



Reading Program and Lessons Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate reading program lessons and your instruction for each of the reading components. The checklist is not comprehensive, but will help you look for evidence of best practice in your reading lessons. And when you are not sure if the practice is there, the checklist includes ideas for how to make your lessons stronger, more efficient, and productive for all of your students.

As you read through the checklist, watch for links to helpful tools to support your planning.

Phoneme Awareness – Grades K-1 and 2. These tasks are auditory tasks, done without letters.

Does your program:

___ Teach awareness of phonemes through articulation features. Draw attention to what the mouth is doing when phonemes are spoken.

___ Provide opportunities to isolate phonemes in spoken words: first sound, last sound, middle sounds.

___ Engage students in segmenting the phonemes in spoken words.

___ Engage students in blending phonemes together to say words. Teacher says the phonemes in a word, and students blend them together to say the “secret” word.

___ Include grades 3-5: Engage students in higher levels manipulation tasks: Deletion, substitution, addition tasks. This is especially important for older struggling readers. They can benefit from these higher-level phoneme awareness tasks.

Decoding – Grades K-2 and 3 Does your program:

___ Provide a [phonics skills sequence](#)? A list of grapheme-phoneme relationships that lays out an order by which phonics/decoding skills are taught, one by one in a cumulative way?

___ Present systematic procedures for teaching the phonic elements? For example is there a daily/weekly process to follow such as the one in this example:

1. Students listen for and say the target phoneme in words.
2. Show students the grapheme and tell them the sound it makes. Students say the sound.
3. Demonstrate decoding words with the new phonic element.
4. Students decode words with you.
5. Students decode words independently with your correction and feedback as needed. They write the target words from dictation.
6. Students read texts that provide a lot of practice reading the target words in meaningful sentences.



- ☐ Provide decodable text to provide support for your phonics lessons?
- ☐ Include some attention to word meaning as you and your students decode words?
- ☐ Apply a speech to print process (phoneme-grapheme mapping) where students segment phonemes and then spell each phoneme? This process helps students realize that a phoneme is sometimes spelled with more than one letter. For example: /sh/ is spelled SH, /ae/ is spelled EIGH in neighbor and eight and sleigh. The graphemes are written for each phoneme.

Decoding – Grades 3-5 and 6 Does your program:

- ☐ Teach students about syllables? Syllable types? How to use [syllable division](#) to read new words?
- ☐ Provide a list of prefixes and suffixes that you teach with multiple word items for each?
- ☐ Provide a list of common Latin and Greek roots from which students can build words and discuss meaning?
- ☐ Include vocabulary lessons that include the pronunciations and spellings of words? The Morphology and maybe the etymology of words? Additional word forms?
- ☐ Include writing and use in conversation, the vocabulary words students are learning?

Fluency Does your program:

- ☐ Include activities that provide multiple practice opportunities to read words, phonics words and vocabulary words as they study words' meanings?
- ☐ Highlight multiple opportunities to read every day: independent (with independent leveled text), monitored reading with you, and repeated readings with a comprehension focus.
- ☐ Allow for timed drills and timed repeated readings for students whose assessment profiles indicate the need for this extra practice? (see this [decision tree](#) to guide your assessment decisions)

Vocabulary Do your program lessons:

- ☐ Introduce vocabulary before reading, steps to pre-teach, introduce, concepts and vocabulary terms critical to meaning that students may not be familiar with?
- ☐ Direct you to ask students to SAY the vocabulary terms aloud? To write the words?
- ☐ Ask students to group and sort words according to meaning? To explain their thinking?
- ☐ Help you provide examples of how vocabulary terms can be used in a variety of contexts? For example: policy can refer to classroom rules, government regulation, family policies, etc.

___ Provide examples of synonyms and antonyms for terms used to describe action and emotion in fiction?

___ Direct students to USE the words to discuss and write about what they are learning and in contexts other than the content they are reading?

Comprehension Does your program:

___ Set a purpose for reading, communicate this to the students, and provide lessons that direct students' thinking to this purpose?

___ Identify complicated sentence structure that may be difficult for students to understand? And then provide support to help them comprehend it?

___ Include questions that lead students to infer when it's important to make inferences?

___ Teach the [expository text structure types](#) when reading non-fiction?

___ Ask questions that go beyond comprehension strategies and lead students to put into words the big picture of what they are reading?

___ Include teacher directed, close reading exercises with appropriate complex text?

___ Include writing exercises that direct students to write about what they are reading by responding to open ended prompts? A couple of examples of these prompts are: What additional information did the author share with us about _____? How is this information similar to what we read yesterday? How is it the same?

