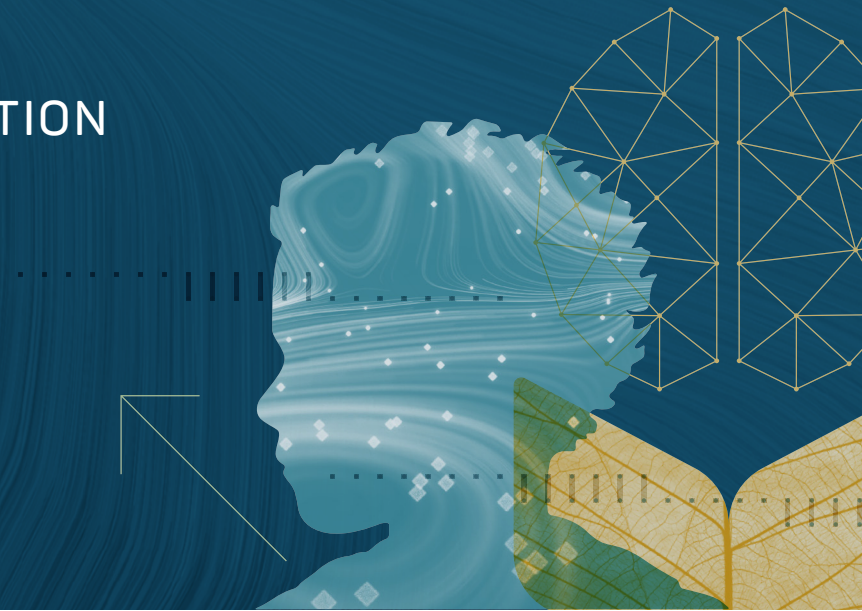


English is Complex, but Teaching It Doesn't Have to Be Complicated

A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE PHONICS INSTRUCTION



English is complex.

It's a fascinating blend of Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Greek influences. Each language adds unique sounds, spellings, and rules, making English rich—but demanding to learn. However, with the proper teaching methods, educators can easily navigate these complexities.

Teaching English doesn't have to be complicated.

Effective phonics instruction allows teachers to feel confident and students to stay motivated on their paths to proficient reading. But what exactly is phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching reading and writing that emphasizes the relationship between sounds (phonemes) and their corresponding letters or groups of letters (graphemes) in written language.

This approach helps students decode new words and spell them correctly.





Phonemic awareness is a crucial precursor to phonics. It is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words. It lays the foundation for understanding how sounds form words.

Let's explore effective, structured phonics instruction and why it empowers teachers and students.



Explicit Instruction

Effective phonics instruction involves directly teaching and practicing the 44 sounds of English and the graphemes that represent them. This process is structured and sequential, starting with the simplest sounds and patterns and gradually moving to more complex ones.

44 Phonemes

Consonants

/b/	/d/	/f/	/g/	/h/	/j/
/k/	/l/	/m/	/n/	/p/	/r/
/s/	/t/	/v/	/w/	/y/	/z/

/ch/	/sh/	/th/	/th/	/wh/	/ng/	/zh/
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Vowels

/ă/	/ě/	/ĩ/	/ö/	/ũ/	/ā/	/ē/
/ī/	/ō/	/ū/	/yū/	/ə/	/ar/	/er/
/or/	/öo/	/au/	/oi/	/ou/		

Four components comprise explicit phonics instruction.

1 Direct Teaching

Instruction is explicit, with clear language and demonstration of the new skill. Instruction includes student response opportunities for engagement and guided practice with corrective feedback.



READING
HORIZONS
DISCOVERY

5 PHONETIC SKILLS

1. mē^{*}t_x

2. sō^{*}ft_x

3. gō_x

4. cā_xpe_x

5. bō_xat_x

2 Planned Sequence

Instruction follows a logical sequence, beginning with simple words and progressing to more advanced patterns.



3 Integrated Practice

During guided practice, students connect the components of language through hearing the word, pronouncing the word, spelling the word, and reading the word. Students then practice reading words containing the instructed skill in connected text to build automaticity and fluency.



4 Regular Review

Students are provided with review and practice opportunities for previously taught skills to ensure progression toward mastery.



How explicit instruction empowers teachers:

A clear road map that covers all necessary skills supports teachers in providing precise and targeted instruction.

READING HORIZONS **DISCOVERY**

GRADE 1 SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

CHAPTER	LESSON #	PHONEMIC AWARENESS		SOUND WALL	LESSON FOCUS	MCW
		TASK 1	TASK 2			
CHAPTER 1	1	Identify Rhyming Words	Count Syllables	/ă/	Letter Group 1: Vowel A	the
	2	Identify Rhyming Words	Blend Syllables	/m/, /s/	Letter Group 1: Consonants M and S	of
	3	Produce Rhyming Words	Segment Syllables	/t/, /p/	Letter Group 1: Consonants T and P	and
	4	Distinguish Rhyming Words	Delete Syllables	n/a	Building Words	a
	5	Isolate Initial Phonemes	Blend Two Phonemes	/i/	Letter Group 2: Vowel I	to
	6	Isolate Initial Phonemes	Segment Two Phonemes	/f/, /n/	Letter Group 2: Consonants F and N	in
	7	Isolate Initial Phonemes	Blend Two Phonemes	/g/, /b/	Letter Group 2: Consonants G and B	is
	8	Isolate Initial Phonemes	Segment Two Phonemes	n/a	Nonsense Words	you
	REVIEW AND TRANSFER DAY					
	9	Delete Initial Phonemes	Blend Three Phonemes	/ô/	Letter Group 3: Vowel O	that
	10	Delete Initial Phonemes	Segment Three Phonemes	/r/, /h/	Letter Group 3: Consonants R and H	it
	11	Delete Initial Phonemes	Blend Three Phonemes	/v/, /j/	Letter Group 3: Consonants V and J	he
	REVIEW AND TRANSFER DAY					
	12	Delete Initial Phonemes	Segment Three Phonemes	/ë/	Letter Group 4: Vowel E	was
	13	Substitute Initial Phonemes	Blend Three Phonemes	/w/, /d/	Letter Group 4: Consonants W and D	for
	14	Substitute Initial Phonemes	Segment Three Phonemes	/l/, /y/	Letter Group 4: Consonants L and Y	on
	REVIEW AND TRANSFER DAY					
	15	Substitute Initial Phonemes	Blend Three Phonemes	/ü/, /kw/	Letter Group 5: Vowel U and Consonant Q	are
	16	Substitute Initial Phonemes	Segment Three Phonemes	/z/, /ks/	Letter Group 5: Consonants Z and X	as
	17	Substitute Initial Phonemes	Blend Three Phonemes	/k/	Letter Group 5: Consonant C	with
	18	Substitute Initial Phonemes	Segment Three Phonemes	/k/	Letter Group 5: Consonant K	his
	19	Substitute Initial Phonemes	Blend Three Phonemes	n/a	Spelling with c and k	they
	REVIEW AND TRANSFER DAY					



How explicit instruction empowers students:

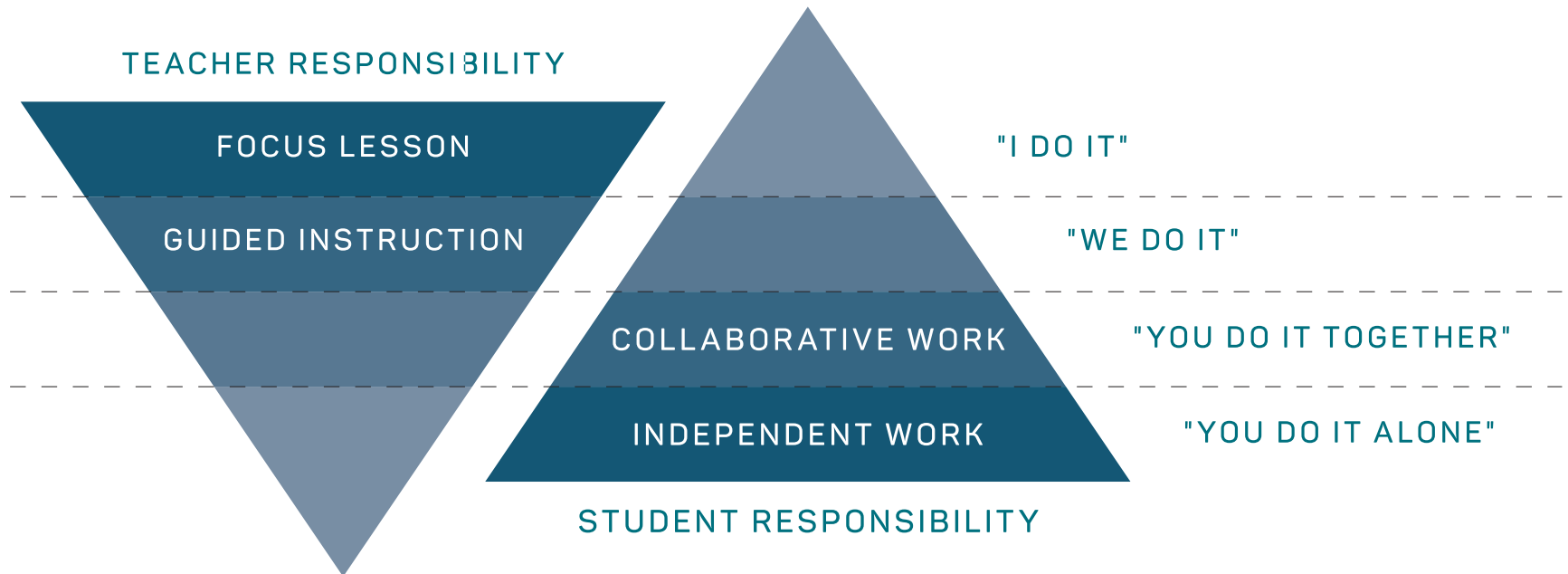
Students have the phonics skills to read unknown words, building confidence as they master each skill before moving into more challenging patterns.



Guided Practice

Guided practice involves gradually shifting the responsibility of learning from the teacher to the student. This approach, often summarized as “I do, we do, you do,” helps students practice new skills in a supportive environment before trying them independently.

GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY MODEL



Scaffolding

Teachers provide support within practice that facilitates all language components through listening, speaking, writing, and reading during guided practice.



How guided practice empowers teachers:

Teachers can support students at different proficiency levels, ensuring all students can participate and progress.



How guided practice empowers students:

Students build autonomy and confidence as they take more responsibility for their learning, applying skills independently over time. This structured practice helps bridge gaps in understanding.



Intentional Independent Practice

Intentional independent practice allows students to transfer the skills they've learned to reading, which is crucial for building automaticity and fluency. The key is ensuring that the practice is tied to previous instruction, building independent application of skills. This means students know the skills well enough to use them without prompting.

Decodable Texts

These texts are specifically designed to align with students' current level of phonics instruction. They contain words that students can sound out and prove based on what they've learned.

Intentional Practice

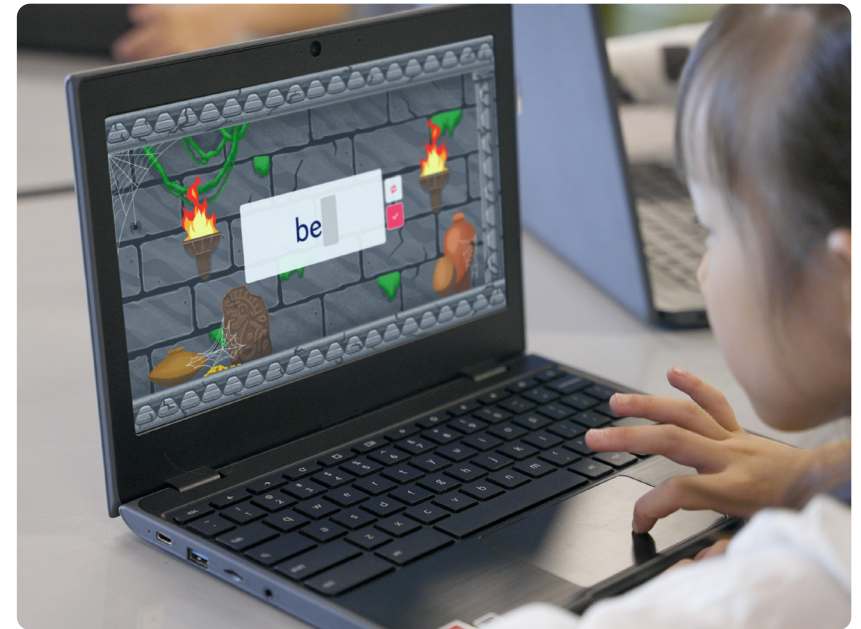
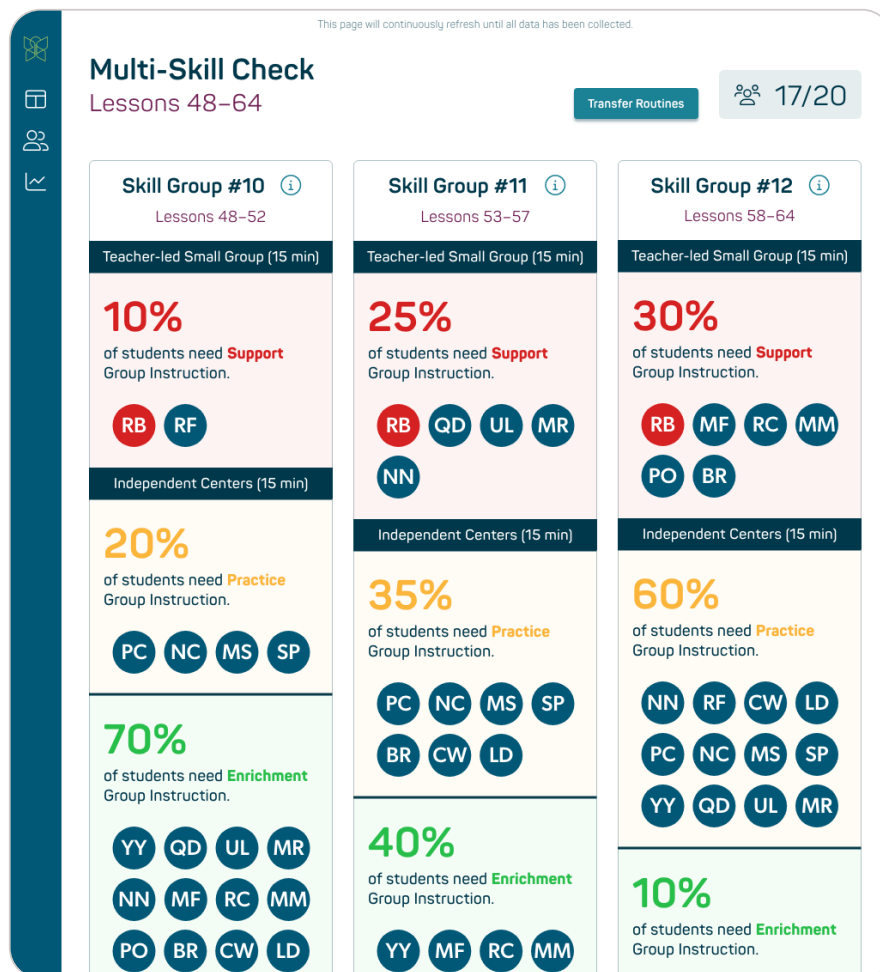
Guided practice is key to ensuring students are proficient in applying the skill before moving to independent practice.





How intentional independent practice empowers teachers:

Provides materials that align with instruction, allowing for immediate assessment of student understanding and skill application.



How intentional independent practice empowers students:

Using the gradual release of responsibility model, students will receive the support and scaffolding necessary to set them up for success. This builds confidence and increases student motivation.

Getting Advanced

Too often, programs only cover basic phonics skills, leaving out the more advanced skills needed to decode complex words. Advanced phonics teaches students to handle multisyllabic words, prefixes, suffixes, and advanced spelling patterns.

Beyond Basics

Teaching advanced phonics doesn't have to be overwhelming. It's about building on what students already know and providing them with strategies to decode more complex words and recognize exceptions.



How getting advanced empowers teachers:

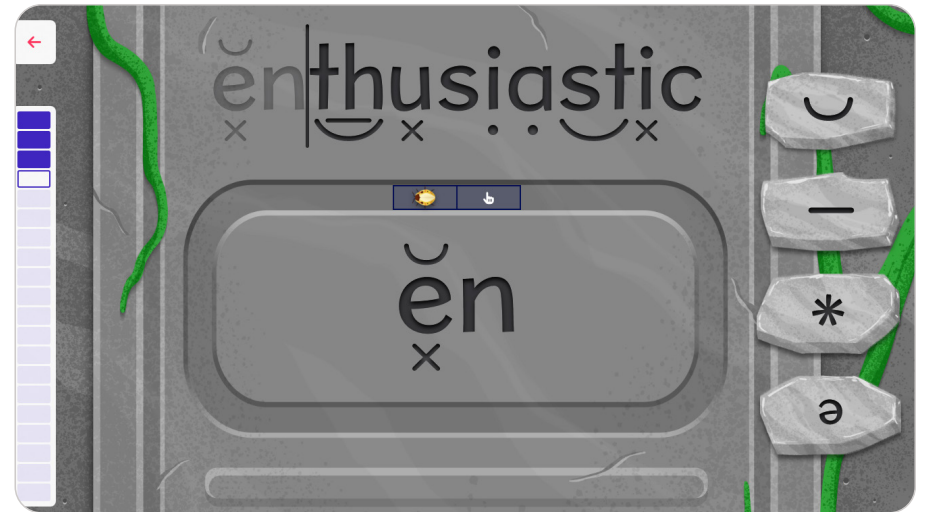
It provides continued strategies and tools to teach advanced phonics effectively, ensuring they can support students as they encounter more complex texts.

[Check out this free teacher resource.](#)



How getting advanced empowers students:

It equips them with the skills needed to decode and understand more sophisticated vocabulary, enhancing their reading comprehension and fluency and ensuring continuous progress in their reading abilities.



English is complex, but students enter a world filled with opportunities when they have explicit instruction, guided practice, intentional independent practice, and tools for decoding more advanced words.

When we equip teachers with effective phonics instruction, we empower them to guide and inspire their students. In turn, students gain the skills and confidence they need to navigate the complexities of the English language easily, leading to proficient reading and opening doors to opportunity and success.



FUN FACT

The word for 'fear of long words' is hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia. Isn't that ironic?

With effective phonics instruction, students can decode and read words of any length!

h^ǔi[̄]p[̄]p[̄]o[̄]p[̄]o[̄]t[̄]o[̄]m[̄]o[̄]n[̄]s[̄]t[̄]r[̄]o[̄]s[̄]e[̄]s[̄]q[̄]u[̄]i[̄]p[̄]p[̄]e[̄]d[̄]a[̄]l[̄]i[̄]o[̄]p[̄]h[̄]o[̄]b[̄]i[̄]a[̄]



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