

Learning to Read

The K-2 Reading Foundations Skills Block is a one-hour block that uses a structured phonics approach, grounded in the Phase Theory of Dr. Linnea Ehri, which describes behavior related to the types of letter-sound connections students are able to make as they learn to read and write. As such, the Skills Block is meant to ensure that, by the end of grade 2, students acquire the depth of skills they need in the Reading Foundations standards to navigate grade-level text independently. The lessons and assessments explicitly address the Reading Foundations standards, as well as some Language standards associated with spelling and letter formation.

Daily Whole Group Lessons

The Skills Block begins with a daily lesson for the whole class typically lasting 10 to 20 minutes. The focus and purpose of this lesson is on letters and letter sounds, phonological and phonemic awareness skills, or spelling patterns and is part of a carefully sequenced program. During these lessons students engage in fun and engaging routines.

Teacher guide:

Work Time

A. Decoding: Syllable Sleuth: Closed Two-Syllable Words: “cannot,” “granddad,” “backpack,” “zipper,” “muffin,” “flattop”

- (Suggested transition song, sung to the tune of “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad”):

“We’ve been workin’ on long words, sound by sound by sound. We’ve been workin’ on long words, so we can read more words aloud. We take a word like ‘exit’ and break it into parts. ‘Ex’ plus ‘it’ makes ‘exit,’ and now it’s time to start!”

- Begin the Syllable Sleuth instructional practice:

1. Teacher says: “Last week, we learned how to be syllable sleuths. Today we are going to be syllable sleuths again. Remember, a *sleuth* is like a detective. We are going to be like detectives to learn about syllables. Listen to our first word!”
2. Teacher says word aloud: “cannot.”
3. Students echo word back to teacher: “cannot.”
4. Teacher asks:
“How many vowel sounds do you hear in ‘cannot?’” (two)
5. Teacher says: “Right! There are two vowel sounds in the word ‘cannot.’”
6. Teacher writes “cannot” on the board and reads it aloud.
7. Students repeat “cannot” as teacher slides underneath the word.
8. Teacher asks:
“How many vowels do you see?” (two)
9. Teacher circles vowels “a” and “o.”
10. Teacher says “cannot” again and asks:
“What kind of sound do these vowels make?” (short)

11. Teacher asks:
“What do you notice about the vowels in this word?” (They are both between two consonants.) “Right! I’m going to underline the consonants around the vowels.”
12. Teacher underlines consonants (“n,” “n,” “c,” “t”) and repeats the word “cannot.”
13. Teacher divides “cannot” by making a vertical line between the first “n” and the second “n.”
14. Teacher asks:
“How many parts do you see in our word?” (two)
15. Teacher says: “That’s right! These parts are called syllables. This word has two syllables: ‘can’ and ‘not.’”
16. Teacher asks:
“What do you notice about these two syllables? What do they both have?” (a vowel sound)
17. Teacher says: “That’s right! Each syllable has one vowel sound in it. And when we circle the vowels, we can begin to divide this word into syllables. We underline the consonants on each side of the vowel and then divide the word between those consonants. Now we can see the two syllables in this word.”
18. Teacher asks:
“What do you notice about both parts of this word?” (Each part is a word by itself.)
19. Teacher says: “Right! When two words makes one word, we call it a compound word. Today, we will read some compound words and some words that are not compound words.”
20. Teacher says: “You are going to act as sleuths to find the syllables in words today. Remember, a sleuth is a detective. Your job is to search for the clues that let you know you have found a syllable. As a syllable sleuth this week, you will look for vowel sounds to see how many syllables are in new words. Then you can underline the consonants to find where to divide the word, and then you have found the syllables!”
21. Teacher distributes materials (**Syllable Sleuth Word List**, **whiteboards**, **whiteboard markers**, and **whiteboard erasers**.)
22. Teacher guides students in their word analysis.
23. Students continue with steps above to divide each word into syllables: “rabbit,” “granddad,” “backpack,” “muffin,” “flattop.”

Meeting Students’ Needs

- Use the language “vowel sound” to build knowledge for future learning when vowel teams (examples: “ea,” “ie,” and “ou”) are introduced in multisyllabic words.
- To help students understand what a syllable is, use the definition “a syllable is each part of the word with a vowel sound.”
- Encourage students to recognize a syllable by noticing when the jaw drops. The amount of times their jaw drops equals the number of syllables in a word.
- Consider explaining to students that a compound word is two words within one word that have a single meaning.

Decodable Readers

A structured phonics program introduces students to spelling-sound relationships separately and explicitly. Students learn the pattern using isolated words, and then practice with a decodable reader. In these decodable readers, students will encounter only spelling-sound relationships that they have been taught—this is what makes it phonetically controlled. Each cycle of approximately five lessons includes a decodable reader and students read them with the whole group and also in smaller differentiated groups.

Student decodable reader:



"I am a spy! Look, I am spying!" says Sam.

3



Sam and Dad go to the shed.

4

Differentiation

For the remaining 40-50 minutes, students work on materials differentiated according to where they test on a benchmarking tool. Part of that time is spent working with the teacher in a homogeneous group using a decodable reading text.

Small group differentiation teacher guide:

K–2 Skills Block: Decodable Reader Routine

Grade 1: Module 1: Cycle 3

Day	Activities	Resources and Materials
<p>Tuesday</p> <p>Pattern for the week: Short /i/ and the consonants <i>k, y, z, d, l, f,</i> and the digraphs <i>sh</i> and <i>ch</i></p>	<p>Read the decodable reader for the week to students multiple times as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First read: Read the decodable reader to students with expression and pause at punctuation marks. 2. Second read: Pattern search: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Read it: Have students read the decodable reader with you. b. See it: Ask: Q: "Where do you see words that have the consonants <i>k, d, l, f,</i> and the digraphs <i>sh</i> and <i>ch</i>?" A: digs, kids, dip, kid, fish, flip, drink, ship, splash, likes, look, fan, drinks c. Speak it: After pointing to the words that have the consonants <i>k, y, z, d, l, f,</i> and the digraphs <i>sh</i> and <i>ch,</i> invite students to say the words. d. Write it: After saying the words that have the consonants <i>k, y, z, d, l, f,</i> and the digraphs <i>sh</i> and <i>ch</i> sound, invite students to write them down. <p><i>*While students are writing the letters, it is important to pay attention to proper letter formation. Ensure that students are writing letters starting at the top of the line extending to the bottom of the line, extending below the line where necessary, but not extending above the top line. Ensure students are moving from left to right. See the letter formation guide document for guidance.</i></p>	<p>Decodable Reader: Pat's Map</p> <p>Writing utensil</p> <p>Paper</p> <p><i>Optional - Letter Formation Chart*</i></p>