



Great Phonics Instruction

with Wiley Blevins

Phonics builds the foundation for reading and writing, and there are engaging ways to teach phonics skills to young children. Refer to this worksheet for strategies to take your phonics instruction to the next level.

7 Key Characteristics of Phonics Instruction

- 1. Readiness Skills:** kids have a strong baseline of alphabet recognition and phonemic awareness
- 2. Scope & Sequence:** Phonics instruction stair-steps from simple to complex, building on what kids know and introducing new skills in an obvious way
- 3. Blending:** Teaching children how to sound out words by stringing together the different letter-sounds in a word
- 4. Dictation:** Guided spelling that allows students to transfer their phonics skills into writing skills
- 5. Word Awareness:** Includes activities like word building and word sorts to help kids analyze and recognize patterns in words.
- 6. High-frequency Words:** The most common words in English that may not follow common sound-spellings or be irregular
- 7. Reading Connected Text:** Helping kids apply their newly-learned phonics skills by reading words together in context with other words, ideally using accountable (phonics-based) texts



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Phonics instruction is no easy task. Unfortunately there are many pitfalls that educators may face when teaching these important skills. Consider these ideas for overcoming common challenges. How might you apply them to your own work?

Overcoming Common Pitfalls

- 1. Inadequate Review and Repetition Cycle:** Kids need lots of practice to retain new skills. In fact, each new skill should be systematically reviewed for at least 4-6 weeks. Be sure to layer in new learning with previously learned skills.
- 2. Lack of Application:** kids often do not have enough opportunity to apply their newly-learned phonics skills. Consider spending half of your instruction time applying skills by reading accountable texts and using words to say and write sentences.
- 3. Under-Utilized Transition Times:** Phonics lessons often require lots of materials. Time spent distributing and collecting materials can be used to review previous lessons. Consider singing the Alphabet Song or asking for first letter sounds to keep kids engaged.

Read *Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction* for more common challenges and solutions.





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Notes & Takeaways

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