



Ideal Literacy Program

A Research-Based Framework

By: Kendra Thompson

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Why It Matters

My Mission:

To cultivate confident, independent readers and writers through evidence-based instruction using the SOR knowledge I have learned. As educators, we play a critical role in shaping independent readers and writers.

- Many students enter upper grades with unseen literacy gaps that hinder learning across subjects (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2018).
- Taking ownership of literacy development ensures every student can access grade-level content and succeed.

“And He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

— Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV)

How the Brain Reads

The Science of Reading

Reading isn't natural; the brain repurposes visual and language centers to link letters, sounds, and meaning.

The Simple View of Reading

Reading = Decoding × Language Comprehension. Both are crucial (Honig et al., 2018).

Connection to Structured Literacy

Structured Literacy explicitly teaches phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, aligning with how the brain learns to read. International Dyslexia Association, 2019

Research Backing

Honig et al. explain that research and brain science confirm reading develops through systematic instruction in foundational skills and data-driven differentiation. (Honig et al., 2018).



Organizing the Literacy Block:

Grades K-2

Component	Time	Instruction
Phonemic Awareness	20 min	Rhyming, segmenting, blending, sound manipulation activities
Phonics	25 min	Systematic explicit instruction on letter-sound relationships
Fluency	15 min	Guided reading with timed oral reading practice
Vocabulary	15 min	Word study and semantic mapping
Comprehension	25 min	Shared reading with prediction and discussion
Writing	20 min	Sentence construction, spelling, handwriting
Language	20 min	Grammar, syntax, oral language activities

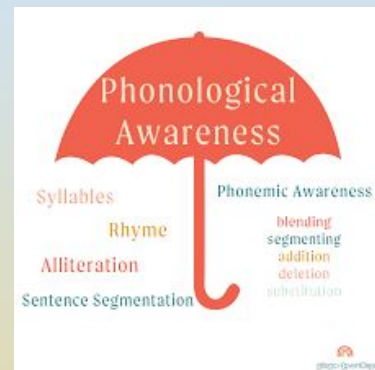
Grades 3-5

Component	Time	Instruction
Phonics/Word Study	15 min	Advanced morphology and affixes
Fluency	15 min	Partner reading and reading logs
Vocabulary	20 min	Greek/Latin roots, context clues
Comprehension	30 min	Close reading, text-dependent questions
Writing	25 min	Structured paragraph and essay writing



Phonological Awareness

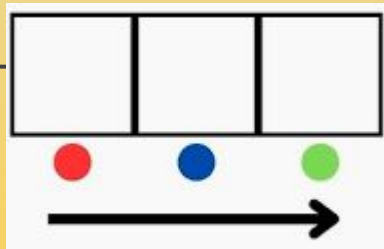
What	Why	When
- Students understand that oral language can be broken down into smaller sounds. - Students must listen, recognize, and manipulate sounds without text. - This is the base for understanding the alphabetic principle that connects sounds.	- used as a predictor of later reading difficulties - better prepared to decode words and have better fluency - Students that have difficulty with phonological awareness usually struggle with decoding, spelling and fluency (Honig et al., 2018). - Early intervention	- pre-kindergarten or kindergarten - taught within the literacy block and continue into first grade - continue on for struggling students. - Instruction should move progressively from words to syllables to onsets and rimes



Student Learning Impact: Students who receive phonological awareness instruction show significantly improved decoding and spelling outcomes, reducing the risk of long-term reading difficulties by up to 88% when identified early (Honig et al., 2018).

Phonological Awareness Differentiation

Dyslexia	ELL	Older Students
• explicit, systematic, and multi-sensory instruction • Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities and supports • Sound boxes, Elkonin chips, and tapping out sounds • spiral review (International Dyslexia Association, 2019)	• Focus on the sounds that are different between english and their native language • Modeling • Contrasting examples • Oral language activities, songs • pictures (Honig et al., 2018)	• remediation using multisensory games • decoding activities • same strategies but at a higher level or in context with their read to learn materials • work on word study and spelling instruction



<u>Open</u>	<u>Closed</u>
<u>motion</u>	<u>cabin</u>
<u>kitten</u>	<u>baby</u>
<u>silent</u>	<u>sentence</u>
<u>happy</u>	<u>whisper</u>
<u>camping</u>	<u>because</u>

(Honig et. al., 2018)

Phonological Awareness in Writing, Language, and Communication

The writing process in structured literacy follows the structure of

- Prewriting (brainstorming, planning)
- Drafting (getting ideas down)
- Revising (improving content)
- Editing (correcting mechanics)
- Publishing (sharing final work)



Connection to Writing	• direct connection to spelling as students must hear the sound, segment the sound, then choose the correct phonemes to represent the sounds • Word mapping to help struggling writers remember how to spell irregular words. • Activities for reading and writing should be paired together to allow the connection of reading and writing to become reciprocal. • Writing activities to reinforce sound and symbols to help make phonological awareness a more meaningful application of the process.
Language and Communication	• student's listening comprehension and vocabulary • songs, chants, or manipulating sounds in words can build both linguistic and metalinguistic awareness • allow students to think about how spoken language works

Phonics

What	Why	When
- being able to connect the sound to a letter. - use word patterns to decode unknown words. - recognize spelling patterns like CVC words, blends, and digraphs - helps build a strong foundation for later reading skills	- Automaticity - comprehension - reading difficulties early on are from lack of good phonics skills - Research shows a good foundation of phonics has a long-term effect on good reading outcomes later on (Honig et al., 2018). - supports orthographic mapping - helps to prevent future reading struggles	- as early as kindergarten - start with more simple word patterns and then move on to more complex spelling and sound concepts - Frequent assessments, including both encoding and decoding skills. - Progress monitoring



Phonics Differentiation & Connections



Structured literacy is a benefit for all students.

- OG uses multi-sensory instruction such as:
 - air writing, the
 - 3 part drill,
 - sand trays
 - saying the letter sounds
 - visual supports
 - small group instruction
 - repetition

Connection to Writing:

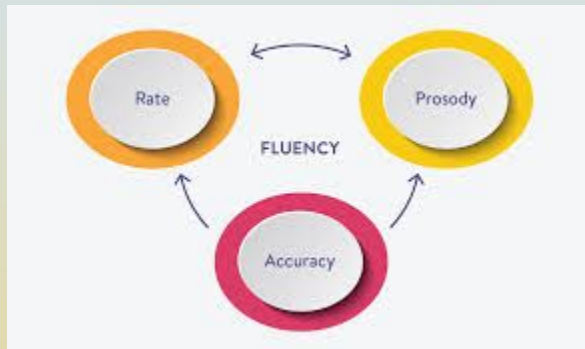
- understand the sound-to-letter connection and how to use it when reading and writing.
- Reading and writing complement each other
- Critical thinking skills

Connection to Language and communication concepts:

- Connect sounds to letters
- vocabulary improves
- supports communication concepts
- produce sounds correctly

(Honig et al., 2018; Orton-Gillingham Academy, n.d.; Phonics.org, n.d.)

Fluency



What	Why	When
• developing rate • Accuracy • prosody • echo reading, partner reading • repeated reading reinforces phonics and comprehension	• comprehension • fluency frees up the cognitive resources that are needed to interpret and analyze text (Honig et al., 2018) • more confident • motivated readers	• Once students can show basic decoding skills • Continue across grade levels • Frequent assessments

Fluency Differentiation & Connections



Diverse Student Support:

- Students that have dyslexia can benefit from structured multisensory decoding paired with guided reading
- ELL Students may require fluency that is embedded within vocabulary instruction and oral language support
- Older learners may need fluency interventions using high-interest, age- appropriate text

(International Dyslexia Association, 2019)

Connection to Writing:

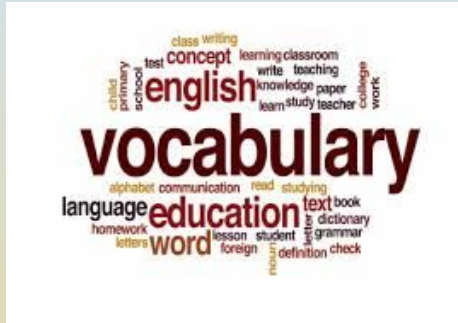
- Sentence structure
- Grammar
- Language patterns
- Flow of writing
- Audience and purpose
- organization

Connection to Language and communication concepts:

- apply phrasing that aligns with spoken language
- support communication skills
- ability to read more expressively to others

(Honig et al., 2018; International Dyslexia Association, 2019)

Vocabulary



What	Why	When
• Knowing the meaning of words • Specific word instruction: intentional, direct teaching of carefully selected words • Word Learning Strategies: ways to help students find out the meaning of an unfamiliar word • Word Consciousness: interest in words	• Reading comprehension • Student independence • Improve content knowledge	• Once students have basic reading and decoding skills • Adults can model early on • At the start of a new academic unit

Vocabulary Differentiation & Connections

Dyslexia:

- multisensory instruction
- learning pre-teach vocabulary
- structured word inquiry
- word play activities that include visual, kinesthetic, and/or auditory

(International Dyslexia Association, 2019).

Older Learners:

- Making the connection to a student's life
- more advanced strategies
- morphology, such as the Latin and Greek roots of words.
- encouraged to explore academic vocabulary, figurative language, content
- vocabulary, and practice using those words in context
- stem- notes

ELL:

- vocabulary instruction
- focus on academic and content vocabulary
- Visual support and examples as well as multiple
- chances for exposure
- oral discussion with vocabulary words
- explicit strategies for inferring word meaning
- Be provided with visuals
- contextual examples.
- Offered bilingual dictionaries
- explore the meanings across languages

Language and Communication:

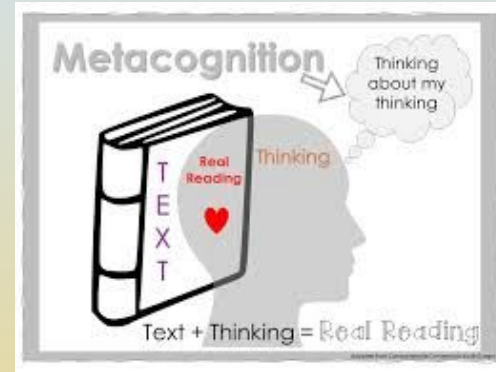
- help both their receptive and expressive language skills.
- better able to find the meanings of unfamiliar words and use those words in their vocabulary
- express ideas and understand more complex information

Connect to Writing:

- richer writing vocabulary.
- more flexible writing
- rich bank of words
- play with words
- enhances writing voice, quality, and clarity

(Honig et al., 2018; International Dyslexia Association, 2019)

Comprehension



What	Why	When
• Process of extracting and constructing meaning from text • Not automatic • Must be explicitly taught	• Goal of reading • Academic success • Vocabulary growth • Background knowledge growth	• Before reading • During reading • After reading

Comprehension Differentiation & Connections

Dyslexia	ELL	Older Students
• structured decoding instruction • audiobooks • graphic organizers • explicit instruction in text structure • Scaffolded summarization • Repeated reading of accessible texts (International Dyslexia Association, 2019)	• build background knowledge • pre-teach vocabulary using visuals and gestures • use sentence frames to support discussion • morphology • use read-alouds with rich language and scaffolds (Honig et. al., 2018)	• complex informational text • disciplinary literacy • inferencing • main idea • text structures • metacognitive modeling • self-monitoring tools
Writing Connection: • Reciprocal process • Reinforces comprehension • Strengthen inference and interpretation • Improves writing vocabulary	Language and Communication Connection: • Explain • Summarize • Interpret • Discuss • Participation • expressive language	 A photograph of a young boy with dark hair and glasses, wearing a white t-shirt. He is sitting at a desk, looking towards the camera with a thoughtful expression, his right hand resting on his chin. On the desk in front of him is an open book and a stack of several closed books. The background is a solid, bright yellow.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Early identification of students who struggle with reading is Important for providing help within a Multi -Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Reading Science Academy (2022) explains, the MTSS framework supports early identification through tiered instruction (Reading Science Academy, 2022).

Level	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
What	Whole Group Instruction	Small Group Instruction	One on one instruction
Strategy	Systematic and explicit teaching of foundational skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension), embedded practice, and strong classroom routines.	Small-group, skill-focused lessons targeting specific deficits like decoding, phonemic awareness, fluency.	Very explicit, diagnostic-driven instruction, more time, smaller groups often 1 to 1 and uses specialized programs.
Assessment	Honig, Diamond, and Gutlohn emphasize that assessment drives every tier of MTSS (Honig et al., 2018). • Universal screening to identify students at risk early- around 3 times a year. • Diagnostic assessment to pinpoint specific skill deficits. • Progress monitoring to determine whether interventions are working- often. • Outcome assessments to evaluate overall program effectiveness. • Data ensures that students receive the right level of support • Instruction is continually adjusted to meet individual needs (Reading Science Academy, 2022)		

Motivating Struggling and Diverse Readers



Use Games

Engage students with fun, interactive games.

Equity:

- level the playing field (Edutopia, 2025)
- multiple entry points visuals
- collaboration
- differentiated challenge levels.



Add Movement

Kinesthetic learning:
Use actions/movement for memory & engagement.

Equity:

- supports diverse learning styles,
- improves processing challenges
- nonverbal pathway to demonstrate understanding.



Set Goals

Have students track progress with clear, achievable goals to build confidence.

Equity:

- helps all learners
- recognize their growth
- develop academic identity
- pursue stretch goals



Relevant

Choose engaging, age-appropriate texts & activities.

Equity:

- ensure students see themselves
 - broaden perspectives.
- (Edutopia, 2025)

(Edutopia, 2025; Honig et al., 2018)

Advocating for Literacy Learning



School Level

- Professional Development
- Share Student Data
- Build Staff Buy-In (Honig et al., 2018)
- cultivate reading, writing, and language
- encouraging students to set goals
- connect to students' lives, identities, and interests
- Frequent reflection and celebration of growth
- Student voice and choice are prioritized

District Level

- Work with administrators to implement evidence-based programs like Orton-Gillingham district-wide, which shows significant gains for students with dyslexia (International Dyslexia Association, 2019)
- Advocate for universal screening (Reading Science Academy, 2022)
- Present Student Data

Community Level

- Collaborate with families on best practices
- Share resources and strategies
- Partner with community organizations like the library

(Benner et al., 2022; Honig et al., 2018; International Dyslexia Association, 2019; Reading Science Academy, 2022)

Resources

Digital Resources

- **Reading Universe:** Evidence-based phonics/multisyllabic lessons for intervention, practice, or whole-group demos.
- **UFLI Foundations:** Phonics sequence with lesson plans and decodables for Tier 1/2 instruction.
- **Reading Rockets:** Strategy videos, articles, and printables for professional learning, families, and classroom use.
- **Phonics.org:** Multisyllabic word strategies for struggling upper elementary readers.

Print Resources

- **Decodable Readers:** Controlled texts (e.g., UFLI, Reading A-Z) for small group fluency, aligned with phonics skills.
- **Sound-Spelling Cards:** Visual phoneme-grapheme charts for display and instruction.
- **Graphic Organizers:** Story maps, Venn diagrams, KWL charts to support comprehension, vocabulary, and writing.
- **High-Interest Trade Books:** Diverse, leveled authentic literature for read-alouds, independent reading, and building background.

[44 Phonemes Recording Resource Link](#)

(Honig et al., 2018; Orton-Gillingham Academy, n.d.; Phonics.org, n.d.; Reading Rockets, 2023; Reading Universe, n.d.; University of Florida Literacy Institute, n.d.)

Professional Development



Plan Together

Collaborate with administrators and teachers to set goals and choose tools.

Model First

Demonstrate use of digital tools during staff meetings with live examples.

Practice & Apply

Host workshops where teachers build lessons and solve tech issues together.

Support & Reflect

Offer coaching, record lessons, and discuss impact in PLCs.

Two Structured Reading Programs



Orton Gillingham (OG) Approach

- Structured Literacy-aligned: Direct, explicit, sequential, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction
- Systematic phonics and language structure focus, ideal for students with dyslexia
- Multisensory component engages:
 - Visual (seeing letters/words)
 - Auditory (hearing sounds)
 - Kinesthetic-tactile (writing, tracing, manipulating letters)
- Reinforces memory and learning by making abstract language concepts concrete
- Evidence-based: Grounded in research on how the brain learns to read
- Practical effectiveness: Works well for struggling readers and aligns closely with Structured Literacy principles
- Instructor-tested: Personally applied in classroom settings with positive results

The Orton-Gillingham Academy. (n.d.)



REWARDS Program (Grades 4-12)

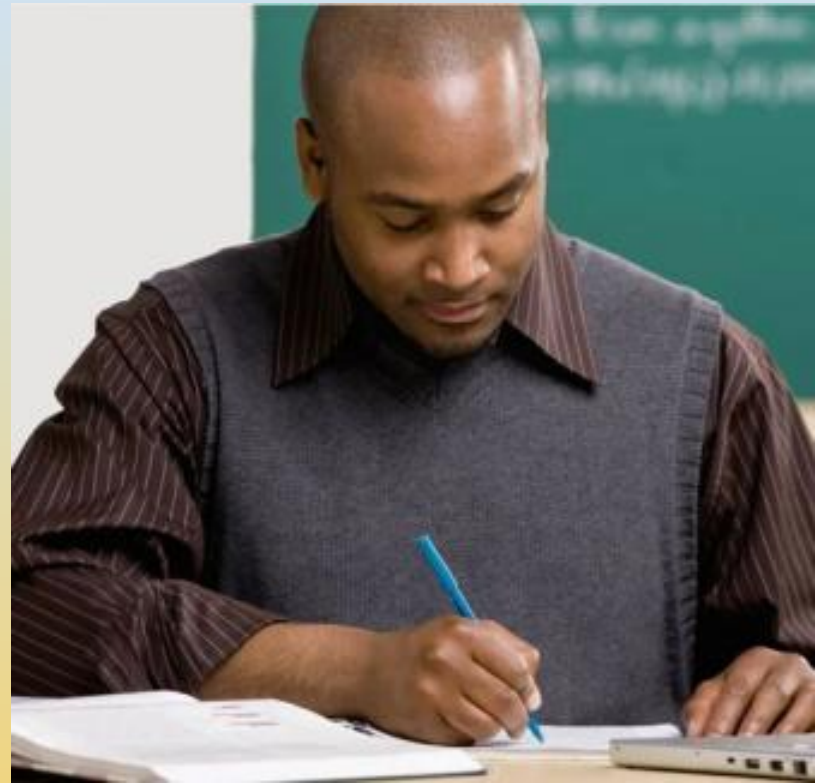
- Research-based, structured intervention for multisyllabic word reading
- Teaches explicit strategies for decoding long words, morphology, and syllable patterns
- Aligns with Structured Literacy and the Science of Reading
- Supports engagement through:
 - Quick-paced, interactive decoding routines
 - Movement-based strategies (finger sliding, tapping syllables)
 - Goal tracking and progress monitoring
- Promotes equity for diverse learners:
 - Effective for ELLs, students with disabilities, and struggling readers
 - Provides scaffolds that reduce cognitive load and build confidence
 - Offers enrichment through analysis of Greek & Latin roots for advanced learners

(Benner et al., 2022; International Dyslexia Association, 2019; Orton-Gillingham Academy, n.d.)

Reflection & Conclusion

SCRIP in Literacy

- Social responsibility: Teaching is a way to serve others, helps others to read to understand God's Word, share knowledge to peers and the community. It is our job to make a difference.
- Commitment: Show compassion and empathy for diverse learners and support struggling readers, ELLs, and students with disabilities with encouragement.
- Reflection: Show cultural competency by selecting culturally relevant texts and valuing each child's voice in classroom discussions. Looking at what we can do to do better.
- Integrity: Model truthfulness and ethical teaching practices by using evidence-based literacy instruction consistently and honestly.
- Professionalism: Commit to lifelong learning and skill development, stay current with research on reading, assessment, and differentiated instruction.



Proverbs 16:21: “The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction.”

As we implement these strategies with wisdom and grace, may our words and actions continue to promote strong literacy instruction for every learner. (King James Bible. (2017).

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