
LITERACY ESSENTIALS: THE JOURNEY FROM SPELLING TO READING

Literacy Essentials is an explicit, systematic, Orton-based phonics and literacy program which teaches students to read through the logic of spelling. Reading skills progress from writing and spelling to reading in a sequence. Each skill is introduced and practiced until mastered from accuracy to fluency. Students journey along a reading continuum in which concepts are first introduced; then, the concepts are supported by repetitive practice; finally, teachers assess these concepts for mastery. The multisensory techniques employed by Literacy Essentials include explicit instruction, interactive analysis, and graphic organization.

LITERACY ESSENTIALS INCORPORATES THE ELEMENTS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE, STRUCTURED LITERACY PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS SKILLS

- Literacy Essentials sequences phonemic awareness instruction from the easiest to most difficult skills. Students learn to identify beginning, final, and medial sounds; segment and blend sounds; rhyme; delete and substitute sounds.

SOUND SYMBOL ASSOCIATION

- In Literacy Essentials, handwriting begins early in literacy because students need to write letters to spell the sounds they hear in words. Handwriting is a complex skill that is taught systematically by breaking instruction into subskills. Students practice handwriting extensively in order to achieve mastery. Cursive instruction begins in the middle of second grade. Writing is integrated into every literacy lesson.
- Through a multi-sensory process, Literacy Essentials explicitly teaches children how the **spoken** English language is **written** with **42** sounds represented by **26** letters that are combined differently to form **72** spelling patterns, which are referred to as **phonograms**.

LITERACY ESSENTIALS TEACHES THE ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE BY BEGINNING WITH SPELLING INSTEAD OF READING. THIS PROCESS IS KNOWN AS ENCODING—TAKING SOUNDS AND MAPPING THEM TO PRINT. CHILDREN GAIN A FIRM UNDERSTANDING OF THE CODE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY LINKING SPELLING AND READING THROUGH THE USE OF PHONOGRAMS AND APPROXIMATELY 44 ENGLISH SPELLING RULES.

SYLLABLE INSTRUCTION

- Students learn that syllables are parts of a word that contain one vowel sound and all the consonants associated with the vowel sound.
- Words are syllabicated for spelling. Students learn a total of eight syllable types that include compound words and affixes, which usually form their own syllable for spelling.

MORPHOLOGY

- The spelling word lists in Literacy Essentials move systematically through English by beginning with the Anglo-Saxon portion of the language and advancing into its Greek and Latin side.
- Literacy Essentials teaches students how words change in spelling and meaning by adding prefixes and suffixes to root words.

SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

- Literacy Essentials contains instructional sequence for grammar and composition. The sequence commences with kindergarteners learning the four different sentence types; by the end of second grade, students have been introduced to compound sentences, compound subjects, and compound predicates. Moreover, the concepts outlined in the grammar scope and sequence spiral in kindergarten, first, and second grade.
- Since writing is the most effective form of integrated practice, students practice different kinds of grammatical structures by writing varying sentence types. Each day, students also practice spelling by writing one or two original sentences using the spelling words provided. These spelling words have been grouped in a manner that reduces their cognitive load and allows them to focus on correct spelling.
- Students begin to read and comprehend written text using a set of controlled readers that are aligned to the sequence of phonogram instruction within Literacy Essentials. Beginning in the middle of first grade, students move into uncontrolled and leveled texts to practice comprehension independently.
- Teachers read aloud to students daily using high-quality texts and literature.

LITERACY ESSENTIALS DOES NOT:

- Teach students to read by using sight words.
- Teach students to read by using letter names.
- Teach students to guess while reading or writing.

Literacy essentials is a comprehensive literacy program that integrates phonemic awareness, phonics, reading, read-alouds and literature, handwriting, spelling, grammar, and writing.

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