Using Decodable and Leveled Readers Appropriately

Presented at

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Objectives

- Participants will understand:
  - the Simple View of Reading
  - the definitions for decodable readers and leveled readers
  - the different purposes and uses of decodable and leveled readers
  - guidelines for when a student is ready to move from decoding practice during reading instruction with decodable readers to comprehensive reading practice with leveled readers.

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What Is Reading?

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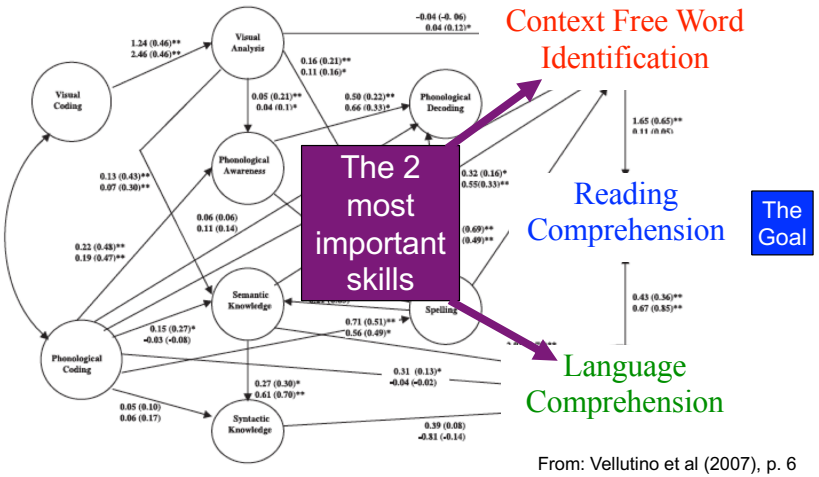
A Complex Map of Interrelationships among Skills Used when Reading



From: Vellutino et al (2007), p. 6

FIGURE 1 Convergent skills model of reading development: Younger/Older groups. *Note:* Coefficients for the Younger group are always listed above those for the Older group. Standard coefficients are in parentheses. $^{*}p \leq .05$. $^{**}p \leq .01$.

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Define the Terms:

Language Comprehension (LC)

- The ability to understand oral language.

Decoding (D)

- The ability to accurately read familiar words and to reasonably decode unfamiliar words out of context.

Reading Comprehension (RC)

- The ability to understand language from print.

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Print Is the Major Difference between LC & RC

Major difference is how the content is accessed -

- **LC** - the content is **oral** and is heard

- **RC** - the content is in **print** and is seen

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Reading Comprehension continued

Reading Comprehension (RC)

Requires both Decoding skills and Language Comprehension abilities

Decoding Skills

- Sight word reading
- Phonics and ability to decode novel (unfamiliar) words

Language Comprehension Abilities

- Vocabulary
- Background Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Story Structure, Genre, etc.
- Higher Order Reasoning Skills

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The Simple View of Reading

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The Simple View of Reading

- A formula introduced by Gough and Tunmer in 1986

Decoding (D) **x** **Language Comprehension (LC)** **=** **Reading Comprehension (RC)**

D X LC = RC

- The formula was demonstrated to work by Hoover and Gough's study, published in 1990.
- The essence has been replicated in research studied many times since.

Note: Scores for D & LC are between 0 and 1.

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Important note:

- The variables in the equation **D x LC = RC** are scores for decoding, language comprehension, and reading comprehension.
- Scores have to be between 0 and 1, or 0% and 100%.
- So, for RC to be 1 (100%), D must be 1 (100%) and LC must be 1 (100%)

1 x 1 = 1

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What if D or LC is less than 100%?

- Weak Decoding

  .5 x 1 = .5

- Weak Language Comprehension

  1 x .5 = .5

- When **both** are weak

  .5 x .5 = .25

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The Essence of the Simple View of Reading

- **Reading comprehension** requires competence in both of two separate areas: **Decoding** & **Language comprehension**
- D and LC must both be strong for RC to be strong.
- RC can never be higher than the lower of D or LC.
- If both D and LC are lower than strong, RC has to be lower than either of them
- Reading comprehension will **NOT be an average** of decoding and language comprehension.

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Reading Comprehension Will NOT Be an Average of D & LC

- Strong language comprehension cannot make up for poor decoding comprehension.
- Strong decoding comprehension cannot make up for poor language comprehension.
- If decoding is low, reading comprehension will hindered so much that it will be low.
- If language comprehension is low, reading comprehension will be low.
- If both decoding and language comprehension are low, reading comprehension will be even lower.

Said Another Way

- D x LC = RC
- Strength x Strength = Strength
- Strength x Weakness = Weakness
- Weakness x Strength = Weakness
- Weakness x Weakness = Even Weaker

Original Simple View of Reading Research Study

- 1990 Hoover & Gough study
  - Longitudinal Study
    - Obtained scores for Decoding (D), Language Comprehension (LC), and Reading Comprehension (RC) over a 4 or 5 year period
    - Grades K - 4
  - 5 sites in Texas
  - Students
    - 254 students
    - Bilingual
  - Assessment
    - D assessed with nonsense words
    - LC assessed with retell and questions after ***hearing*** a story
    - RC assessed with retell and questions after ***reading*** a story

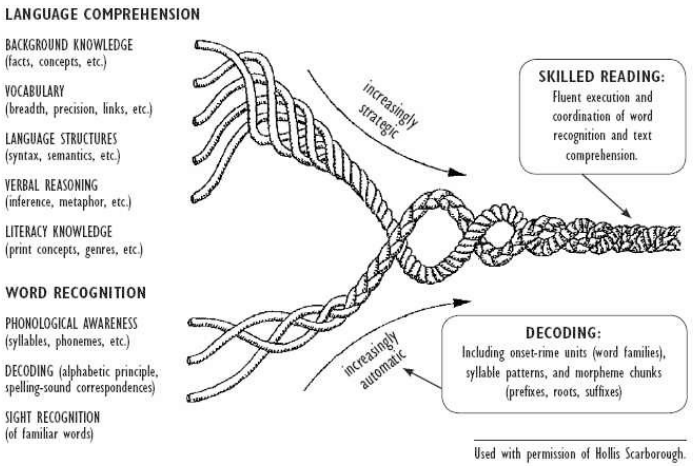
Results of Research

- High correlations between actual Reading Comprehension scores and the product of Decoding and Language Comprehension scores
- The correlations (Hoover & Gough, 1990):
  - 0.84 in first grade
  - 0.85 in second grade
  - 0.91 in third and fourth grade

Note: 0.3 is weak, 0.7 is strong in terms of correlations

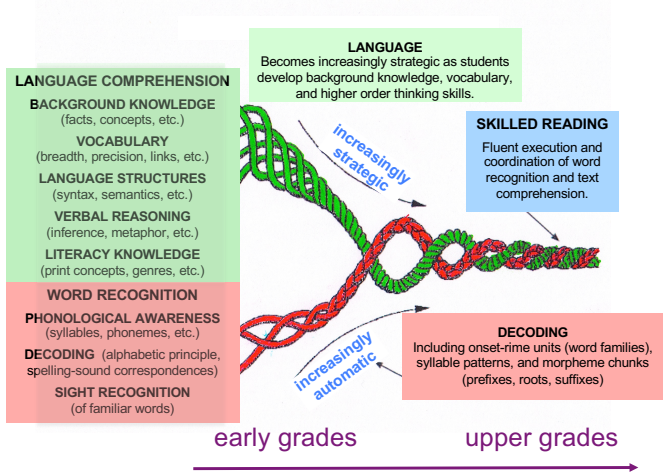
The Scarborough Rope Model

Figure 2.2 The Path to Fluent Reading for Meaning
(Scarborough, 2001)



Used with permission of Hollis Scarborough.

The Scarborough Rope Model: *Many strands that are woven together in skilled reading*



Important Lessons from the Simple View of Reading & the Rope Model

- Students need to be both strong decoders *and* strong in language comprehension if they are to be strong readers.
- Weak decoding cannot be overcome by strong language comprehension.
- Decoding and language comprehension should be assessed and taught *separately* to beginning readers. The two areas gradually develop to work together as students become strong enough decoders to be able to get information from text.
- Struggling readers may have only one or a few strands of the "rope" that are weak and impairing reading comprehension. Assessment and intervention need to focus on identifying the weak strands and strengthening them.

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New Questions To Ask About Struggling Readers

New Questions from the Simple View of Reading

If you are working with a student who has reading difficulties, answer these questions before deciding on intervention:

1. Is the problem decoding?
2. Is the problem language comprehension?
3. Is the problem both?

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Leveled Readers

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Leveled Readers

- Reading level: Count words, words in sentences, length of words as part of criteria to determine reading level.
- Student interest: Try to be about stories or subjects that are interesting to students.
- Word banks: Some leveled readers start with a body of words in the first level and add a certain number of words at each subsequent level.

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Early Leveled Readers

- Early leveled readers:
  - are often predictable
  - are about familiar subjects
  - have strong support for text from the pictures
  - may include a number of high frequency words
  - repeat words, with support from pictures for the repeated words.

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Premise for Leveled Readers

- Students will learn to read words by exposure to them.
- Students will use pictures and context to learn new words.
- Accuracy in reading is not as important as comprehension. Reading errors that do not affect meaning are not corrected.
- Phonics patterns may be recognized and can be used to figure out words students do not already know or that they cannot guess from the picture or the context.
- Beginning readers read books with content that allows for comprehension discussions.

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From Reading A-Z: Criteria for Leveling Reading A-Z Books

- Word count
- Number of different words
- Ratio of different words to total words
- Number of high-frequency words
- Ratio of high-frequency words to total words
- Number of low-frequency words to total words
- Ratio of low-frequency words to total words
- Sentence length
- Sentence complexity
- Predictability
- Language pattern and repetition
- Print size, spacing, and number of words per page
- Illustration support
- Concept load
- Topic familiarity

Source: http://www.readinga-z.com/guided/criteria.html

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Fountas and Pinnell Criteria for Leveling Books

The characteristics used to array books in the Fountas/Pinnell system include:

- length
- size and layout of print
- vocabulary and concepts
- language structure
- text structure and genre
- predictability and pattern of language
- supportive illustrations

Source: http://www.ciera.org/library/reports/inquiry-1/1-010/1-010.pdf

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Pre-Primer and Primer Leveled Books

- *Guided Reading* Levels A-D (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996)
- "*Assumption at this level:* When students encounter an unknown word in print, they can easily use context from known words and illustrations along with language pattern cues and early word analysis skills for successful decoding."
  - From *Reading Inventory for the Classroom* Flynt & Cooter, 2001

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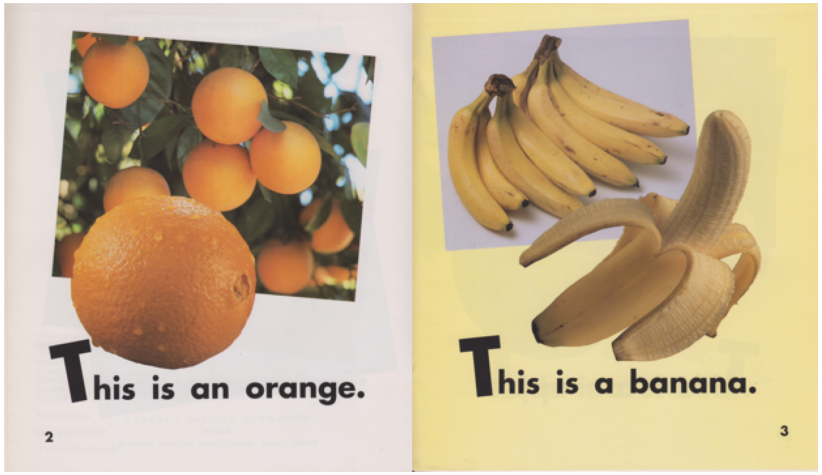
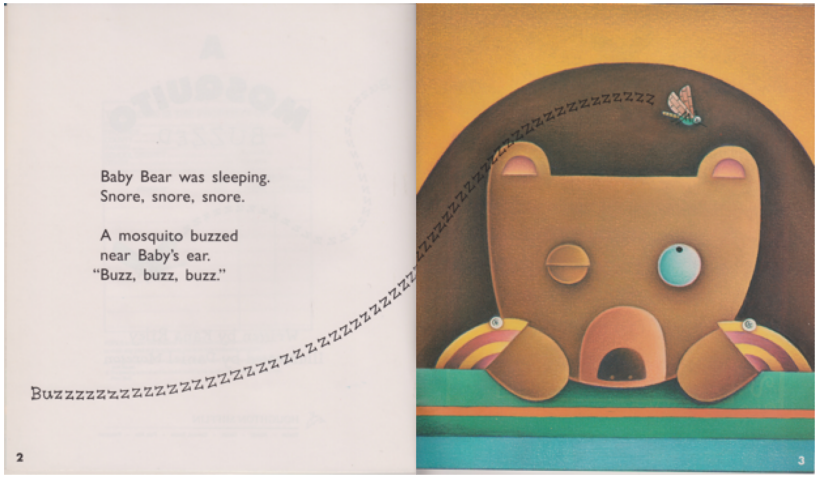
Early Emergent Leveled Reader from Houghton Mifflin



readsters Source: *Food to Eat*
© Houghton Mifflin 1995

Emergent Leveled Reader from Houghton Mifflin


Baby Bear was sleeping.
Snore, snore, snore.
A mosquito buzzed
near Baby's ear.
"Buzz, buzz, buzz."
Buzzz

Premise for Decodable Readers

- Students will learn to read words by utilizing phonics patterns, starting with simple patterns and moving to more complex patterns.
- Beginning readers should read only words that they can decode so that they do not develop a habit of guessing the word based on pictures or context.
- Developing a habit of reading accurately should occur before fluency is expected.
- Comprehension is taught through oral reading to students and discussion of the books *read by the teacher*, not through decodable books. (Decodable books may allow for literal comprehension, but generally are not appropriate for teaching comprehension.)

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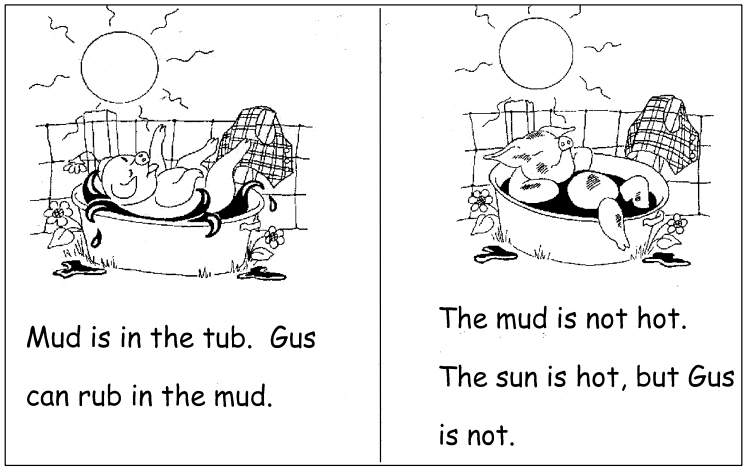
Decodable Book from *Power Readers*



From Power Readers by Susan Ebbers, published by Sopris West. Used with permission.

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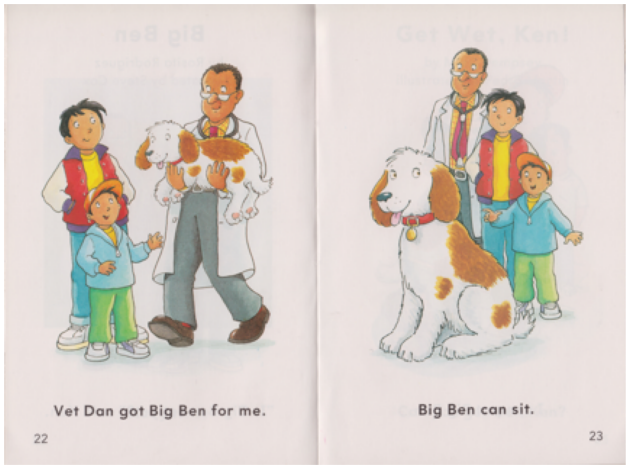
Decodable Book from Houghton Mifflin



From Houghton Mifflin Phonics Library, Grade 1, Theme 2 "Surprise" © 2001

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Comparison of Decodable and Leveled Readers

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Usefulness for Beginning Readers

Decodable Readers

- Use to give beginning readers practice reading words spelled with phonics patterns you have taught and high frequency words you have taught.
- Use to develop habit of accurate reading.
  - Expect students to read with 100% accuracy before asking them to read with fluency.
  - Have students re-read for fluency after they achieve 100% accuracy.
- Expect literal comprehension.
  - Many better materials exist to develop language comprehension.

Leveled Readers

- Use with beginning readers as a read-aloud or for echo reading.
  - Do not expect beginning readers to read these independently.
- Ask students about the text and pictures after you have read the book or during the time you are reading the book.
- Use to help students develop concepts of print, such as:
  - Text moves from top to bottom and left to right.
  - Sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period.
  - Words have spaces between them.
  - Where to find the title.
  - Locating the most frequent words such as the, is, a, I, etc.

Usefulness for Beginning Readers

Decodable Readers

Decoding

- practice reading:
  - phonics patterns
  - high frequency words
- develop accuracy
- literal comprehension

Leveled Readers

Language Comprehension

- read-alouds or for echo reading
- oral discussion
- develop concepts of print

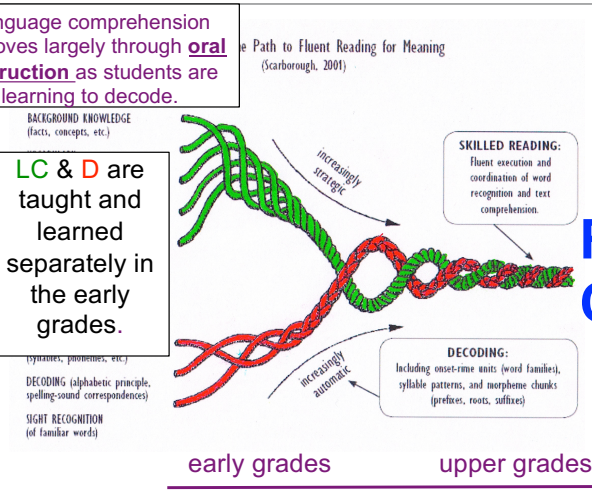
The Scarborough Rope Model: *Many strands that are woven together in skilled reading*

Language comprehension improves largely through **oral instruction** as students are learning to decode.

L
C

D

LC & D are taught and learned separately in the early grades.



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Language comprehension improves largely through **reading** once students are more skilled decoders.

early grades → upper grades

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Teaching Strategies for Beginning Readers

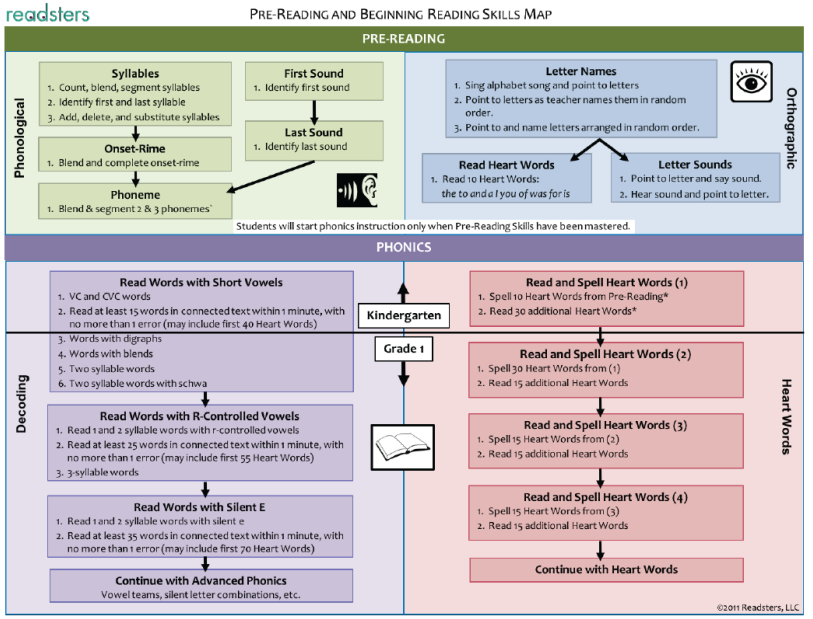
General Guidelines for When Students Are Ready To Read Leveled Books Independently (instead of the teacher reading them)

Use Decodable Readers with students *until* they meet *all* three criteria.

Student:

1. demonstrates mastery of decoding real and nonsense cvc words (short vowels, digraphs, and blends) in isolation. (Scores 47 on the Beginning Decoding Survey*.)
2. can decode 2-syllable words (e.g., comment, napkin, tennis, submit, gallon) and known 3-syllable words in isolation (e.g. penmanship, fantastic, magnetic, accomplish, electric) that have short vowel syllables (closed) or schwa.
3. Can decode one and 2-syllable real words with r-controlled vowels and silent e.

*Contact me for information on Decoding Surveys.



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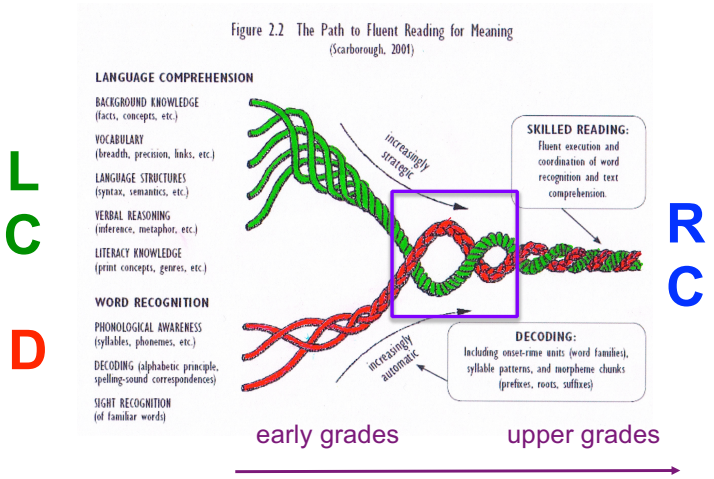
Last Page of Handout

General Guidelines for Beginning Reading Instruction

- All beginning decoding instruction is taught with decodable books.
- Language comprehension during early reading instruction is primarily developed through read-alouds and discussions that follow.
- *After* students show strong beginning decoding skills, they are ready to read leveled readers themselves during reading instruction. At this point, students can begin developing language comprehension through their own reading.

Decoding strongly enough to read independently to access content



Decoding strongly enough to read independently to access content

L
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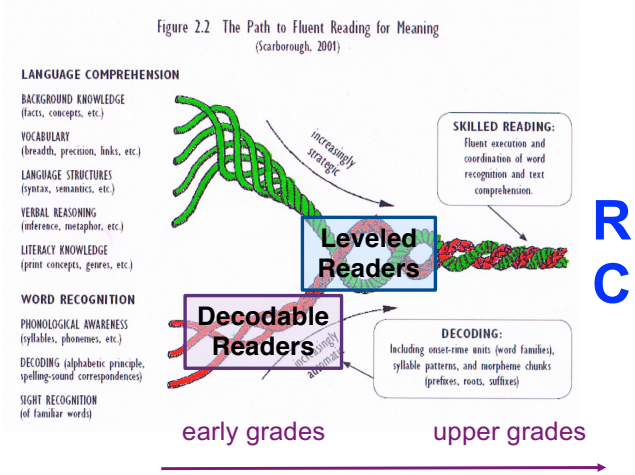
D



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Eliminate These Guessing Strategies for Decoding

- If you don't know a word:
  - Look at the picture
  - Look at the first letter and guess based on context
  - Read to the end of the sentence and determine what word fits
  - Look for parts of the word you know from other words

Use These Strategies To Teach Accurate Decoding

- When a student doesn't know a word:
  - Teach him to try to sound it out.
  - If he can't sound it out, teach him to ask for help.
    - For decodable words, help the student sound them out
    - For words that are not decodable, tell him what the word is.
- When a student skips or adds a word:
  - Tell the student "You skipped XX words" or "You read all the words and added XX words."
  - Have the student re-read the sentence, touching each word so he/she reads the exact words in the sentence correctly.

Use Leveled Readers for Print Awareness and Language Comprehension Skills

- Until students have established basic decoding skills, **read** the books **to** students.
  - Read the entire book, no echo reading.
  - Read page by page or sentence by sentence and have students echo read.
- Teach students about book elements:
  - cover page, title, table of contents, etc.
- Teach students to track words as you read to them or as they echo read.
- Teach students to find beginning high frequency words (the, a, of, to, etc.).
- Use the books as a basis for **oral** language development.

Accurate Reading from the Start

- Teach students to develop strong decoding habits.
- When a student misreads a word in a sentence, *always* have the student re-read the sentence for accuracy.
  - Stop the student at the end of the sentence or paragraph.
  - Tell the student how many words he read correctly in the sentence.
  - Point to the word the student misread and ask the student to re-read the word. If needed, guide the student to the correct word.
  - Have the student **re-read** the entire sentence.

Fluency (Rate)

- For many students, fluent rate will develop naturally after they become accurate readers and continue reading on their own and in class.
- Some students will need help developing fluency.
  - *Before* working on rate, be *sure* that the student is not guessing the words and can read words out of context accurately.

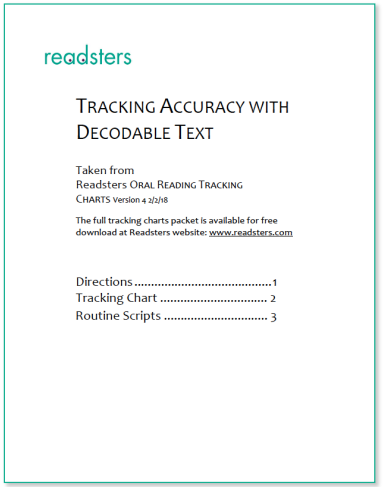
Beginning Readers Need Decodable Text – No Rate Goals until Accuracy is Established

- Decodable text has only spelling patterns & high frequency words that have been taught.
  - *Power Readers* (Sopris West) by Susan Ebbers
  - *Primary Phonics* (EPS) by Barbara Walker
- When students read decodable text, they do not have to guess words; they learn to rely on the letters to determine what the word is.
- The primary purpose for reading decodable text is to develop the habit of accurate reading.

Tracking Accuracy in Decodables

Tracking Accuracy with Decodable Text packet available for free at: www.readsters.com

Or email me at: michael@readsters.com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TRACKING ACCURACY WITH DECODABLE TEXT

Taken from
Readsters ORAL READING TRACKING CHARTS Version 4 2/2/18

The full tracking charts packet is available for free download at Readsters website: www.readsters.com

Directions 1
Tracking Chart 2
Routine Scripts 3

Preparation for Using Beginning Readers Tracking Chart

- Divide the text into the parts each student will read.
  - This can be pages, paragraphs, or any other "chunk" of text.
- Count the number of words in each chunk and put it on the student's page.
- All students in the group have a copy of the text and act as 'checkers' tracking the reader and marking any errors.
  - Checkers give 'thumbs-up' or 'helping hand'.

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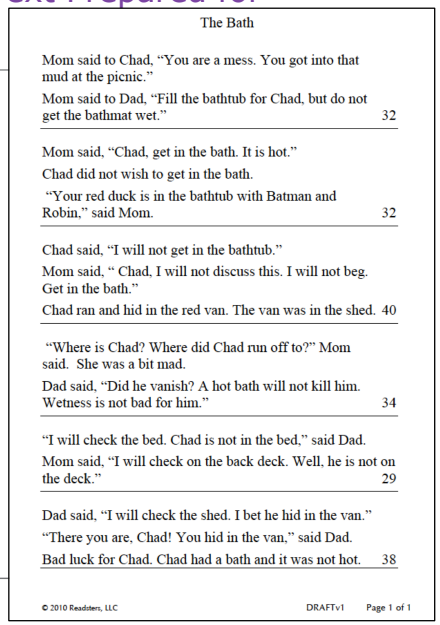
Illustration of Decodable Text Prepared for Reading

The story has *one and two-syllable words* with *short vowels* and the *diagraphs th*, *ch*, and *ck*.

Heart words (words that are not decodable) are: *the*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *and*, *you*, *I*, *said*, *to*, *for*, *do*, *your*, *where*, *he*, and *there*.



The Bath

Mom said to Chad, "You are a mess. You got into that mud at the picnic."
Mom said to Dad, "Fill the bathtub for Chad, but do not get the bathmat wet." 32

Mom said, "Chad, get in the bath. It is hot."
Chad did not wish to get in the bath.
"Your red duck is in the bathtub with Batman and Robin," said Mom. 32

Chad said, "I will not get in the bathtub."
Mom said, " Chad, I will not discuss this. I will not beg. Get in the bath."
Chad ran and hid in the red van. The van was in the shed. 40

"Where is Chad? Where did Chad run off to?" Mom said. She was a bit mad.
Dad said, "Did he vanish? A hot bath will not kill him. Wetness is not bad for him." 34

"I will check the bed. Chad is not in the bed," said Dad.
Mom said, "I will check on the back deck. Well, he is not on the deck." 29

Dad said, "I will check the shed. I bet he hid in the van."
"There you are, Chad! You hid in the van," said Dad.
Bad luck for Chad. Chad had a bath and it was not hot. 38

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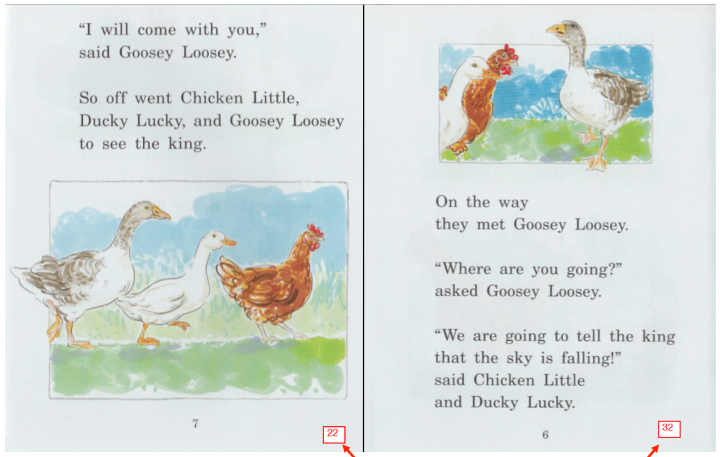
Illustration of Level J Guided Reading Text Prepared for Reading



"I will come with you,"
said Goosey Loosey.

So off went Chicken Little,
Ducky Lucky, and Goosey Loosey
to see the king.

7

22

On the way
they met Goosey Loosey.

"Where are you going?"
asked Goosey Loosey.

"We are going to tell the king
that the sky is falling!"
said Chicken Little
and Ducky Lucky.

6

32

Number of words on page

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Never say "Look at the picture."

- If the word is not decodable, say, "That word is ___."
- Example: *If the student reads "admiral" as "admire", **do not** tell him/her to look at the picture because an admiral is in the picture.*
- *If the student reads "ape" as "monkey," he/she is so far off that a mini lesson on the beginning letter sound and silent e would be pointless. You might point to the word ape and say, "This word is ape. Monkey would start with the letter m."*

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My school insists on guided reading groups with leveled readers for struggling and beginning readers. What do I do?

1. **Provide the text orally:**
   - Read the text to the students before discussing it.
     - Read the whole text or page-by-page, whichever is appropriate.
   - Echo read the text on a page before discussing it.
     - The teacher reads a sentence, then the students read the sentence.
2. **Insist that students receive appropriate decoding instruction**

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Summary

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Summary

Decodable Readers

- Students first develop accuracy by reading decodable readers that are not predictable.
- Use decodable readers to teach students that they can sound out words *without* looking at the picture or thinking about what makes sense.

Leveled Readers

- Students can learn concepts of print using leveled readers.
  - They should not be expected to read the books because the words are not decodable and often require looking at the picture.
- Leveled readers often offer pictures and stories that can be used to develop students' *oral* language comprehension through hearing the books read to them and discussions based on the books or their pictures.

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Directions

Decodable Readers Tracking Chart

Purpose

The *Decodable Readers Tracking Chart* is for students who are beginning to read, no matter their age. We call the chart *Decodable Readers Tracking Chart* because at this stage of reading, students are generally reading decodable text. The chart can also be used with leveled or guided reading texts. It is generally appropriate for guided reading levels A – G, but may be used with higher levels if the students are still working on accuracy and do not need the pressure of measuring rate at the same time.

Overview

- Only accuracy is charted.
- There is no timing because rate is not important at this stage.
- The goal is to read all the words in the assigned section correctly. The student is allowed three tries (during the same session) to read the section with 100% accuracy. A student's turn at reading aloud ends after either: (1) reading the passage accurately, or (2) the third try.
- The *Decodable Readers Tracking Charts* is generally used with students in grades K and 1, but is also appropriate for older students who are reading easy text and working only on accuracy.

Suggestions for Preparing Texts:

- Cover pictures in a book or type only the text on a separate sheet to focus students' attention on the printed words. (Text with no pictures also eliminates the extra time it takes to turn pages in a book with pictures on most pages.)
- Break the text into sections of appropriate length for the student's skills, and write the number of words in the section at the end of each section.
  - ~ For text in books or booklets, write the number of words at end of each page or section.
  - ~ Number of words can be written only on the teacher's copy or on both the students' copies and the teacher's copy.

Steps for completing the chart:

1. ***Name***: Fill in student's name.
2. ***Name or # of Passage or Book*:** Fill in identifying information for the decodable passage or book read by the student.
3. ***Date*:** Fill in date of reading.
4. ***Words Read Correctly out of Total Words*:** After a student reads the section or book, fill in the box with the number of words read correctly and the number of words in the section (e.g. 15/17). Record this information each time the student reads the section. The student stops re-reading when he/she reads all words in the text correctly, or completes a third reading.

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Decodable Readers Tracking Chart

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Version 1

Decodable Readers Tracking Chart

Name: Sammy Sample

Name or # of Passage or Book	Sun and Mud – pp 8-10	Sun and Mud – pp 11-13	Sun and Mud – pp 1813							
Date	9-14	9-15	9-16							

Words Read Correctly out of Total Words

Reading	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total
#1	31 / 37	43 / 45	82 / 82							
#2	36 / 37	45 / 45								
#3	37 / 37									

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Decodable Readers Tracking Chart

Name: _____

Name or # of Passage or Book										
Date										

Words Read Correctly out of Total Words

Reading	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total
#1										
#2										
#3										

Name or # of Passage or Book										
Date										

Words Read Correctly out of Total Words

Reading	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total	# correct / total
#1										
#2										
#3										

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Pre-Reading and Beginning Reading Skills Map

PRE-READING

Phonological

Syllables
1. Count, blend, segment syllables
2. Identify first and last syllable
3. Add, delete, and substitute syllables

Onset-Rime
1. Blend and complete onset-rime

Phoneme
1. Blend & segment 2 & 3 phonemes`

First Sound
1. Identify first sound

Last Sound
1. Identify last sound

Orthographic

Letter Names
1. Sing alphabet song and point to letters
2. Point to letters as teacher names them in random order.
3. Point to and name letters arranged in random order.

Read Heart Words
1. Read 10 Heart Words:
the to and a I you of was for is

Letter Sounds
1. Point to letter and say sound.
2. Hear sound and point to letter.

Students will start phonics instruction only when Pre-Reading Skills have been mastered.

PHONICS

Decoding

Read Words with Short Vowels
1. VC and CVC words
2. Read at least 15 words in connected text within 1 minute, with no more than 1 error (may include first 40 Heart Words)
3. Words with digraphs
4. Words with blends
5. Two syllable words
6. Two syllable words with schwa

Read Words with R-Controlled Vowels
1. Read 1 and 2 syllable words with r-controlled vowels
2. Read at least 25 words in connected text within 1 minute, with no more than 1 error (may include first 55 Heart Words)
3. 3-syllable words

Read Words with Silent E
1. Read 1 and 2 syllable words with silent e
2. Read at least 35 words in connected text within 1 minute, with no more than 1 error (may include first 70 Heart Words)

Continue with Advanced Phonics
Vowel teams, silent letter combinations, etc.

Kindergarten

Grade 1

Heart Words

Read and Spell Heart Words (1)
1. Spell 10 Heart Words from Pre-Reading*
2. Read 30 additional Heart Words*

Read and Spell Heart Words (2)
1. Spell 30 Heart Words from (1)
2. Read 15 additional Heart Words

Read and Spell Heart Words (3)
1. Spell 15 Heart Words from (2)
2. Read 15 additional Heart Words

Read and Spell Heart Words (4)
1. Spell 15 Heart Words from (3)
2. Read 15 additional Heart Words

Continue with Heart Words

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