



Foundational Skills Practice Strategies—Kindergarten and First Grade

To develop their foundational skills in reading and writing, students need practice. All students will need some practice, and many students benefit from lots of practice opportunities—likely more than your curriculum provides.

Here are some examples and resources you can use to supplement your kindergarten or Grade 1 foundational skills instruction. For each, consider how you will adapt the content of the activity to match student needs and your scope and sequence to reflect current or previously taught skills that require additional practice.

These activities will be most effective with a structured foundational skills program that includes a scope and sequence. Two standards-aligned programs, available for free, are Core Knowledge Language Arts and EL Education. In addition, please ensure that these activities align with your state’s standards.

Supplementing your structured foundational skills program may be necessary to give your students sufficient practice to cement their learning, but it must be done strategically. To select an effective practice activity, ask yourself these questions when considering planning for your class or individual students based on data:

- **What scope- and sequence-based skill(s) are students practicing with this activity?**
- **How does the activity help students master the targeted skills?**
- **Does your selected practice activity require teacher involvement/instruction or can students complete it without direct teacher support?**

Print Concepts
Learn more [here](#).



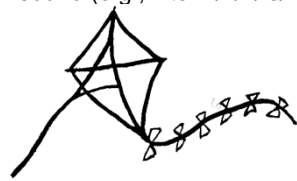
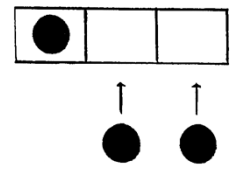
Content	Teacher-Led Instruction and Practice (Whole Group, Small Group)	Non-Teacher-Led Practice Tasks that Can Be Completed Without Teacher Support (Centers, Small Group, Partners, Independent Work)
<p>Letter Recognition * <i>The ability to recognize and name all upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet.</i></p>	<p>The Florida Center for Reading Research: Letter Recognition Rollins Center For Language and Literacy: Activities for Teaching Alphabet Knowledge FreeReading.net: Letter Writing Accuracy</p>	<p>Upper Case/ Lower Case Matching Activities from Florida Center for Reading Research</p>
<p>Handwriting <i>Printing upper and lowercase letters clearly and consistently.</i></p>	<p>EL Education Handwriting Guidance (pg. 31)</p> <p>Provide explicit instruction on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pencil grip ● letter formation (i.e., curves and lines) ● size ● use of lined paper <p>Information on the importance of teaching handwriting.</p>	<p>Handwriting Practice Sheets</p>
<p>How Books and Print Work * <i>Recognizing the features of books (e.g., front and back cover, title, first page, where the text begins, etc.), and how print works on the page (e.g., where to start, reading from left to right, spaces between words, etc.).</i></p>	<p>Review these with every read-aloud early in the year: point out the cover, author, illustrator, first page, and where the text begins!</p> <p>Print Awareness: Guidelines for Instruction FreeReading.net: Follow Words from Left to Right</p> <p>FreeReading.net: Return Sweep</p> <p>FreeReading.net: Page By Page</p> <p>Use any shared reading or writing (poems on chart paper, the daily agenda, a school memo) to reinforce words, spacing, directionality and other print concepts.</p> <p>Rollins Center for Language and Literacy Concepts of Print Guidance (note: this link will redirect you to download a PDF)</p>	<p>Ample time for students to read and write.</p>

*Denotes kindergarten-only skill.

Phonological Awareness
Learn more [here](#).

Content	Teacher-Led Instruction and Practice (Whole Group, Small Group)	Non-Teacher-Led Practice Tasks that Can Be Completed Without Teacher Support (Centers, Small Group, Partners, Independent Work)
<p>General Listening <i>Listening with intention.</i></p>	<p>Reading Rockets: Listening to Sequences of Sounds</p> <p>Reading Rockets: Nonsense</p> <p>CKLA: Listening for the direction of a sound</p>	<p>Students in a small group can play a game of “telephone.”</p> <p>Create a bin of sound-making objects. One student at a time is the soundmaker. While other students close their eyes, two objects are selected, and the soundmaker student makes two sounds. Other students must name the two sounds in order. Variation: create cards with picture prompts such as clap, whisper, sneeze to use instead of object sounds.</p>
<p>Rhyming <i>The ability to recognize and produce words (or nonsense words) with endings that sound the same.</i></p>	<p>CKLA Nursery: Rhymes & Songs</p> <p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Rhyming Activities</p> <p>FreeReading.Net: Identifying and Generating Rhyming Words, Body Part Game</p> <p>Rollins Center for Language and Literacy: Tried and True Recipes for Phonological Awareness (pg. 47) (note: this link will redirect you to download a PDF)</p>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Rhyming Activities</p> <p>Rollins Center for Language and Literacy: Tried and True Recipes for Phonological Awareness (pg. 47)</p>
<p>Blending and Segmenting Syllables <i>Blending involves putting together words from individual syllables; segmenting involves breaking down/taking apart words into their individual syllables.</i></p>	<p>Reading Rockets: Clapping Names</p> <p>FreeReading.Net: Blending Syllables Name Game</p> <p>Rollins Center for Language and Literacy: Tried and True Recipes for Phonological Awareness (pg. 34) (note: this link will redirect you to download a PDF)</p>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Phonological Awareness Activities</p> <p>Rollins Center for Language and Literacy: Tried and True Recipes for Phonological Awareness (pg. 34) (note: this link downloads a PDF)</p>
<p>Onset/Rime <i>Onset is the initial phonological unit or sound in a word, and rime is the letter or letters that follow (most frequently, a vowel and end consonants).</i></p>	<p>VPK Learning Center Activities: Phonological Awareness: Onset and Rime</p> <p>Fun Preschool and Pre-K Phonological Awareness Activity Blending Onset-Rime (Video)</p> <p>Rollins Center for Language and Literacy: Tried and True Recipes for Phonological Awareness pg. 43</p>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Phonological Awareness: Onset and Rime</p>

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<p>Isolating*/Identifying*/Blending/Segmenting Phonemes <i>Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that combine to make up words. Isolating and identifying phonemes involves hearing, recognizing, and naming the individual speech sounds in words. Blending and segmenting with phonemes involves breaking words down into their individual sounds (segmenting) and putting them back together again (blending).</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Hear it </p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Effective Enhancement for Foundational Skills Instruction (Note: this resource includes suggestions for both phonological awareness and phonics tasks.)</p> <p>Finding Things: Initial Phonemes</p> <p>Two-Sound Words</p> <p>FreeReading.Net: Phoneme Segmenting Accuracy</p> <p>Blending Picture Cards</p> <p>Identifying phonemes with “I’m thinking of something…” game: Give students riddles of things that contain the target sound at the beginning or end of the word. (e.g., for /ar/ - I’m thinking of something you drive, what is it? I’m thinking of something you can see in the sky at night, what is it?). See this activity being modeled here.</p>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Phoneme Isolating</p> <p>FreeReading.Net: Phoneme Identification With Sound-It-Out Chips (for practice activities with other phonemes, go here.)</p> <p>Students use picture cards to identify the number of sounds in each word using Elkonin boxes. Students will push one tile (or other object) into a box for each sound (e.g., kite = /k/ /ie/ /t/)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>
<p>Adding/Substituting Phonemes <i>Adding and substituting phonemes involves adding a new phoneme to a word (as in, what word do you get if you add /b/ to “at”) or swapping one for another (take off the /c/ sound in “cat” and add /r/ instead—what word did you make?)</i></p>	<p>Word Pairs I: Take a Sound Away (Analysis)</p> <p>Word Pairs II: Add a Sound (Synthesis)</p>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Phonological Awareness: Phoneme Manipulating</p>

For more ideas around phonemic awareness, see [Reading Rockets Phonemic Awareness Activities](#).

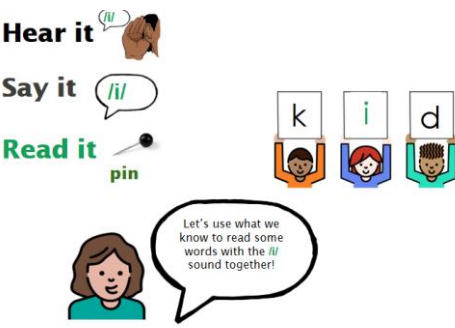
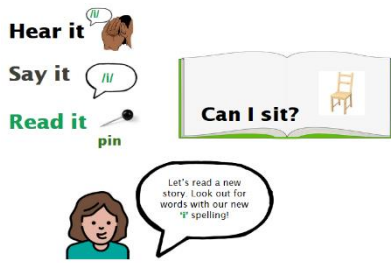
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Phonics & Word Recognition

Learn more [here](#).

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<p>Letter Sound Identification <i>Recognizing the name of the printed letter and the sound or sounds it represents, on sight.</i></p>	<p>EL Education: Learning Letters</p> <p>Sound Cards</p>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Letter-Sound Correspondence Note: Need to match to scope and sequence</p>
<p>Encoding (out of context) <i>The process of using letter/sound knowledge to represent spoken words in writing.</i></p>	<p>Dictation: Dictate words with taught sound and spelling patterns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask student to write the words you say on a paper or whiteboard. • Use a sentence along with target words to help connect to meaning/build. vocabulary (e.g., “Spell ‘mat.’ I stood on the mat at the front door. ‘Mat.’”). • Ask students to self-correct as needed. • Pro tip: Try adding in a few nonsense words (e.g., wat, zad, hab). <p>Chaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to spell a word containing taught sound and spelling patterns • Tell students to change one sound in the word in order to make a new word. (e.g., Change the /m/ to /p/. What word do you have now?) • Repeat. (e.g., “Change the /a/ to /i/”) • Chaining variations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See this variation of chaining if you have letter tiles available. ○ See this variation where students use letter cards to spell words in teams. Download your own large letter cards here. ○ Check out this teacher engaging in chaining with whiteboards. ○ For sample chaining folders and letter cards, see these resources. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Hear it</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Say it</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Read it</p>  <p>pin</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Spell it</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Encoding and Decoding Activities Note: Need to match to scope and sequence</p>

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<p>Decoding (out of context) The process of reading words by recognizing the letters and the sounds they represent, and then blending them together accurately. “Out of context” refers to reading words in isolation, or out of the context of connected text.</p>	<p>Decoding words: Write words with taught sound and spelling patterns large enough so that all students can see them. Ask students to sound out the words quietly. When you give a signal, ask students to chorally read the words—this allows for more students to do the thinking than calling on one student at time.</p>  <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to hold letter up letter cards while other students read the spelled words. Download your own large letter cards here. • Use a pocket chart or whiteboard to create chains of words - changing one letter at a time (e.g., at > mat > cat : cab). • Read it! Act it out! Ask students to read words and then act out what they mean (e.g., students read the word “run” and then act out running in place). 	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: Encoding and Decoding Activities Note: Need to match to scope and sequence</p>
<p>High Frequency Words Words that occur most frequently in text.</p>	<p>For guidance on how to address sight words see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Frequency Words? Sight Words? Is There a Difference? • Teach “Sight Words” As You Would Other Words <p>Watch this teacher introduce high-frequency words that both “play by the rules” (include taught sound and spelling patterns) and those that don’t.</p>	<p>Florida Center for Reading Research: High Frequency Words Note: Need to match to scope and sequence</p>
<p>Decodable Text (in-context practice) Text that is intentionally constructed, consisting of primarily taught, high-frequency words and words that contain taught sound and spelling patterns for students to practice decoding connected sentences.</p>	 <p>Decodable Reader Protocol for full-group reads</p>	<p>Decodable Reader Protocol follow up reads—a chance for teachers to assess/monitor student performance.</p> <p>Re-reading decodable readers that consist of sounds students are not yet decoding with accuracy/automaticity.</p>

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	<p>For access to free decodables see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CKLA includes free decodables starting in Unit 7 of kindergarten called “Student Readers,” available as PDFs within each unit’s materials. The end of each reader has a chart with included sound and spelling patterns and high-frequency words for your reference. • EL Education includes free decodables texts along with its resources. To download, click on “Access the Curriculum.” Sign up for a free account. Find decodables under the “Skills” section for the grade level. • The Reading League’s list of decodable texts. Please note that many of these are not free resources. <p><i>Note that unless you are following the scope and sequences of the above programs, students may need additional support to decode words with untaught sound and spelling patterns.</i></p>	
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Fluency
Learn more [here](#).

Content	Teacher-Led Instruction and Practice (Whole Group, Small Group)	Non-Teacher-Led Practice Tasks that Can Be Completed Without Teacher Support (Centers, Small Group, Partners, Independent Work)
<p>Fluency (any text) <i>The act of reading with accuracy, automaticity, and appropriate rate. Students need some practice with a range of different text types.</i></p>	<p>K-2 Non-Decodables Protocol for Reinforcing Learning</p> <p>Which Texts for Teaching Reading: Decodable, Predictable, or Controlled Vocabulary?</p>	<p>Non-Decodables Protocol for Reinforcing Learning</p> <p>Readers Theater: more information here and here.</p> <p>Re-read familiar texts in silly voices (e.g., opera singer, ghost). For cards see here.</p>
<p>Fluency (decodables) <i>Same as above, with a focus on decoding words with taught sound and spelling patterns.</i></p>	<p>Decodable Reader Protocol</p> <p>See these Kindergarten and Grade 1 samples of how you might use decodable texts to reinforce taught foundational skills with games and riddles, as well as connect to meaning through comprehension conversations.</p>	<p>Decodable Reader Protocol</p> <p>Students re-read decodables on their own or with partners.</p>

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Bridging the Standards
(Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, Foundational Skills, Language)

Content	Teacher-Led Instruction and Practice (Whole Group, Small Group)	Non-Teacher-Led Practice Tasks that Can Be Completed Without Teacher Support (Centers, Small Group, Partners, Independent Work)
Evidence-Based Writing <i>Writing about text, using information gained from reading or listening to read-aloud.</i>	Practice writing while building knowledge with a mini research project (read multiple texts on one topic and ask students to demonstrate their new knowledge through writing and drawing). See a model here .	Create a bin of recent read-aloud texts. Ask students to draw, label, and write about what they learned or their favorite parts of the text.
Retelling/ Rereading Texts <i>Retelling a story orally, reading texts over and over.</i>	Read-Aloud Lessons with Text Sets	Retelling Station: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a favorite read aloud to your reading buddy/ stuffed animal. • Act out a favorite story • “Reread” your favorite read aloud Reader’s Theater
Knowledge Building <i>Building knowledge and vocabulary through reading of multiple texts on the same topic.</i>	Read-Aloud Lessons with Text Sets	Create topic-based Book Baskets from your classroom library. More information here and here . Ask students to keep a “Knowledge Notebook” where they write and draw about their learning from book baskets.

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