



## Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years

# SD45 – Bowen Island Community School Professional Learning Series

Foundational Literacy Teaching  
& Learning in K–3 Classrooms

Tuesday, November 7th

3:00 – 4:30pm

Presenter:

Lisa Thomas

POPEY Program Manager

# Shape of the Afternoon

This afternoon we will continue our focus on foundational phonics skills to support successful literacy development in the primary grades:

- ✓ making meaning in and out of texts as we build our word solving skills
- ✓ quick review: high leverage routines for phonemic awareness
- ✓ quick review: characteristics of strong phonics instruction
- ✓ dictation and guided spelling
- ✓ sight words vs. high-frequency words
- ✓ examples of phonics activities/centres to support word awareness
- ✓ prioritizing print as a strategy of first resort for word solving
- ✓ choosing books with the decoding opportunities students need to practice

### Making Meaning OUT OF Texts

#### Word Study

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

### Making Meaning IN Texts

#### Reading

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

#### Writing

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

← Oral Language Comprehension →

High-leverage instructional routines for **phonemic awareness**:

- ✓ Let's **notice** how sounds are made (articulatory gestures)
- ✓ Let's **put sounds together** to make whole **words** (blending)
- ✓ Let's **take words apart** (segmenting)
- ✓ Let's **listen for sounds** that are the **same** (isolation & discrimination)
- ✓ Let's **take sounds off** of words (deletion)
- ✓ Let's **change one sound** in a word to make a new word (substitution)

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How can you help students both **NOTICE** and **MANIPULATE**  
the phonemic structure of individual words?



# Characteristics of Strong Phonics Instruction



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

Active \* Social \* Reflective

# Dictation - guided spelling

Not a test. Cumulative.

## Early dictation

1. s t m f
2. am at
3. Sam sat. (simple sentence)

## Differentiated dictation

rain  
train  
training  
retraining

take  
taking  
retaking  
mistaking

move  
remove  
removing  
removable

– Make your thinking public about how English works –

## *Sight words are NOT the same as HFWs*

Sight words are simply all words, not just high-frequency words, that we have come to know through **sight, sound, and meaning** and have **stored** away in the **visual word form area** of the **brain** for **quick retrieval**. As an expert reader, almost **every** word you read has become a sight word for you.

High-frequency words – those that show up more frequently in text – are especially important for students to learn.

This means that **strategic effort** helping readers **store a few dozen high-frequency words** in the word form area of the brain can **free up** a lot of **working memory**. Less attention spent on deciphering the words means that students can direct **more attention** toward **comprehending** the text.

## *All words have some degree of decodability...*

For each word, notice what IS reliable about the sound spellings within it:

*are, been, come, could, do, does, done, give, have, live of, one, said, some, the, their, they, their, to, was, want, who, would, you*

Many high-frequency words are ABSOLUTELY decodable, such as:

*a, and, big, came, can, down, each, fast, get, how, in, like, make, not, play, read, see, stop, them, try, went, will, yes*



# High Frequency Power Words

## 109 Power Words

Jan Burkins and Kari Yates © 2020 TheSixShifts.com

1	*the	21	be	41	which	61	into	81	made	101	get
2	*of	22	this	42	their	62	has	82	over	102	through
3	*and	23	from	43	said	63	more	83	did	103	back
4	*a	24	I	44	if	64	her	84	down	104	much
5	*to	25	have	45	do	65	two	85	only	105	before
6	*in	26	or	46	will	66	like	86	way	106	go
7	*is	27	by	47	each	67	him	87	find	107	good
8	*you	28	one	48	about	68	see	88	use	108	new
9	*that	29	had	49	how	69	time	89	may	109	write
10	*it	30	not	50	up	70	could	90	water		
11	*he	31	but	51	out	71	no	91	long		
12	*for	32	what	52	them	72	make	92	little		
13	*was	33	all	53	then	73	than	93	very		
14	on	34	were	54	she	74	first	94	after		
15	are	35	when	55	many	75	been	95	words		
16	as	36	we	56	some	76	its	96	called		
17	with	37	there	57	so	77	who	97	just		
18	his	38	can	58	these	78	now	98	where		
19	they	39	an	59	would	79	people	99	most		
20	at	40	your	60	other	80	my	100	know		

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

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

# The process of orthographic mapping

To really learn any new word you have to get in and do some phonemic analysis, comparing the word's sound structure to its spelling. This sound-to-spelling work, known as **orthographic mapping**, is essential, whether the word is very easily decodable (*at*) or irregularly spelled (*should*).

Taking the spoken word and the written word apart and then matching up the two – phonemes to graphemes – is how the spelling of a word gets locked into long-term memory. This locking in is the magic of orthographic mapping, and it is speech-to-print work, as opposed to the print-to-speech work of decoding.

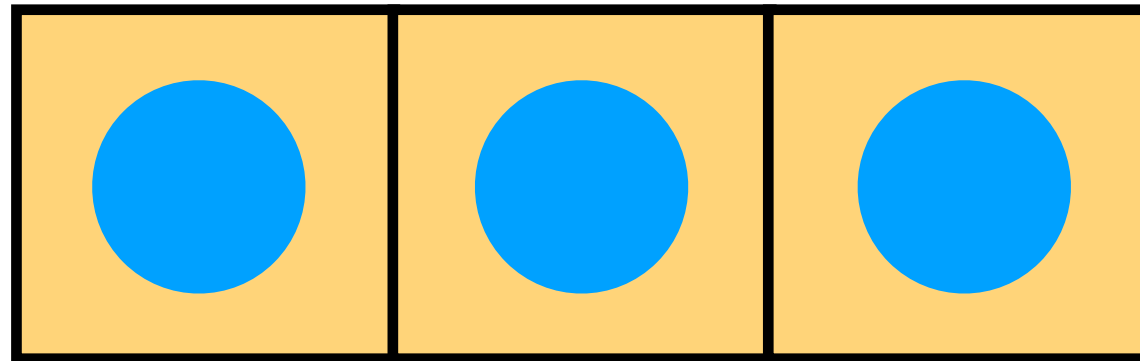


# Orthographic Mapping & Irregular HFWs

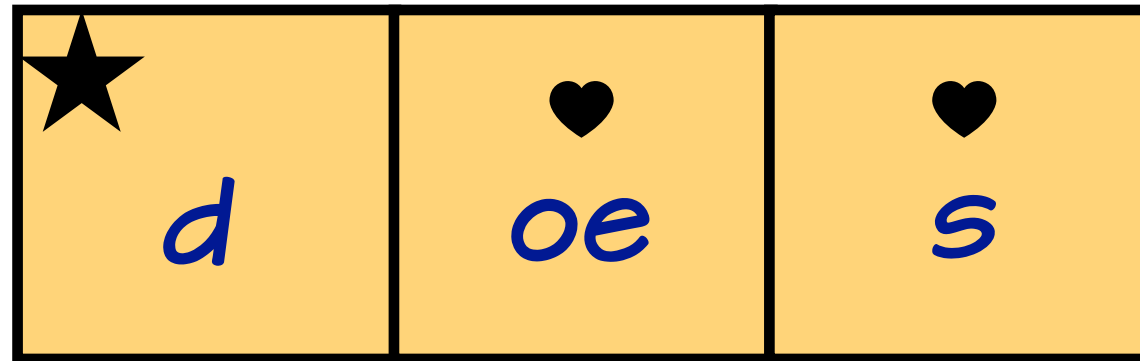
Let's explore an orthographic mapping routine for the word

*does*

sound boxes



transfer to  
spelling



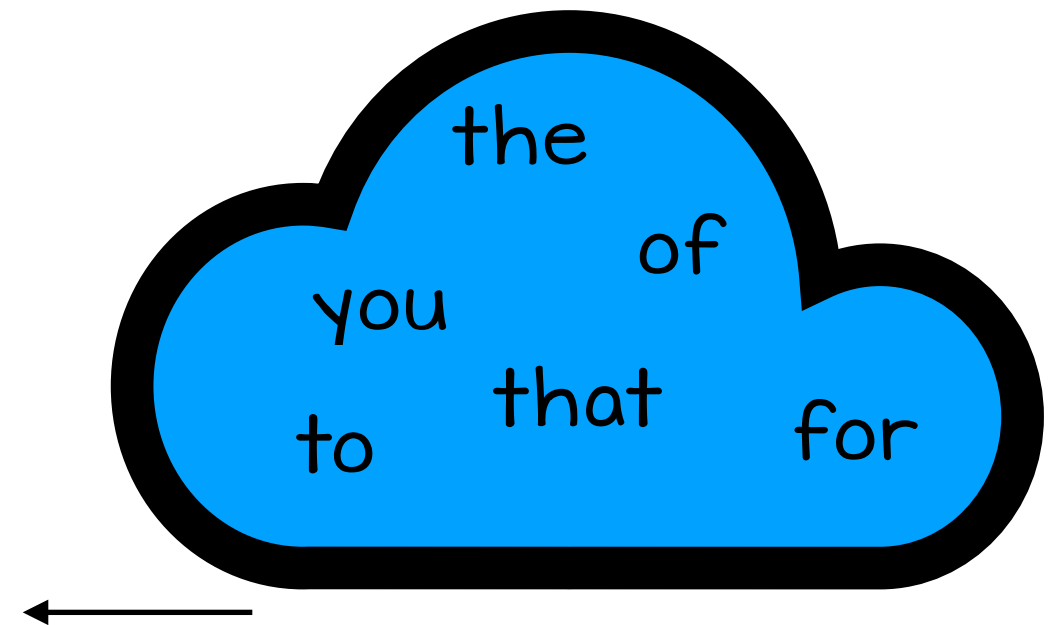
Reading outcomes are stronger when  
phonemic awareness is taught with print.

-Nathan H. Clemens et al

# High-Frequency Words

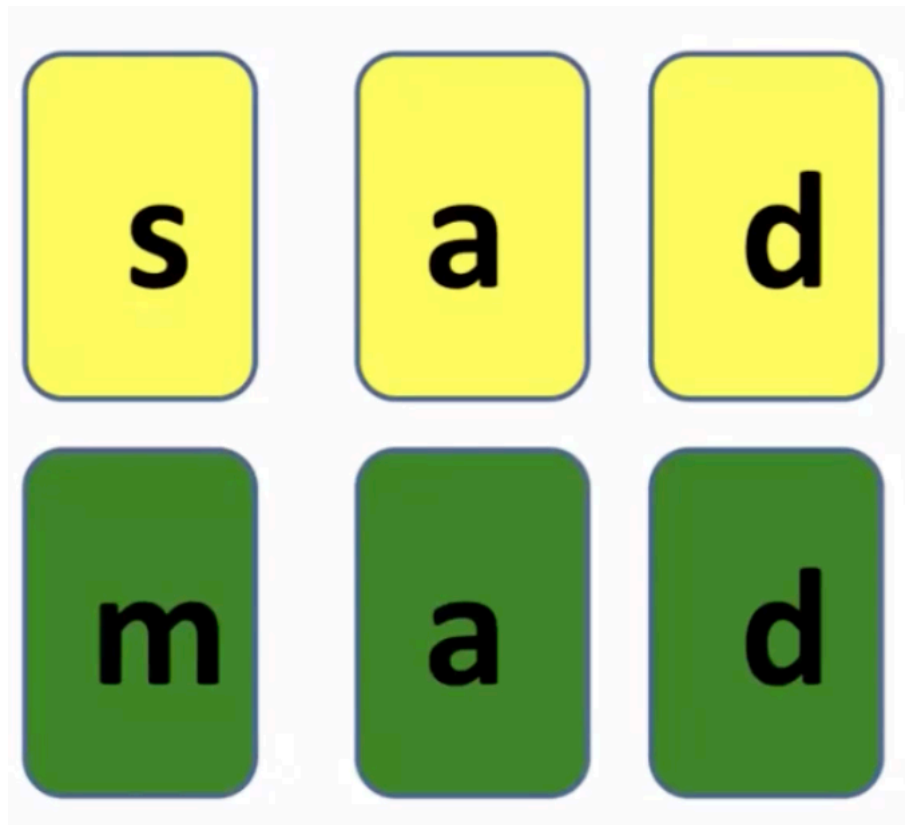
Prioritize which high-frequency words you explicitly teach...

	Low Frequency	High Frequency
Regular	quake	went
Irregular	choir	was



## Teacher Language

(Begin with sad.) Change sad to mad.



## Skill

encoding






decoding

This is sophisticated phonemic awareness work:

Students are substituting, deleting, and adding sounds (encoding). And then they're using their knowledge of spelling to create the new word, and then read (decode) the new word to make sure it's correct.

# A Phonics Centre Activity - Letter Bank

## Word Awareness

1		l	e	g
2				
3				
4				
5				

Letter Bank

b d d e

e e

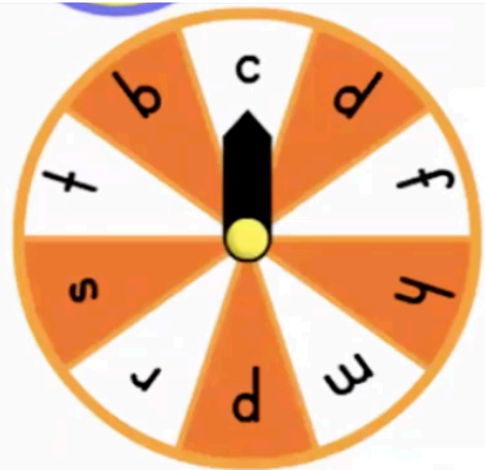
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l n n

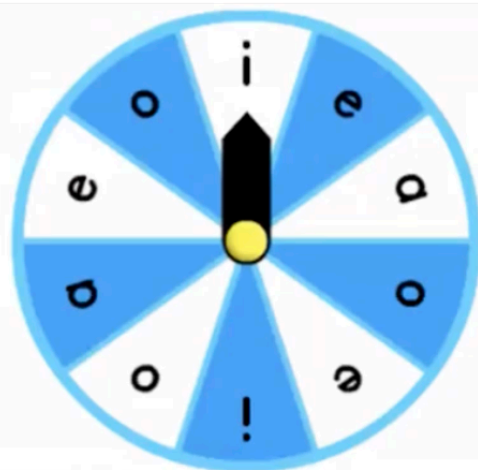
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# A Phonics Centre Activity - Spin It

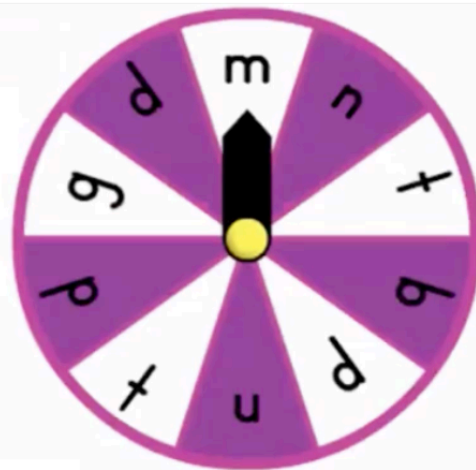
## Word Awareness



Spinner 1



Spinner 2



Spinner 3

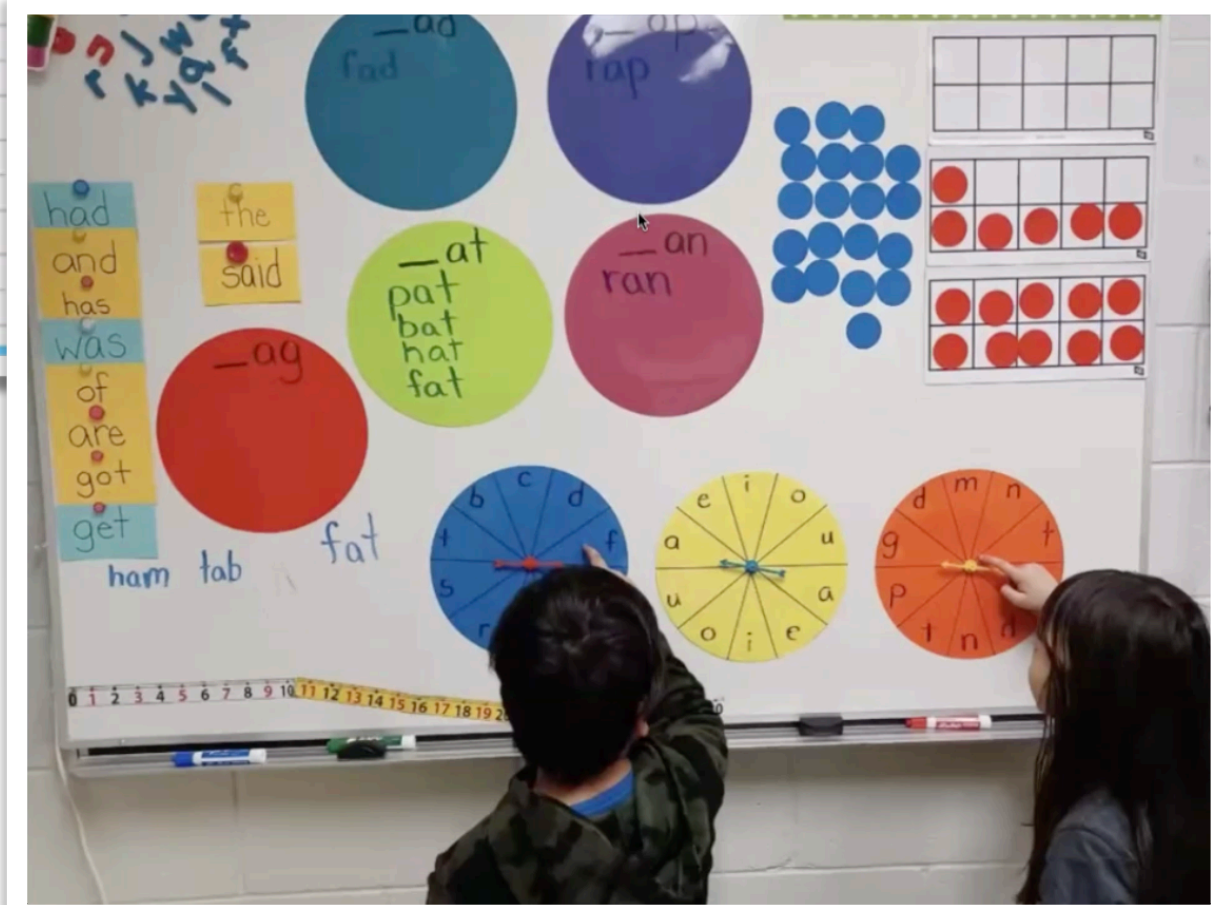
TEAM 1

Handwriting practice lines for Team 1, consisting of four sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom).

Organize list by spelling pattern

TEAM 2

Handwriting practice lines for Team 2, consisting of four sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom).



# A Phonics Centre Activity - Roll It

Word Awareness

The activity setup includes three dice: a purple die with the letter 'm', a pink die with the letter 'b', and an orange die with the letters 'st'. Below the dice are two grids for 'TEAM 1' (orange border) and 'TEAM 2' (purple border). Each grid has three columns labeled '-ear', '-air', and '-are' and three rows of empty boxes for recording words.

TEAM 1			TEAM 2		
-ear	-air	-are	-ear	-air	-are





road  
show  
grow  
boat  
blow  
coat  
row  
goat

Word Sort			
-o	-oa	-ow	oddballs

no snow boat were show  
mother throw toad goal old  
soak cold yellow don't yolk  
know toast soap father follow

Each sort should end with a question like:

What did you **notice** about these words?

or

What did you **learn** about these spelling patterns?

# Rich Instructional Conversations

High-Frequency Word	Possible Supports
have	No English words end in the letter <b>v</b> . If you hear the <b>/v/</b> sound at the end, you must add an <b>e</b> . Connect to <b>give, live, love, glove, above</b> .
to	Connect to <b>do</b> and <b>who</b> . (Confusion: go, no, so) Contrast with <b>two</b> and <b>too</b> .
one	Connect to <b>done</b> and <b>once</b> . Contrast with <b>won</b> .
could	Connect to <b>should</b> and <b>would</b> . <b>-ould</b> spelling pattern, silent "l"
was	Discuss reversals <b>was/saw</b> . Highlight <b>a</b> for <b>/u/</b> and <b>s</b> for <b>/z/</b> ( <b>is</b> and <b>has</b> ).



# More Advanced Language Comprehension

Common Prefixes and Suffixes we can explicitly teach:

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

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

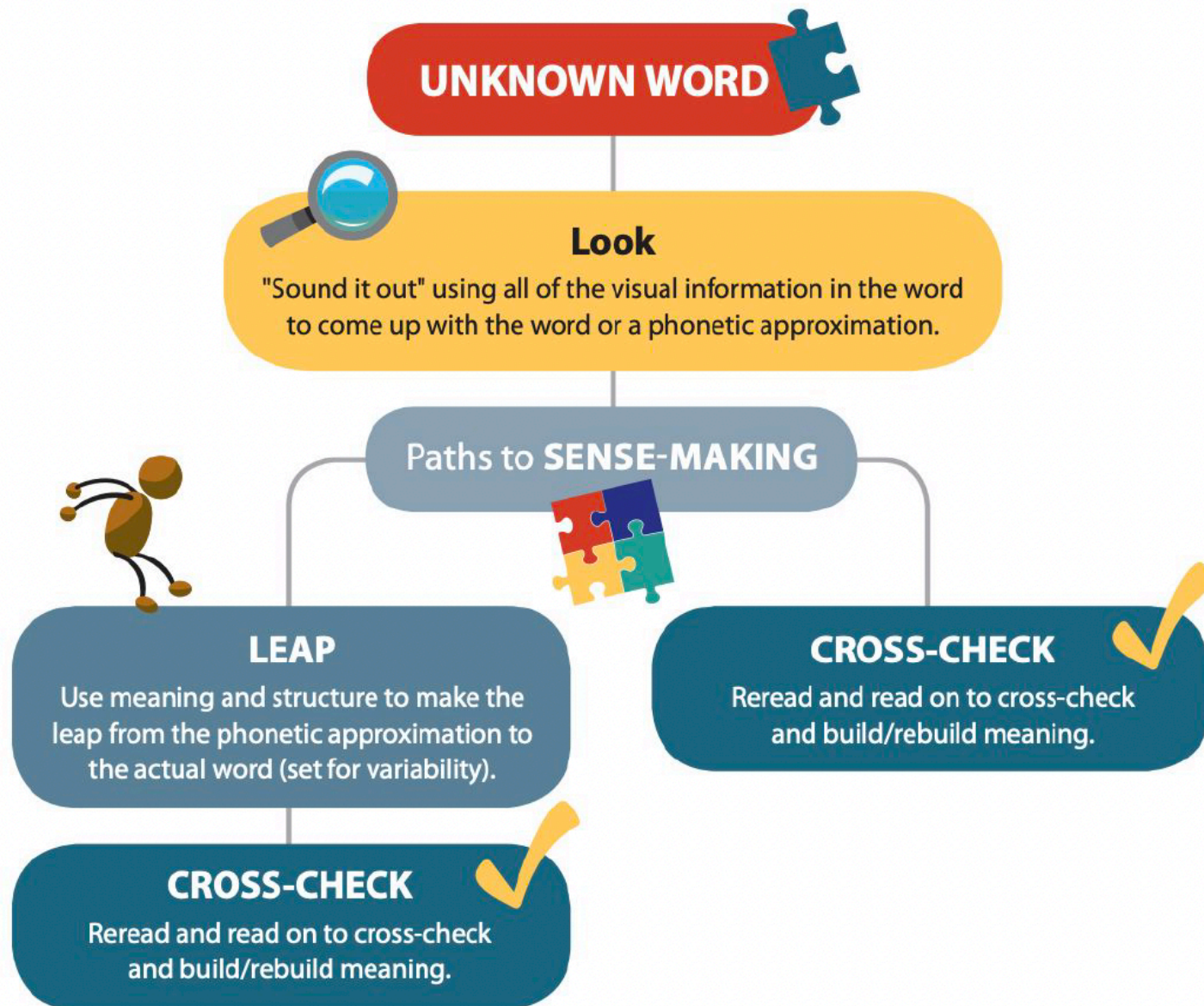
Look what knowledge students can gain from these explicit lessons!

# Paths to Problem Solving

Prioritize print as a strategy of first resort for word solving

## The Look Before You Leap Routine: Paths to Problem-Solving Using V-SM

TheSixShifts.com



Using **Visual** information in the word **first**, and **then** using **Meaning and Structure** to make sense and build/rebuild meaning

# Considerations for choosing books

Questions to ask when considering beginning texts:

The three tensions...

**Decodability**

How regular are the words in the text?

**Predictability**

Do the patterns and/or illustrations make the words easy to predict?

**Novelty**

Will students encounter new words build from familiar sound-spellings?

**Redundancy**

Are words or spelling patterns repeated to give st's practice with them?

**Orthographic Value**

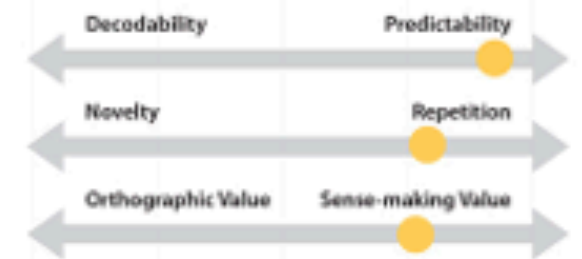
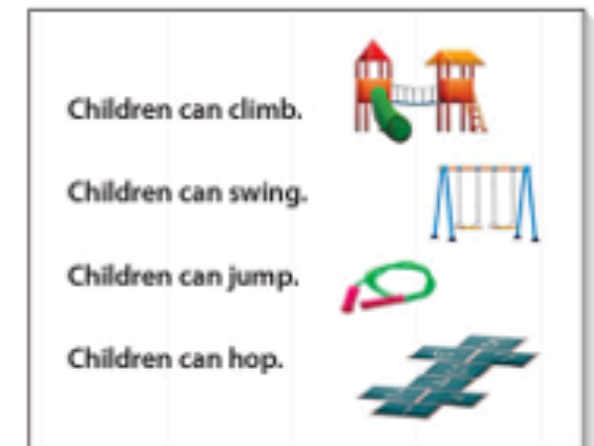
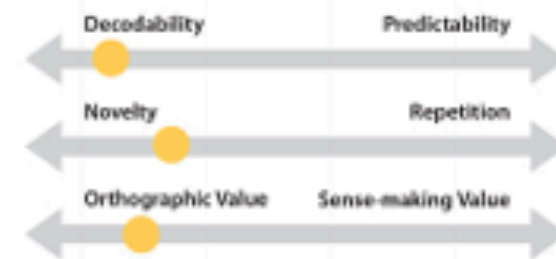
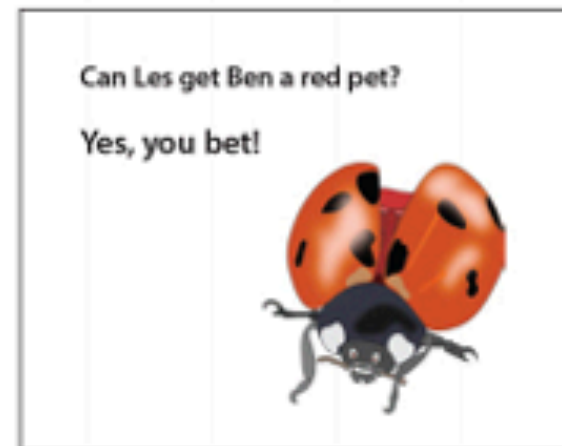
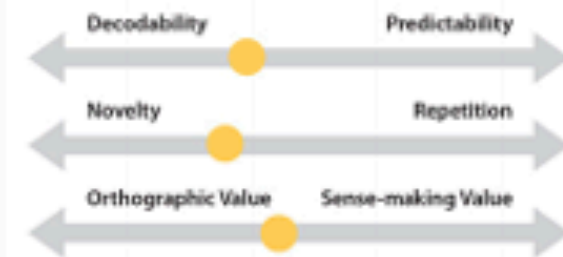
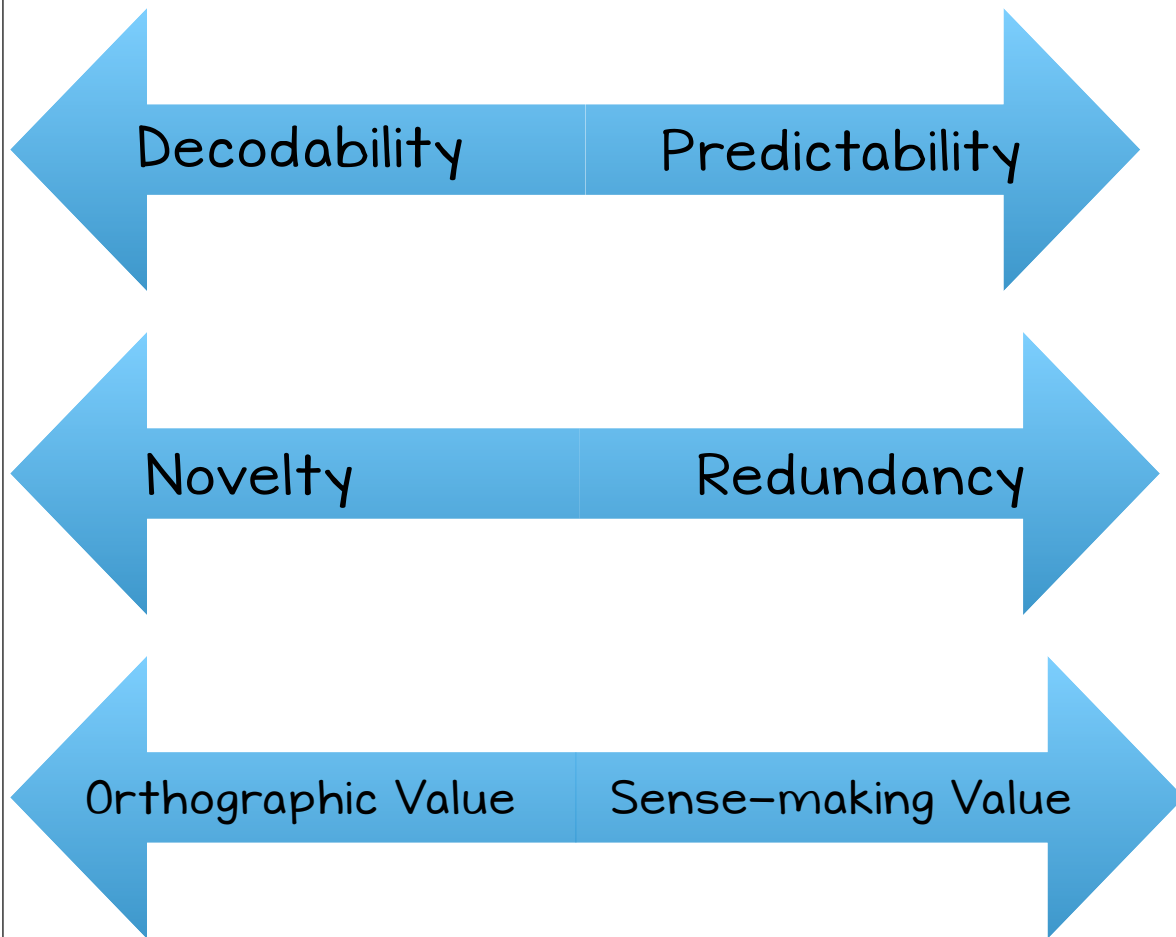
How aligned is the text with the student's current phonics knowledge?

**Sense-making Value**

Does the text make sense?  
Does the text engage the reader in thinking?

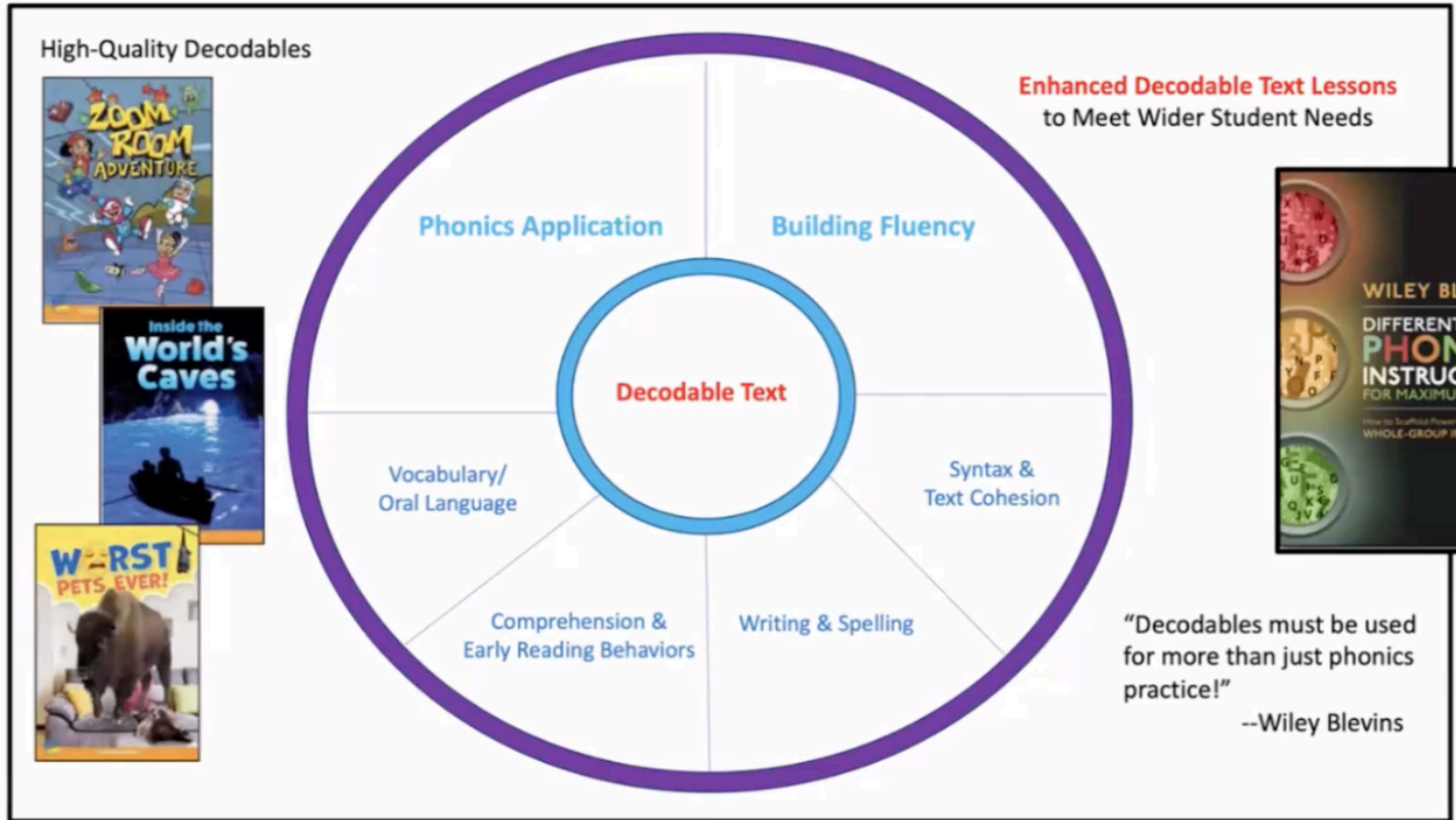


# Questions for using the 3 tensions in book selection



# Enhanced Decodable Text Lessons

Decoding AND encoding



*Differentiating Phonics Instruction for Maximum Impact, Blevins (Jan. 2024)*

# A Phonics Lesson

★Blending

★Dictation

★Word Awareness Activities

The same letter/sound focus through each lesson part..



## REVIEW IT

- ➡ Review High Frequency Words
- ➡ Name letters and sounds



## HEAR IT

- ➡ Phonemic Awareness



## TEACH IT

- ➡ Name new skill/sound



## DECODE IT

- ➡ Decode words with target sound



## SPELL IT

- ➡ Spell words with target sound



## READ IT

- ➡ Read word lists, sentences or decodable books

\*These last two steps should be approximately 50% of your lesson time. Blevins states “students progress at a much faster rate in phonics when the bulk of instructional time is spent on applying the skill to authentic reading and writing experiences” (2017).

# Revisiting characteristics of strong phonics instruction

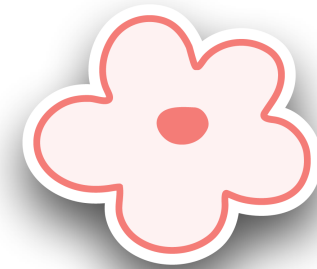
- ✓ **Readiness Skills**      phonemic awareness & alphabet recognition
- ✓ **Scope and sequence**      build from simple to complex; build on previous learning
- ✓ **Blending**      teaching students to sound out words
- ✓ **Dictation**      transfer students' growing phonics skills to writing
- ✓ **Word Awareness Activities**      word bldg/sorts are key to increase word awareness
- ✓ **Teaching High-Frequency Words**      spend more time on the most common words
- ✓ **Reading Connected Text**      accountable texts to apply their growing phonic skills

Active \* Social \* Reflective





# Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years



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# Sources

## Books & Presentations

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

Phonics From A–Z – Blevins

Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates

Units of Study – Calkins, The Reading and Writing Project

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

Wiley Blevins – ILA webinar: Adding Encoding to Phonics Lessons, Oct. 2023

## Digital Resources

[ILA Article: Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction](#)

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

[They Say You Can Do Phonemic Awareness Instruction “In the Dark” But Should You?](#)

[Carroll, Davies, & Richman – Suffixes & Prefixes](#)

[Ehri – Movement into Reading](#)





The **brain** is a natural puzzle solver and releases **endorphins** when we solve a problem. It loves to find **patterns** and figure things out, and it **IS wired to reward us** for our efforts. So, as children use the **secrets** we've taught them for **cracking bits of code** – noticing, comparing, and applying phonic patterns – their brain can **reward** them for their efforts.

The **up-front support** we provide with beginning to solve the **great puzzle** of our **written code** not only **sets children up for success** in the moment but is also proven to **increase reading motivation, reading volume, and confidence** down the road.