

## Decodable Texts: Enhancing Their Impact

Tuesday, January 12, 2021 from 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm EST

Presented by **Wiley Blevins**, Bestselling Author and Educator

Hosted by Tara Welty, Vice President and Editor-in-Chief, Scholastic Teacher Resources

Wiley Blevins will explain why quality decodable texts are an essential early learning tool and how you can distinguish the good from the bad. He'll offer strategies for practical lessons and routines for using decodable texts to build children's phonics and fluency skills, as well as tips on selecting strong decodable texts and what to do if you don't have any. Viewers will leave with ideas for lessons, knowledge about how to use decodable texts to build reading, writing, vocabulary, and comprehension skills, and much more.

This webinar is a must-attend for teachers of Kindergarten – Grade 2.

The graphic is a promotional poster for a webinar. At the top, the Scholastic logo is in a white box. Below it, the title 'Strategies for Enhancing Phonics Instruction' is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath the title, it says 'with Wiley Blevins, Educator & Author'. In the center, there is a book cover for 'CHOOSING AND USING DECODABLE TEXTS' by Wiley Blevins, which features a child reading. To the right of the book cover are two circular portraits: one of Wiley Blevins and one of Tara Welty. A yellow speech bubble on the left says 'You could win a FREE copy!'. At the bottom, a yellow banner contains the text 'FREE zoom WEBINAR' in bold black letters, followed by 'Tuesday, January 12 @ 4pm EST' in white text.

**SCHOLASTIC**

# Strategies for Enhancing Phonics Instruction

with Wiley Blevins, Educator & Author

You could win a FREE copy!

WILEY BLEVINS  
LEVEL: K-2  
**CHOOSING AND USING DECODABLE TEXTS**  
Practical Tips and Strategies for Enhancing Phonics Instruction

nap plate rug home hot fish ship

Hosted by Tara Welty  
VP, Editor-in-Chief

**FREE zoom WEBINAR** Tuesday, January 12 @ 4pm EST

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FREE **zoom**  
WEBINAR

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# WELCOME!

**Wiley Blevins**

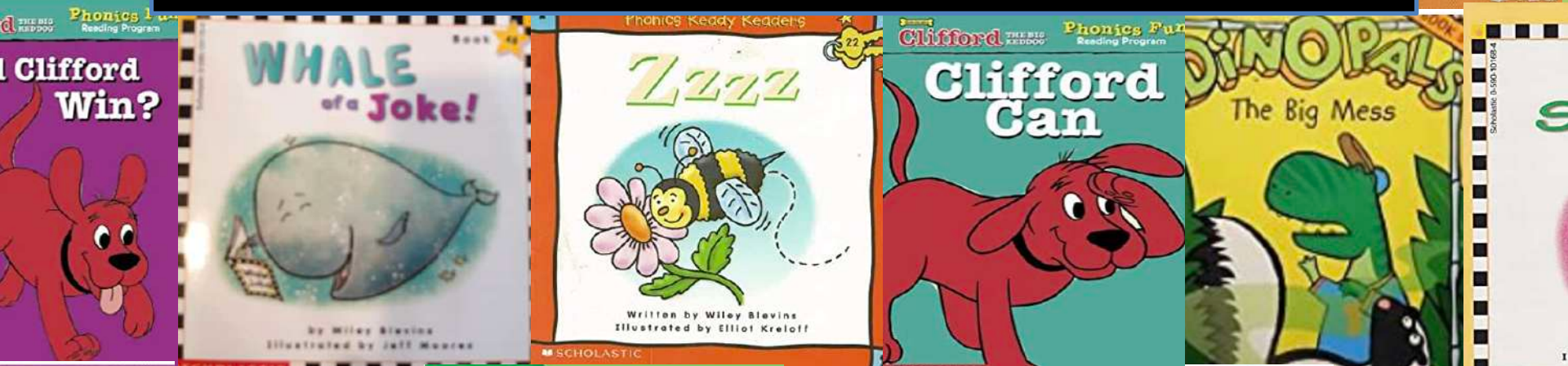




**Decodable Texts:  
Enhancing Their Impact**



# My History with Decodable Texts



# Renewed Interest in This Instructional Tool

- **What** Are Decodable Texts?
- **Why** Are They an Important Early Learning Tool?
- **How** Can We Enhance Their Use in Our Phonics Instruction?



# Science of Reading



- We have a large body of knowledge on how children learn to read—from educational researchers, linguists, cognitive psychologists (brain researchers), and so on.
- This knowledge is largely **unknown** by classroom teachers.
- This knowledge is largely **untaught** in colleges of education (teacher prep courses).
- The knowledge is **ignored** in many reading programs.

# Models of Reading

## The Simple View of Reading

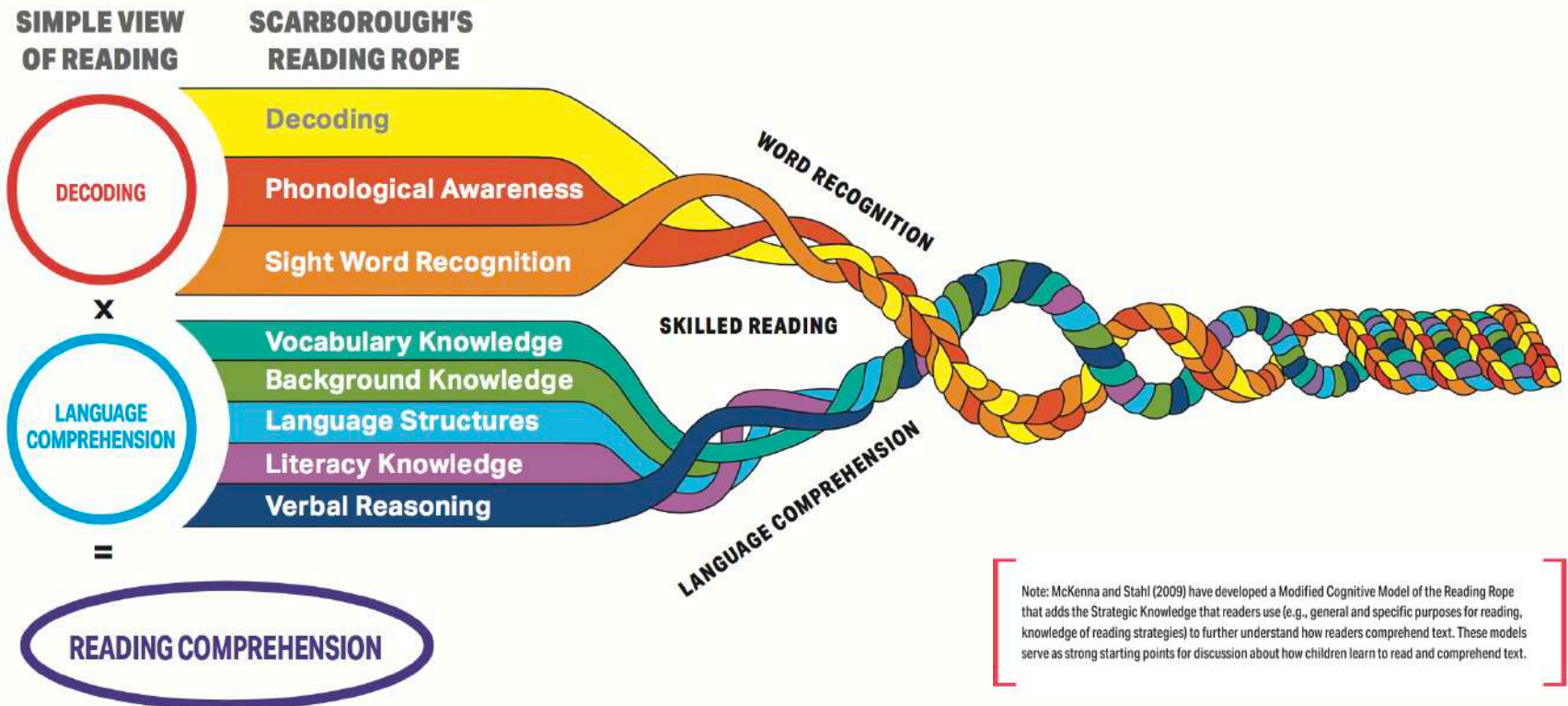


(Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990)



# Models of Reading

## Theoretical Models That Underpin the Science of Reading





# Reasons Why Your Phonics Instruction Sometimes Fails

- 1. Inadequate or non-existent review and repetition cycle**
- 2. Lack of application to real reading and writing experiences**
- 3. Inappropriate reading materials to practice skills**
- 4. Ineffective use of the gradual release model**
- 5. Too much time lost during transitions**
- 6. Limited teacher knowledge of researched-based phonics routines and linguistics**
- 7. Inappropriate pacing of lessons**
- 8. No comprehensive or cumulative mastery assessment tools**
- 9. Transitioning to multisyllabic words too late**
- 10. Overdoing it (especially isolated skill work)**

# Daily Application to Reading and Writing

**It's in the application  
where the learning STICKS!**



# Which Schedule?

## Schedule A

10 minutes: Action Rhyme Review

10 minutes: Phonemic Awareness (rhyme: Reutzel, 2015)

5 minutes: Introduce Letter-Sound and Model Blending

**5 minutes: Read Story**

## Schedule B

5 minutes: Review warm-up (cumulative)

5 minutes: Phonemic Awareness (oral segmentation)

5 minutes: Introduce Letter-Sound and Model Blending

**10 minutes: Read Story**

**5 minutes: Writing Follow-Up**



# The Impact of Schedule

## Schedule A

**5** minutes a day

**25** minutes a week

**900** minutes a school year (**15 hours**)

## Schedule B

**15** minutes a day

**75** minutes a week

**2,700** minutes a school year (**45 hours**)



# Why Decodable (Accountable) Texts?

I

see

▲ = a

■ = t

◎ = c



I see ▲ ◎ ▲ ■.

# Why Decodable Texts?

I

see

▲ = a

■ = t

◎ = c

v ▲ D

◎ ▲ \*

see

▲

○

▲

■

■

◓

■.

# What Are Decodable Readers?

## Phonics Readers

- most of the words can be sounded out based on the phonics skills taught
- each book usually focuses on one target phonics skill
- the books are organized using a specific scope and sequence
- designed to help students achieve phonics mastery



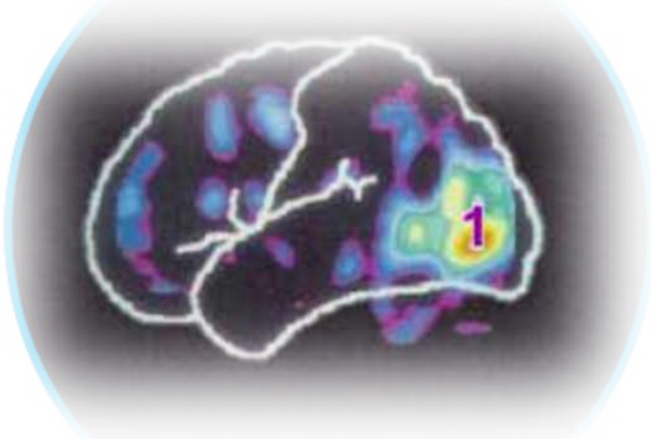


# Beginning Texts: The Battleground

## New Findings

### Recent Brain Research (Stanford)

- Beginning readers **who focus on letter-sound relationships**, or phonics, instead of trying to learn whole words, **increase activity in the area of their brains best wired for reading.**
- That is, words learned using letter-sounds activate the left side of the brain. This is where the visual and language regions of the brain reside. (characteristic of skilled readers)
- Words learned using a **whole-word method** activate the right side of the brain. (**characteristic of children and adults who struggle with reading**)



# Patterned, Leveled Texts: Whole Word



Puppies get **into** lots of silly spots.  
2 puppies are in the boots.



2



Puppies get **into** lots of silly spots.  
3 puppies are in the flowers.

3

# What Does This Mean?

Type of Text	Text Sample	How Students Access Words
Patterned Text	<p>LEVEL C</p> <p>Puppies get into lots of silly spots. 2 puppies are in the boots.</p>  <p>Puppies get into lots of silly spots. 2 puppies are in the flowers.</p> 	<p>RED = decodable words</p> <p>BLUE = sight words previously learned</p> <p>GREEN = initial letter and picture clues, then guessing</p> <p>So, students learn the pattern and rely primarily on memorizing sight words to read this text.</p>

WHOLE WORD

INCIDENTAL  
PHONICS with  
LIMITED  
APPLICATION

# Decodable (Phonics) Readers



It has no tail.

It is a frog!


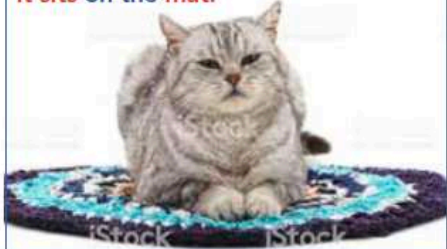


A frog can jump up on a rock.

It can get a fat bug. *Snap!*



# What Does This Mean?

Type of Text	Text Sample	How Students Access Words
Decodable Text	<p>Can Sam sit? Sam can sit in the chair.</p>  <p>Can the cat sit? The cat can sit. It sits on the mat.</p> 	<p>RED = decodable words</p> <p>BLUE = sight words previously learned</p> <p>GREEN = initial letter and picture clues, then guessing</p> <p>So, students sound out the majority of the words. The other words are learned sight words, except chair. This word can be determined from the picture clue and makes the story more natural-sounding and interesting.</p>

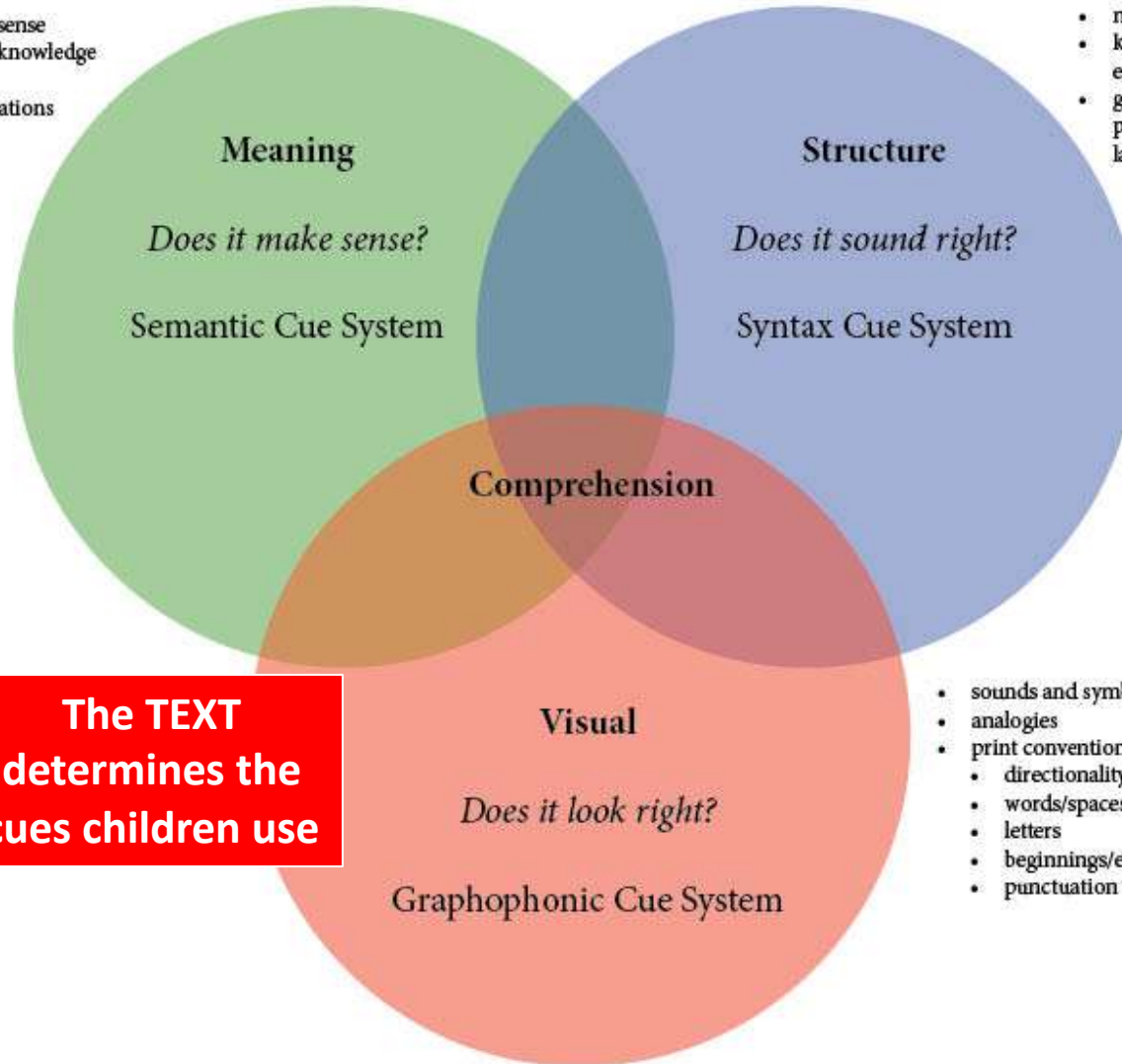
PHONICS BASED

DAILY APPLICATION

DEVELOPS STRONG  
READING  
BEHAVIORS

# 3 Cueing Systems

- story sense
- prior knowledge
- text
- illustrations



- natural language
- knowledge of english
- grammatical patters and language structure

**The TEXT determines the cues children use**

- sounds and symbols
- analogies
- print conventions:
  - directionality
  - words/spaces
  - letters
  - beginnings/endings
  - punctuation

**If you can't sound out most of the words, what are you doing?  
What habits are we developing in our beginning readers?**

# Decodable Text Studies

## Juel and Roper-Schneider (1985) (effects of text vs. instruction)

Brain Research Helping Us  
Confirm and Understand Why

---

*The selection of text used very early in first grade may, at least in part, determine the strategies and cues children learn to use, and persist in using, in subsequent word identification. . . . In particular, emphasis on a phonics method seems to make little sense if children are given initial texts to read where the words do not follow regular letter-sound correspondence generalizations. . . . [T]he types of words which appear in beginning reading texts may well exert a more powerful influence in shaping children's word identification strategies than the method of reading instruction.*

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# The Current Conversation

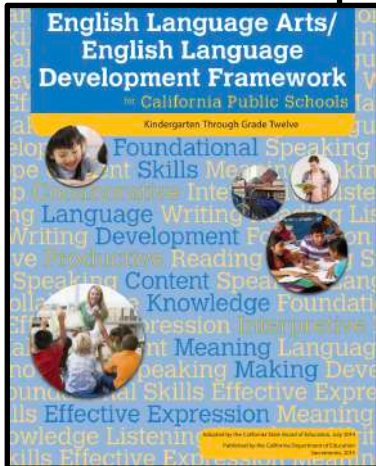


**NOT a productive place to be.**

**WHAT WE NEED . . . a more nuanced conversation**



# Decodable Texts: A Definition (CA)



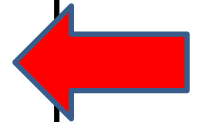
Children should have ample opportunities to practice decoding and encoding words that reflect the letter-sound and spelling-sound correspondences they are learning. They practice reading words and building words with tiles or other manipulatives. They read the words in *decodable texts*. Decodable texts are books and other reading materials that consist of words learned by sight (such as irregularly spelled high-frequency words) and, importantly and most prominently, words that consist of regular letter-sound and spelling-sound correspondences, especially those the children have already learned.

*The value of decodable texts is time-limited but significant for beginning readers. These materials provide children the opportunity to apply and practice what they are learning about the alphabetic code, which enhances their reading acquisition.*

Specifically, decodable texts are reading materials designed to prompt beginning readers to apply their increasing knowledge of phonics and practice *full alphabetic decoding* (that is, use of all letter-sound and spelling-sound correspondences in a word [Ehri 2005]) to identify words. In decodable texts, 75–80 percent of words consist solely of previously taught

letter-sound and spelling-sound correspondences and the remaining 20–25 percent of the words are previously taught high-frequency irregularly spelled words and story or content words.

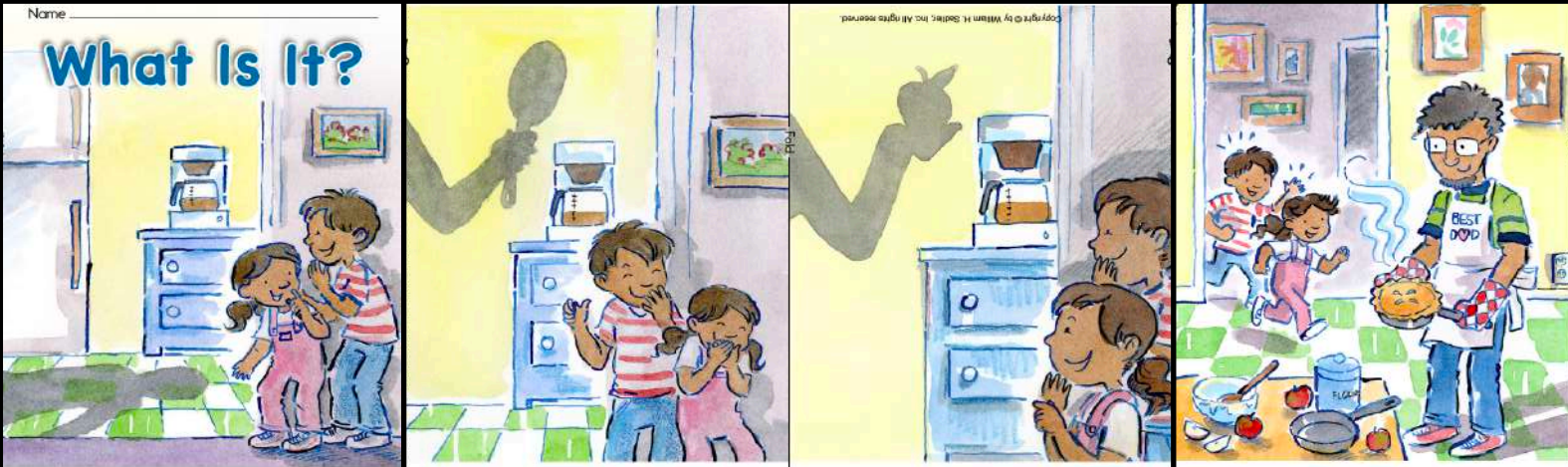
The value of decodable texts is time-limited but significant for beginning readers. These materials provide children the opportunity to apply and practice what they are learning about the alphabetic code, which enhances their reading acquisition (Cheatham and Allor 2012). Adams (2009) notes that children's *use* of acquired skills (not simply their learning of the skills) to decode new words is crucial and that decodable text prompts that use. The amount of time devoted to decodable text depends on how quickly children grasp the code and develop automaticity. Some children need considerable practice with decodable text. Others need less practice with decodable text. Instruction, therefore, is differentiated. Children are provided instruction and texts that reflect and extend their skills. Formative assessment and interim assessments inform these decisions.



# Let's Talk About Cues

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**What Is It?**



1  
What is it?  
It is a man.

2  
What is it?  
It is a pan.

3  
What is it?  
It is an apple.

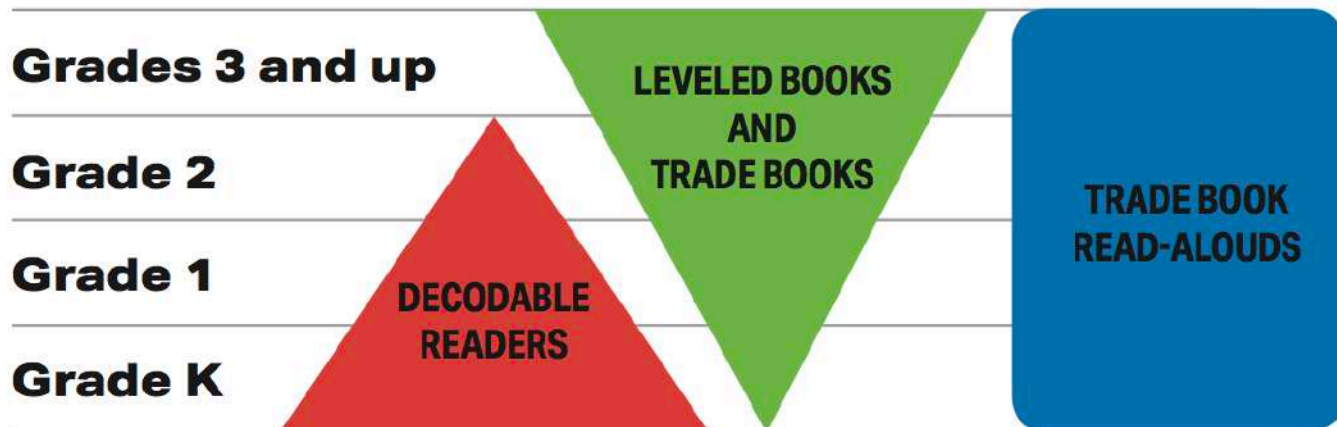
4  
What is it?  
It is an apple pie.

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Short a, Short i, Consonants

# Classrooms need a range of texts for different instructional purposes.

Different texts receive different degrees of emphasis at each grade level.  
But ALL are needed for a comprehensive literacy solution.



English Learners

# Add Decodable Texts to Small Group Reading to Accelerate Mastery

Guided Reading Level	Recommended Phonics Skill	Application	Decodable Readers
<b>A</b>	Alphabet (basic letter sounds and introducing the alphabet principle)	Children read patterned text to learn concepts of print and some basic high-utility sight words such as I, can, see.	<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> The ABC Train
<b>B</b>	Alphabet (basic letter sounds, highlighting awareness of short vowel sounds and securing knowledge of all consonant sounds)	Children read patterned text, but the phonics instruction includes the reading of simple 2- and 3-letter short vowel words.	<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> A to Z Animals On the Farm
<b>C</b>	Alphabet (basic letter sounds and introducing the concept of blending sounds to read word using one or more short vowels)	Children read patterned text with a few short-vowel VC and CVC words.	<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> I Can Do It I Am Max
<b>D</b>	Short vowels a, i (full blending is expected from here on)	Children begin reading texts that contain larger numbers of decodable words. Instruction can also include inflectional endings, consonant blends, and plurals.	<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> I Am Big • Who Am I? • S Sam Likes the Town • We See • We Go, Go, Go! • W Sam • We Like to Plant • Pumpkin • Pat and Pam • Cat • It Is Hot! • Bob Can  <b>GRADE 1</b>

Guided Reading Level	Recommended Phonics Skill	Application	Decodable Readers
<b>E</b>	Short vowels o, u, e	Instruction can also include consonant digraphs.	<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> What Is It? • Rob at School • Red Hens • Meg Likes Bugs • Where Is Dan? • We Have Fun • Lin Can See • Jim and Jan Have Fun • Look at the Kids • Mom and the Cubs • Val and Vic • Mr. Max's Job  <b>GRADE 1</b> Crops for Us • A Frog Can Jump • When Red Hen Fell Red at the Vet • Big Bus Gets Stuck • Bud, Gus, and Dot • Let's Sled! • Glenn the Robot • Mr. Drake's Plan • Make It Safe • Shop for Socks • Kids Can Fix It • Grant's Coat • Let's Clean It Up! • I Wish, I Wish • Trish's Birthday • Chad and Patch • A Picnic Lunch • Splat and Sprat • Splash on the Pond
<b>F</b>	Final e (use minimal contrasts to help students grasp the new concept: hat/hate)	Reinforce consonant blends and consonant digraphs.	<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> At Work • Mr. and Mrs. Mole • Ned Makes a Home It Can Go Up!  <b>GRADE 1</b> At the Lake • Blake and Shane Play Around the Globe • All Kinds of Holes • Mole City • We Live in Space • Five Kittens • Fox Jumps • A Hat for Pete • Zeke's Garden
<b>G</b>	Long vowels a, e (multiple spelling from here on)	Contrast short and long vowel sounds.	<b>GRADE 1</b> Painting in May • Gail and Gram • Grandpa's Party Bees, Bees, Bees! • Lee, Dee, and Zee • Beach Fun
<b>H</b>	Long vowels o, i, u	Instruction can also focus on introducing simple multisyllabic words.	<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> It Is Time to Tug  <b>GRADE 1</b> How We Go • Toad's Big Boat • Coaches Help Us • Window Washers • Way Up High • Bright Lights •
	r-Controlled vowels er, ir, ur, ar, or, ore  Diphthongs oi, oy, ou, ow  Variant vowels oo, au, aw	Instruction can also focus on introducing simple multisyllabic words.	<b>GRADE 1</b> Mark and the Stars • Sparkling Stars • Search for Food • The Sun Is Important • The North Wind Blows • Soar to the Moon • Red Bird Flies • Thunderstorms • Our Planets • Stars in the Sky • Our Town • All Around Town • Roy and Joy • Earthworm's Soil • One Cool Day • Brooms Sweep • All About Storms • Food Grows • What Does Paul See? • Crows Caw • The Hermit Crab • In the Woods • Lights at Night • The Sounds of the City



- Focus skills to reinforce during reading
- Affects follow-up activities
- Use to evaluate student writing
- Assess

# Create Accountable Sentences

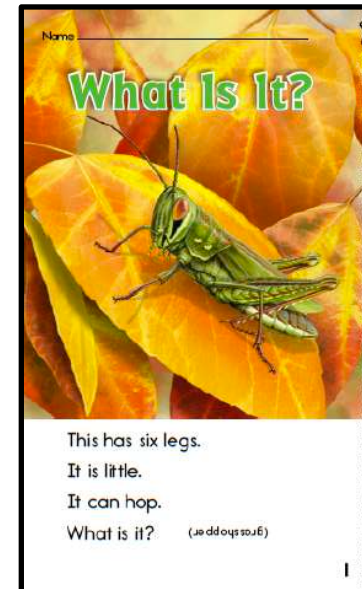


- Use words with phonics skills— new and review.
- Use high-frequency words.
- Base sentences on readings from the week.

# Decodable Text: A Criteria

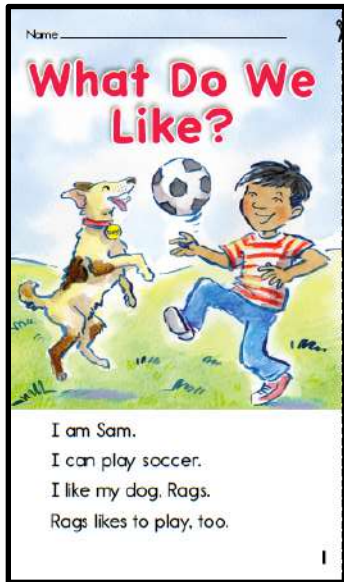
Turn These Into POWERFUL, IMPACTFUL Learning Tools

Becoming a Nation of Readers  
1985



**Instructive**  
**Comprehensible**  
**Engaging**

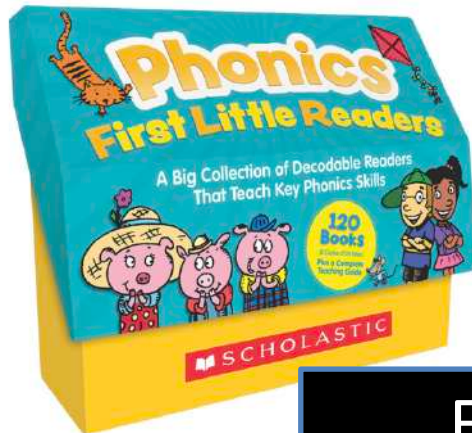
# Choose Accountable Texts Worth Reading



Sadlier



Scholastic

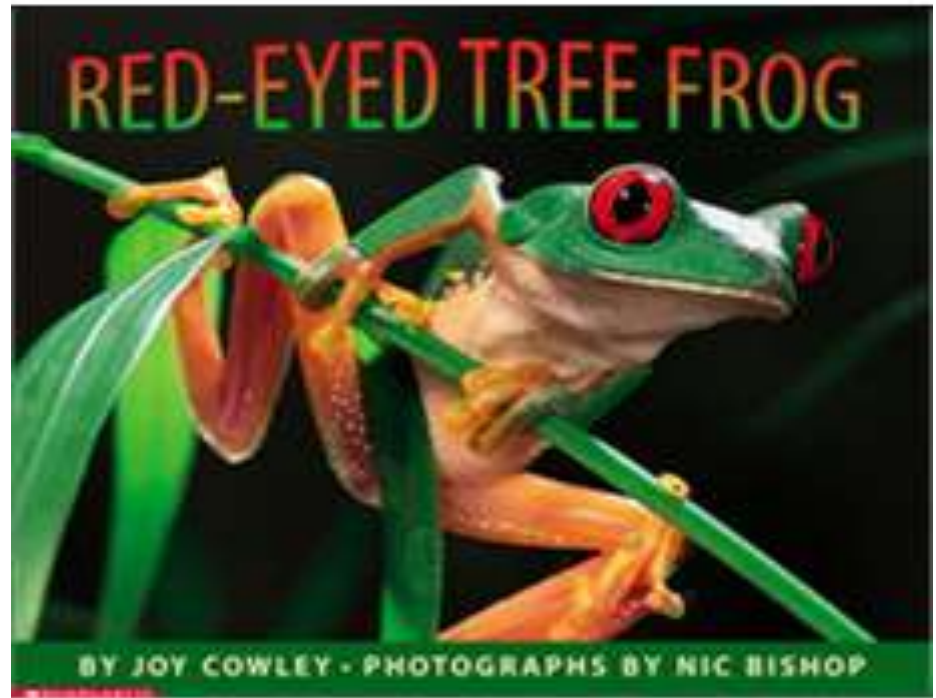


Benchmark Education



Fiction and Informational

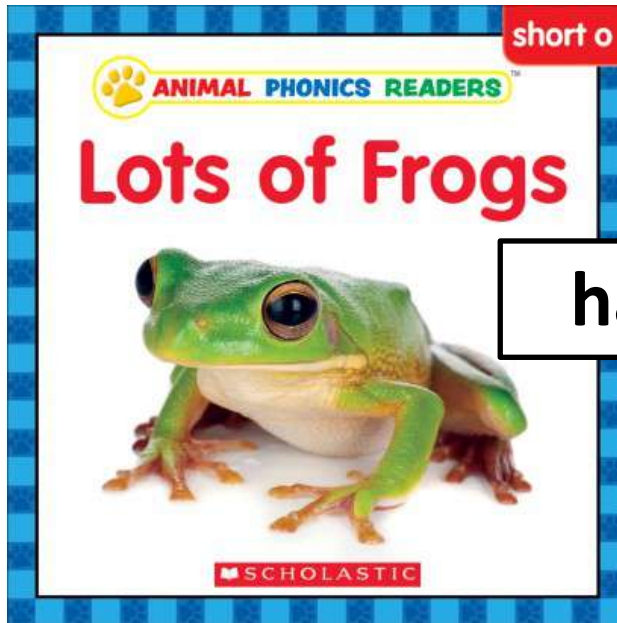
# Build Vocabulary



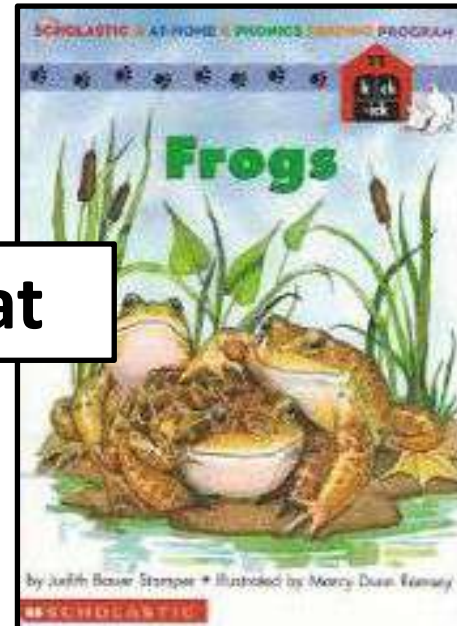
springBoard



# Build and Reinforce Vocabulary



habitat



Preteach 1 word "about" the story and reinforce during and after the reading.

# Focus on Decoding and Comprehension



**Check Comprehension** Ask questions about the story. Allow children to discuss answers with a partner before you call on a volunteer to answer. Prompt children to answer in complete sentences and find details in the text or illustrations to support their answers.

- *Where did the girl go on a trip? Point to the country's name in the story.*
- *What did the girl do in Spain? Find the sentences that tell this.*
- *What problems did the girl have on her trip? Circle them.*
- *Where might the girl go on her next trip? Why do you think this?*
- *What kind of big trip would you like to go on?*

1. Focus on word with new phonics skill.
2. Prompt students to find detail and support with text evidence.
3. Ask higher-level question.
4. Make Inference.
5. Connect to students' lives.

Repeated Reading for Fluency

# Add Writing to Follow-Up Work

1. Write story retelling or extension.
2. Use characters in a new setting.
3. Write what you learned.

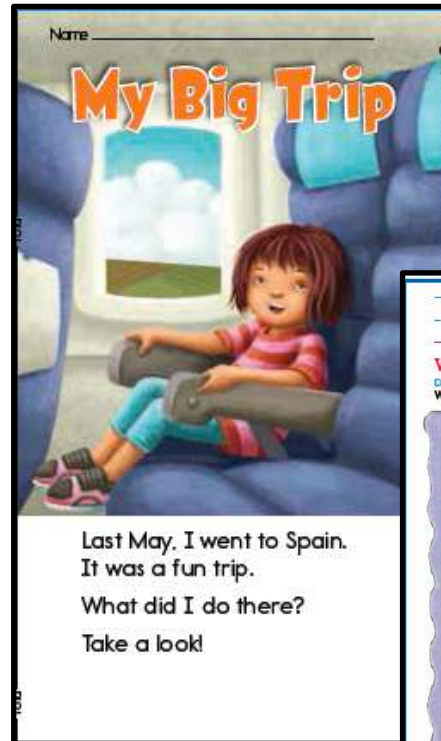
## SENTENCE FRAMES or SENTENCE STARTERS

For English Learners

The girl went to \_\_\_\_\_.

She went on a \_\_\_\_\_.

In Spain, she \_\_\_\_\_.



Writing Extension

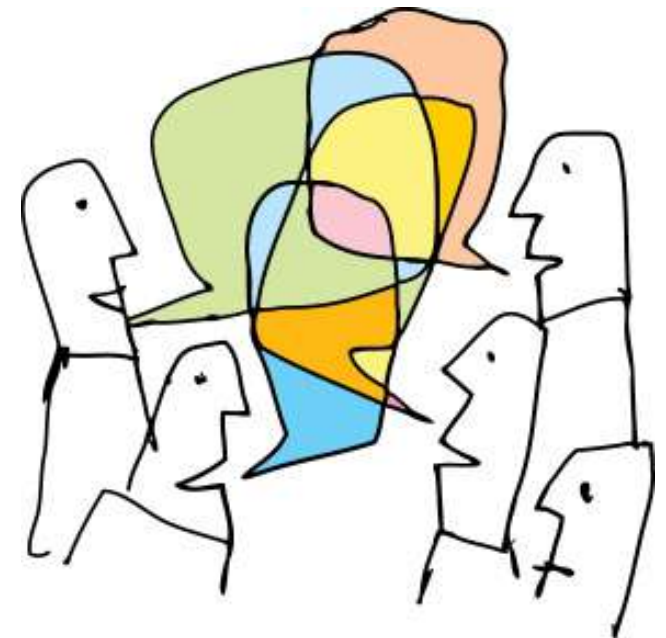
**Write About It**  
Directions: Read "My Big Trip" again.  
Write what you learned about Spain.

Answers will vary.

Lesson 15 • Lang 4 223

# Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.

James Britton





**Internalize Story Structure**

# Introduce High-Frequency Words?

## Making Irregular English Words Really Stick



### *Did you know . . .*

Only **13 words** account for **25%** of the words in print.

*a, and, for, he, is, in, it, of, that, the, to, was, you*

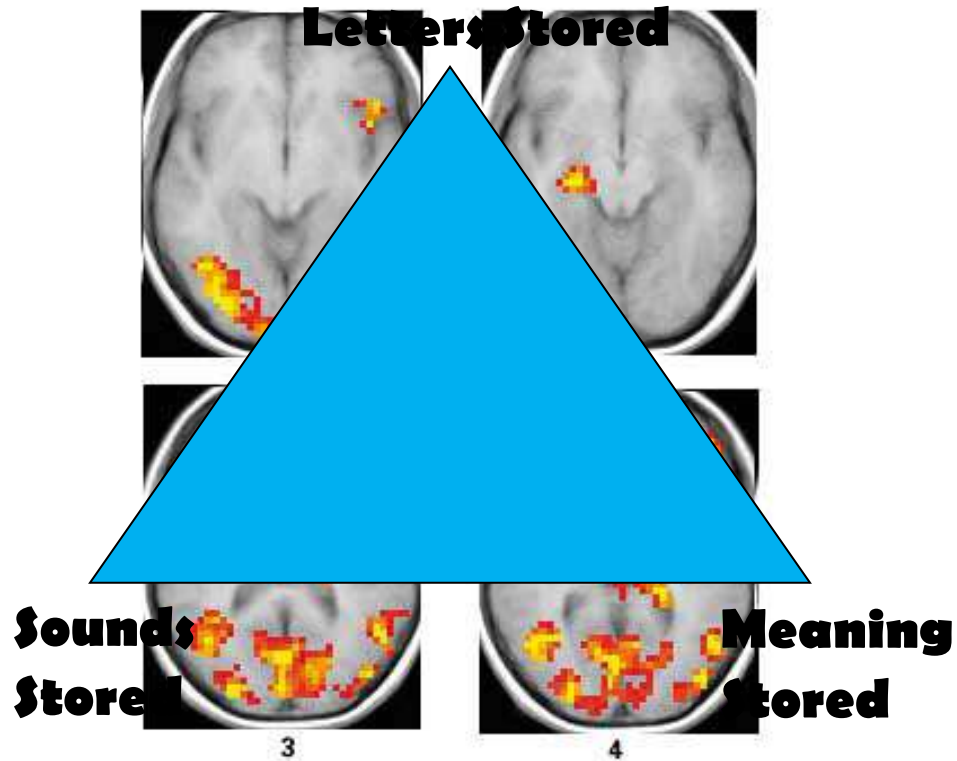
Only **100 words** account for **50%** of the words in print.

# Traditional Teaching Routine

**I see a cat.**



# Brain Research





# Stronger Routine

## STEP ① Introduce in Context

“I see a cat,” said Pam.



## STEP ② Read (SEGMENT, then discuss known sound-spellings)

/s/ = s    /d/ = d    ai = irregular

## STEP ③ Spell

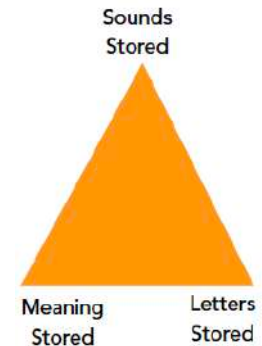
s a i d

## STEP ④ Write

said

## STEP ⑤ Extend (Writing, Connect to Known Words)

(oral and written sentence frames or sentence starters)



# Problem Words

on      was  
no      saw

Addressed in Scope and Sequence

of      for      from

## Words with *th* and *wh*

there      where  
then      when  
that      what  
this      with  
their      were  
them      why

one      once



# Not So Irregular

**there**  
**where**

**to**  
**do**  
**who**

**come**  
**some**

**give**  
**live**

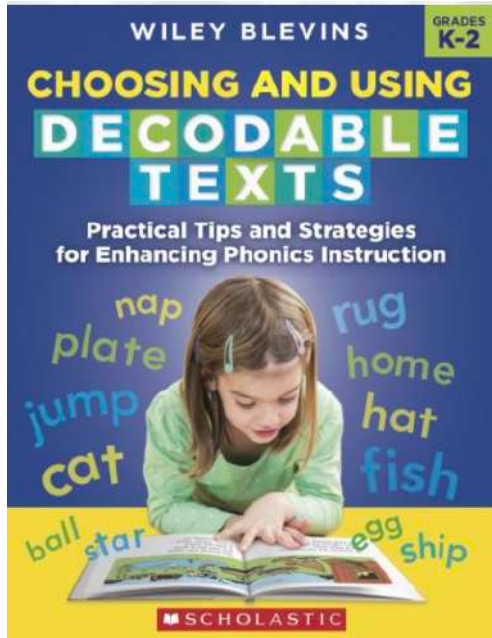
**could**  
**should**  
**would**

Pattern Detectors

Addressed in Scope and Sequence



# Lesson Plan



## Decodable Text Lesson Planner

Book Title:

Focus Phonics Skill:

Decodable Words With Phonics Skill:

New High-Frequency and Story Words:

### BEFORE READING

Academic Vocabulary Word About the Book:

- Define:
- Example:
- Ask:

English-Learner Supports (e.g., vocabulary to preteach):

### DURING READING

Technique (choral read, echo read, whisper read):

### AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions:

1. (focus on word with phonics skill)
2. (detail with text evidence)
3. (higher-level question)
4. (higher-level question)
5. (connect to children's lives)

Writing Prompt:

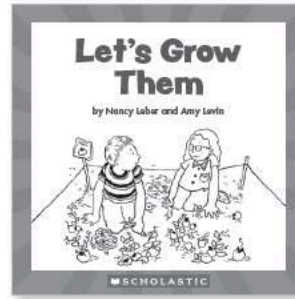
Fluency Plan:

## ***Let's Grow Them*** (page 87)

**Focus Phonics Skill:** Short e

**Decodable Words With Phonics Skill:** *Jess, red, Ben, ten, get, wet*

**New High-Frequency and Story Words:** *are, grow, let's, yes, you*



# Lesson Plan

### **BEFORE READING**

**Academic Vocabulary Word About the Book:** *patient*

- **Define:** waiting quietly for something
- **Example:** The kids were patient as they waited for the recess bell to ring.
- **Ask:** When have you had to be patient?

**English-Learner Supports (e.g., vocabulary to preteach):** *seeds, grow, dig, red, can* (noun)

### **DURING READING**

**Technique (choral read, echo read, whisper read):** Have children read the story while you listen in and offer feedback. Then, echo model how the end mark affects how you read each sentence: question mark, exclamation point.

### **AFTER READING**

**Comprehension Questions:**

1. **(focus on word with phonics skill)** How many seeds does Ben have? (*ten*) Find the word in the story.
2. **(detail with text evidence)** What did Ben and Jess do to help the seeds grow? Find the sentences that support your answer.
3. **(higher-level question)** Why did Ben and Jess have to wait so long?
4. **(higher-level question)** Do you think Ben and Jess were patient? Why or why not?
5. **(connect to children's lives)** Have you ever planted seeds or watched a plant grow? If so, what did you observe, or see?

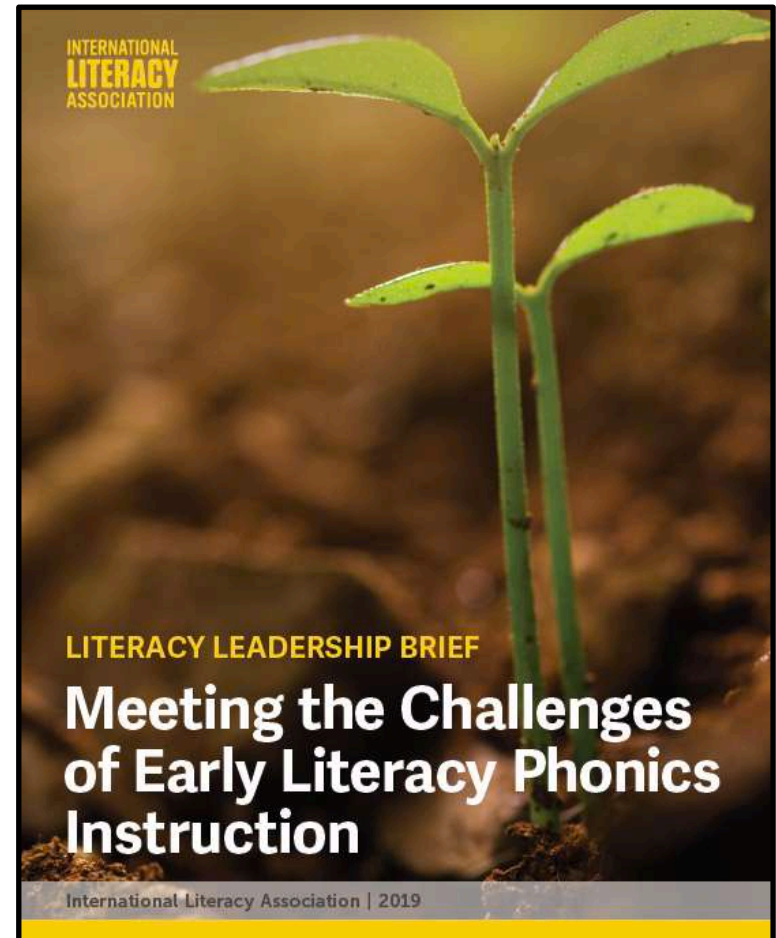
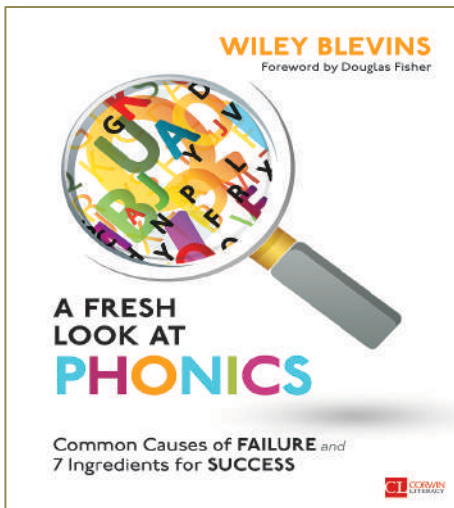
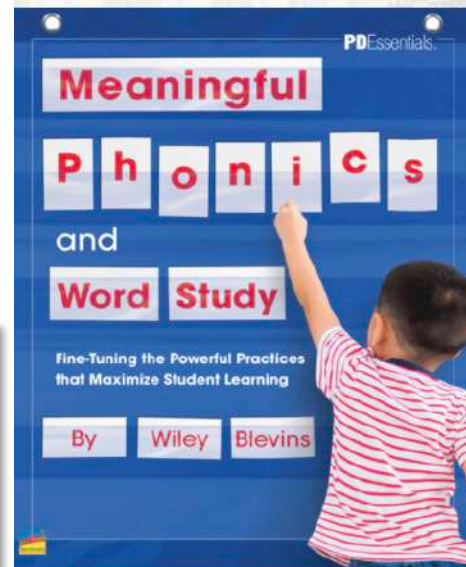
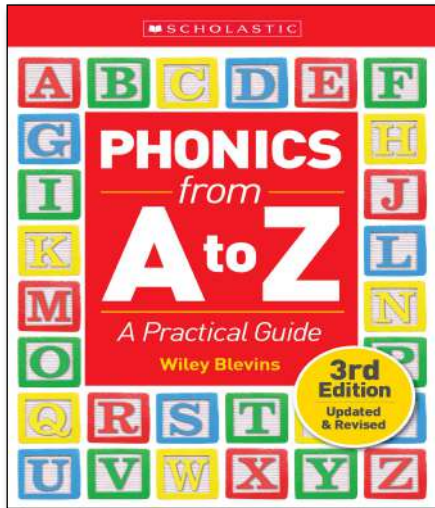
**Writing Prompt:** Have children make a list of the steps to grow tomatoes.

**Fluency Plan:** Have children reread the story to a partner on the following day. On a later day, have them reread the story to find (circle or list) words with *-en* and *-et*.



**Decodable Texts:  
Enhancing Their Impact**

# Additional Phonics Resources





Give  
the Gift of  
Reading

It is an **honor** and **responsibility** to give the gift of reading to children.

**Thank you** for all that you're doing!

**[wbny@aol.com](mailto:wbny@aol.com)**



# Recommended Decodables

Benchmark Education's latest decodables  
(including a low-cost black-and-white class set option)

<https://goto.benchmarkeducation.com/acton/media/34723/benchmark-education-decodable-readers?sid=TV2:zEfwNzIi4>

Scholastic's Phonics Readers (coming in February 2021)

<https://shop.scholastic.com/teachers-ecommerce/teacher/books/phonics-first-little-readers-classroom-set-9781338717556.html>

Sadlier *From Phonics to Reading* (with embedded Decodable Readers)

<https://schoolstore.sadlier.com/from-phonics-to-reading>