Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan Tool

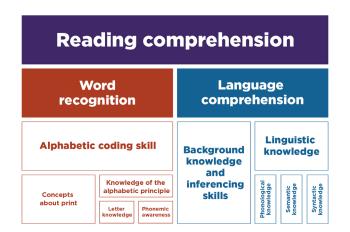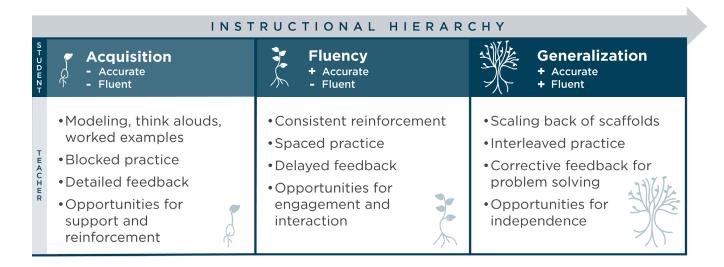| Reading comprehension		
Word recognition	**Language comprehension**	
Alphabetic coding skill	**Background knowledge and inferencing skills**	**Linguistic knowledge**
Concepts about print / **Knowledge of the alphabetic principle** / **Letter knowledge** / **Phonemic awareness**		**Phonological knowledge** / **Semantic knowledge** / **Syntactic knowledge**

Word recognition is a key building block for learning to read. Fast, accurate recognition of words allows readers to focus on making meaning from texts—the ultimate goal of reading. The Simple View of Reading[1] is based on the idea that Reading Comprehension is the product of Word Recognition and Language Comprehension (RC = WR × LC).[2] A focus on early word recognition in kindergarten through second grade is informed by promising practices from the Science of Reading, including a sounds-first approach.[3]

Applying the Instructional Hierarchy for Early Word Recognition

The instructional hierarchy articulates the kinds of teaching and learning students need to develop accuracy and fluency with any new skill.[4] Students who are developing early word recognition skills progress through the learning stages of Acquisition, Fluency, and Generalization, gaining proficiency in one stage as they advance to the next.

Use the instructional hierarchy framework to support students as they learn.[5]

INSTRUCTIONAL HIERARCHY		
STUDENT **Acquisition** – Accurate – Fluent	**Fluency** + Accurate – Fluent	**Generalization** + Accurate + Fluent
TEACHER • Modeling, think alouds, worked examples • Blocked practice • Detailed feedback • Opportunities for support and reinforcement	• Consistent reinforcement • Spaced practice • Delayed feedback • Opportunities for engagement and interaction	• Scaling back of scaffolds • Interleaved practice • Corrective feedback for problem solving • Opportunities for independence

Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan Template

It is important to combine several strategies for early word recognition to help students build the foundational skills they need to become fluent readers. The Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan template provides a framework for sequencing these strategies. It can be used to create new lessons or to organize and expand upon existing lessons from standards-aligned materials. The companion Early Word Recognition Learning Walk Tool can be used to extend and support a focus on early word recognition.

Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan

TASK	MIN.	INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
Review Review previously learned skills using visual and auditory drills.	2	Record <u>previously learned</u> letters (or letter combinations) and <u>previously learned</u> sounds that students should review prior to the new skill introduction. Graphemes: Phonemes: Notes:
New skill introduction Model the relationship between a grapheme (e.g., i) and a phoneme (e.g., /ĭ/).	2	Record the <u>new</u> letter (or letter combination) and the <u>new</u> sound that you will introduce in this lesson. Grapheme: Phoneme: Example words: Notes:
Spelling and word chaining Lead an activity that helps students to connect the sounds in words with letter-sound relationships.	4	Word chain Notes:
Decoding Have students practice decoding words. Use word lists with new and previously learned skills.	3	List of new words List of review words Notes:
Irregular words Have students practice reading, speaking, and spelling words with irregular parts. Review familiar words first, and then introduce new words from the connected text.	3	List of review words List of new words Notes:
Connected text Have students practice decoding in context by reading a connected text.	6	Title: Text-dependent comprehension questions Notes:
Total time	20	To build fluency and independence, follow this lesson with partner reading of the connected text.

Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan (Sample)

TASK	MIN.	INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
Review **Tip:** Model drills to reinforce grapheme-phoneme correspondences.	2	**Graphemes:** a, s, t, p, f, n, o, d, c, g, b, e **Visual drill:** Show the grapheme. Have students name the letter(s) and say the sound. **Example:** "When I show you a card, you say the sound." (Show card for the letter *a*.) "The letter *a* spells the sound /ă/."
		Phonemes: /ă/, /k/, /h/, /r/, /w/, /j/ **Auditory drill:** Say the phoneme. Have students say the sound and write the letter(s). **Example:** "When I say a sound, you write the letter or letters that spell that sound." (Make the sound /ă/.) "The sound /ă/ is made by the letter *a*."
New skill introduction **Tip:** Build on sounds shared across languages,[6] such as sounds shared between Spanish and English.[7] Ask students what words they know in languages other than English that include the new sound.	2	**Grapheme:** i **Phoneme:** /ĭ/ (short i) **Example words:** kid, kit, bib, bin, fin **Directions:** Show example words with the letter *i*. Show articulation of the sound /ĭ/.[8] Discuss and practice the sound /ĭ/. **Example script** TEACHER: Listen. (Reads example words.) What part of these words sounds the same? STUDENTS: The sound /ĭ/. TEACHER: Look. (Shows the list of words.) What part of these words looks the same? STUDENTS: The letter *i*. TEACHER: Yes. Our new sound spelling today is /ĭ/. The letter *i* spells the sound /ĭ/. (Shows the letter card.) When you see this card, you say /ĭ/. Let's practice all together. (TEACHER points to the letter card, and STUDENTS say /ĭ/ at the same time.) TEACHER: Now, tell your neighbor. (STUDENTS turn to their neighbor and say the sound /ĭ/.) TEACHER: Now, write the letter that spells the sound /ĭ/. (STUDENTS write the letter *i*.) TEACHER: What spells the /ĭ/ sound? STUDENTS: The letter *i*.

Fluency

Acquisition

Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan (Sample)

TASK	MIN.	INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
Spelling and word chaining Acquisition Fluency	4	**Word chain** it » bit » big » bog » dog » dig » did » hid » had **Directions:** Have students use dry-erase boards or letter tiles to add, replace, or remove one sound for each new word in a chain. Work through a few examples as a group. Then have students work independently. **Example script** TEACHER: I'll say a word, and you'll spell or read the word. Let's start with the word *it*. Spell *it*. (STUDENTS write the word *it*.) TEACHER: Add a *b* to the beginning of *it*. What word do you have now? STUDENTS: Bit. TEACHER: Now, change the *t* in *bit* to *g*. Read your new word. STUDENTS: Big.
Decoding	3	**List of new words:** big, pig, wig, bib, in, pit, did, jig, hit, rib, sit **Directions:** Identify and practice words from the connected text with the <u>new</u> sound /ĭ/. **I do (teacher):** big, pig **We do (with students):** wig, bib, in, pit, did, jig, hit, rib, sit **Example script (with students)** TEACHER: (Shows the word *wig*.) Touch the letter with the new sound. (STUDENTS touch the *i* in *wig*.) TEACHER: Say the sound it spells. (STUDENTS say the sound /ĭ/.) TEACHER: Blend the sounds in the word. (STUDENTS blend the /w/, /ĭ/, and /g/ sounds.) TEACHER: Now, say the word. STUDENTS: Wig.
Acquisition Fluency		**List of review words:** on, off, and, get, can **Directions:** Review words with <u>previously learned</u> sounds. Have students listen to, say, read, and spell each word. **I do (teacher):** on, off **We do (with students):** and, get, can

Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan (Sample)

TASK	MIN.	INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
Irregular words **Tip:** Use your scope and sequence to determine when an irregular word might be temporarily or permanently irregular. If the skill has not yet been taught, the word is likely only temporarily irregular. Remind students that English words are more often regular than irregular.[9]	3	**List of review words:** to (/too/), said (/sĕd/) **Directions:** Practice reading, speaking, and spelling previously learned irregular words.[10] **Example script** TEACHER: The word *to* is made up of the sounds /t/ and /oo/. Which sounds do you already know? STUDENTS: *T* spells the sound /t/. TEACHER: Yes. You already know this letter-sound pattern. Which sounds need to be learned by heart? STUDENTS: When *o* makes the sound /oo/. TEACHER: Yes. The word *to* is spelled differently than other words with the sound /oo/, like *boot*. We must learn this part—*o* makes the sound /oo/—by heart. (Draws a heart under the letter *o* in *to*.) The heart reminds us that this part of the word is said differently than other words with the letter *o*. Let's practice all together. (TEACHER shows the word card for *to*.) TEACHER: How do you say this word? (Points to word.) STUDENTS: To. (TEACHER hides the word card.) TEACHER: How do you spell the word *to*? STUDENTS: (Spelling) *T-o*.
Fluency Acquisition		**List of new words:** is (/ĭz/), his (/hĭz/), has (/hăz/) **Directions:** Introduce 1–3 new irregular words (or heart words) from the connected text. Use the same strategies and a similar script to analyze the letter-sound patterns in each word. Focus on words with irregular parts that are similar, like *is* and *has*.

Early Word Recognition Lesson Plan (Sample)

TASK	MIN.	INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
Connected text **Tip:** Find samples of decodable texts online.[11] Avoid using predictable or repetitive texts.[12] *Acquisition Fluency Generalization*	6	**Title:** <u>Fig the Pig</u> **Directions** 1. Discuss concepts of print (e.g., title, author, illustrator): "Put your finger on the title." 2. Ask for predictions about the text: "What do you think this story is about?" 3. Model whisper reading and choral reading—everyone reading aloud simultaneously—with finger tracking. 4. Monitor whisper reading progress and provide feedback. 5. Give corrective feedback by blending and segmenting. 6. Have students go through the text and highlight all the words targeted by the new phonics skill. 7. Engage all students in choral reading: "Touch each word you highlighted in the story as we read the story aloud." 8. Model how to use text evidence to answer questions: "Touch the line in the story where you found the answer." 9. Elicit responses with scaffolded questions. **Example text-dependent comprehension questions** • Who are the characters? • What happens in the story? • What do the characters learn?
Total time	20	To build fluency and independence, follow this lesson with partner reading of the connected text.

AFTER THE LESSON	MIN.	INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
Partner reading **Tip:** Encourage translanguaging[13] and support differentiated instruction.[14] *Fluency*	4	**Directions** 1. Organize partners strategically. Consider students' academic, social-emotional, and linguistic needs. 2. Have both partners choral read or have partners model turn taking and roles for reading and listening (one student reads aloud while the other gives feedback, and then they switch roles). 3. Use blending and segmenting strategies for support. 4. Actively monitor and support partners in their reading. 5. Engage students in a text-based task to demonstrate their reading comprehension.

Endnotes

1. For an overview of the Simple View of Reading, read Cindy Jiban's *Teach. Learn. Grow.* blog post [Simple, but not easy: What we forget about how reading comprehension develops](#).

2. Concept for reading comprehension graphic based on Wesley A. Hoover and William E. Tunmer, "The Primacy of Science in Communicating Advances in the Science of Reading," *Reading Research Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2022): 399–408, https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.446.

3. For a primer on the Science of Reading, read Cindy Jiban's *Teach. Learn. Grow.* blog post [The science of reading explained](#).

4. For more details on learning stages, read Priscilla Bade-White's online article [Working Smarter: The Instructional Hierarchy](#).

5. Concept for chart based on Norris G. Haring and Marie D. Eaton, "Systematic Instructional Procedures: An Instructional Hierarchy," in *The Fourth R: Research in the Classroom*, ed. Norris G. Haring, Thomas C. Lovitt, Marie D. Eaton, and Cheryl L. Hanson (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1978): 35.

6. For ways to build on sounds shared across languages, read page 6 of the International Literacy Association's brief [Explaining Phonics Instruction: An Educator's Guide](#).

7. For a comparison of Spanish and English phonics, read Colorín Colorado's online article [Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English](#).

8. For a demonstration of the correct articulation and pronunciation of English phonemes, review the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy's video [44 Phonemes](#).

9. For more information about words that are temporarily or permanently irregular, review the University of Florida Literacy Institute's online resource [Printable Cards for Irregular "Heart" Words](#).

10. For best practices for teaching irregular words, read Linda Farrell, Tina Osenga, and Michael Hunter's article [A New Model for Teaching High Frequency Words](#).

11. For samples of decodable texts, explore lessons in the University of Florida Literacy Institute's online resource [UFLI Foundations Toolbox](#).

12. For more information and a video demonstration about the problem with predictable or repetitive texts, go to the *Spelfabet* blog post [Predictable or Repetitive Texts](#).

13. For ways to encourage translanguaging during partner activities, read page 8 of Alicia A. Stewart and Elizabeth Swanson's [Turn and Talk: An Evidence-Based Practice, Teacher's Guide](#).

14. For ideas on how to differentiate instruction while working with connected text, view a [summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade](#).