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Recommendation

Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

For students to be able to read with greater fluency and comprehension, they must first develop their understanding of morphology, the knowledge of meaningful word parts in the language. To develop this understanding, students must learn the following: letter patterns and word parts, the relation of sounds to letters, and high-frequency word recognition. The following recommendation focuses on actions teachers can take to support students in developing their understanding of morphology to increase fluency and comprehension.

How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach students to blend letter-sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.

Instructional strategies from the examples

- Have students practice chunking letter-sounds.
- Have student practice sounding out words.
- Use manipulatives to demonstrate chunking and sounding out.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
TEACHER: INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

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Blending is a systematic process for reading words. Students read from left to right, successively adding more letters to produce the sound of the word. Chunking and sounding out are two approaches to use when teaching students to blend.

- **Chunking** – When students chunk, they combine the first two letter-sounds, then practice that combination before adding the next letter-sound. This process of adding a sound and then practicing is repeated until all the sounds are added and the whole word is pronounced.
    - Have students identify the first and second sounds and put these two sounds together. Then, encourage students to add the next sound to the chunk of the first and second sounds until they have pronounced the word in its entirety. Have students ask themselves if the word they produced is familiar as a way to check their pronunciation.

- **Sounding out** – When students sound out words, they say all the letter-sounds from left to right, connecting them as much as possible as they go.
    - Have students pronounce each letter-sound individually. Then ask students to put the letter-sounds together. Finally, ask students what the word is after combining all letter-sounds. Have students ask themselves if the word they produced is familiar as a way to check their pronunciation.

Teachers can also use manipulatives such as a pocket chart with letter tiles, magnetic letters, or an Elkonin sound box* to demonstrate chunking and sounding out.

2. Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns.

Instructional strategies from the example

- Demonstrate how letters appear in multiple words.
- Use word cards to demonstrate spelling patterns.
- Use spelling patterns to practice spelling words.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA:
TEACHER: INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

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* Elkonin sound boxes can be created by providing students with paper squares and instructing students to write in spelling patterns. Each sound gets its own box. Then students are able to create words using the spelling patterns identified by the teacher.

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Demonstrate to students how letters, when combined, often appear in multiple words. To begin, use common vowel and syllable patterns like *th*, *oo*, or *ee*. To continue, teachers can use syllable-construction patterns like *gen-tle* and *Tues-day*.

Activities to introduce and practice sound-spelling patterns

1. Use word cards. Word cards should include words that have the identified pattern and those that do not. Students can sort the word cards into these two groups: word cards that have the identified pattern and word cards that do not.

2. Provide students with a spelling pattern. Prompt students to practice writing words that include the spelling pattern.

3. Provide students with a spelling pattern. Have students use Elkonin sound boxes to build words with the provided spelling pattern.

3. Teach students to recognize common word parts.

Instructional strategies from the examples

- Develop a common set of academic vocabulary.
- Use activities that ask students to use or talk about academic vocabulary.
- Review new words regularly and expose students to the words in new contexts.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
TEACHER: INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

After students have learned some common spelling patterns, show them how to break words down into smaller, meaningful parts. For example, teaching students suffixes, contractions, prefixes, and root words will help students have a strong foundational understanding of how to build and create new words. Activities to support students in learning to manipulate word parts would be most helpful in supporting student understanding of spelling.

Teachers can further students' understanding by helping students decode more complex words by, for example, identifying words parts and vowels and repeating words in context. Encourage students to adjust vowel sounds, as necessary, when reading words until they pronounce a recognizable word.

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Word part worksheet

> *Using previously taught suffixes, prefixes, and roots, provide students with a worksheet that students would be able to add prefixes and suffixes to create words.*
>
> | small | er | | happ | y |
> | small | est | un | happ | y |

4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.

Instructional strategies from the examples

- Encourage students to identify spelling patterns in word lists and texts.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
TEACHER: INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

Word lists, decodable sentences, and short decodable texts can provide opportunities for students to practice recently learned spelling patterns. Teachers should encourage students to identify spelling patterns in word lists and texts.

Word List

how	cow	below
slowly	show	crow
know	row	

Connected text passage

The crow flew across the sky and saw below a cow in a field. The crow swooped down to look closer and landed behind a row of corn. The cow did not know the crow had landed close by. The crow moved closer and closer to see the cow.

The cow slowly turned toward the row of corn, and said "Who is watching me from behind the row of corn? Show yourself!" The crow came out from behind the corn. "How did you get here?" asked the cow to the crow. "Aren't you supposed to live up in the sky?" The crow replied, "I saw you from the sky and wanted to take a closer look."

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5. Teach irregular and regular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.

Instructional strategies from the examples

- Use numerous approaches to help students learn both irregular and regular high-frequency words, such as flashcards or word walls.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
TEACHER: INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

Teaching students high-frequency word recognition can help speed up the reading process so students can focus on the meaning of the text. For example, high-frequency words can include *the*, *there*, *was*, *in*, *and*, and *with*. However, some high-frequency words can be irregular, with exceptions to the typical sound-spelling patterns. These irregular words are hard for students to decode and should be taught holistically. When teaching high-frequency words, teachers can use numerous approaches to help students learn both irregular and regular high-frequency words, like using flashcards, having students practice writing words, or creating a high-frequency word wall for students in the classroom.

6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

Instructional strategies from the examples

- Review books to determine the presence of non-decodable words.
- Teach these words prior to introducing the book.
- Limit the number of non-decodable words that are introduced at any one time.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
TEACHER: INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

Non-decodable words have irregular sound-spelling patterns (e.g., pigeon and villain). Books may include complex, non-decodable words that are essential to understanding the story. Prior to introducing a new book, review it and determine if it includes any non-decodable words. If it does, determine which non-decodable words may be

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essential to students' understanding, and teach them the non-decodable words prior to introducing the new book. For example, a book about dinosaurs may include words such as tyrannosaurus rex or brachiosaurus. Learning these words in advance will help students better understand the context of the book. Teachers should limit the number of non-decodable words that are introduced at one time to reduce demands on students' memory.

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Potential roadblocks and how to address them

Roadblock	Suggested Approach
Students sometimes use invented spellings for words.	When students are working independently, encourage them to try spelling words on their own. Doing so provides an opportunity for them to practice what they have learned about letter-sound relations. Encourage students to use their knowledge of sound-spelling patterns as they write. Students should review their work to identify words that do not look right and make additional attempts at spelling those words. If students are consistently misspelling high-frequency words, particularly words with irregular spellings, post the words on the wall or add them to a student's writing journal to support student learning.
Students may struggle with correct pronunciation for a word, even when they are able to identify letter-sounds.	Encourage students to blend sounds smoothly, connecting all the sounds without stopping. Sometimes students encounter difficulty with this when they emphasize the schwa sound (e.g., they pronounce b as buh). This interferes with the smooth blending of sounds. Work with students to minimize the schwa sound. When teaching students to blend and sound out, encourage students to be flexible with their vowel pronunciation; this may help students improve their ability to pronounce words they can recognize.

Reference: Foorman, B., Beyler, N., Borradaile, K., Coyne, M., Denton, C. A., Dimino, J., . . . Wissel, S. (2016). *Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2016-4008). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21

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