

2

Phonics and Word Identification



Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg

Chapter Questions

1. How do children learn to decode words?
2. How do effective teachers assess students' letter and word identification abilities?
3. What does research show are the best ways of teaching phonics?
4. Who has difficulty learning phonics and what can be done to assist them?
5. What strategies can parents use to help their child learn phonics skills?

Mr. Bill and Emily

Mr. Bill, as his students like to call him, is a second-grade teacher beginning his third year of teaching at Doolittle Elementary in downtown Chicago. As is his practice, Mr. Bill conducts a number of short assessments in the first two weeks of school to get a better handle on where his students are in their reading development and to help in planning small-group instruction. While his students are engaged in independent work, Mr. Bill invites Emily, apparently one of his more precocious readers, to join him in the reading center. He had asked her to pick a favorite book or two and show him her "very best reading."

"Emily," asks Mr. Bill, "what book did you choose to share with me today?" Emily proudly holds up a copy of *The Summer of the Swans* by Betsy Byars and says, "I'm ready to show you my very best reading, Mr. Bill."

"Go for it!" responds Mr. Bill. "Let's do it! Pick out a page and show me your very best reading." He then turns on the tape recorder.

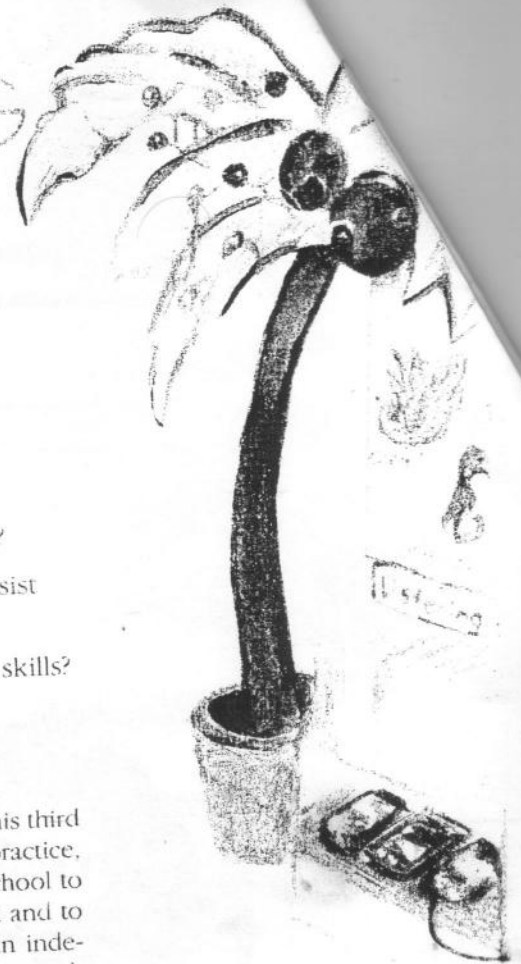
Emily opens her book to page 46, where she had placed her bookmark, and begins reading. At one point, Emily reads tentatively: "Already he had started shhh—aaakkk—ing, *shaking* his head again, all the while waaa—chh—ing the swans gliding across the dark water." Emily looks up for a reaction from her teacher.

Mr. Bill says, "I like how you stretched out those words you didn't know like a rubber band so you could *hear* the sounds and blend them. Well done! Let's continue."

Emily reads, "'Sss—kwint—ing, *squinting!*'" then quickly looks up with a mix of anticipation and dread in her eyes.

"Right again! You're quite a reader, Miss Emily!" says Mr. Bill. Emily beams at Mr. Bill's words of praise.

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Chapter 2 Phonics and Word Identification

When Emily's recitation is finished, she looks up, obviously hoping for some sign of approval from the room's best reader, Mr. Bill. Mr. Bill says, "Emily, I've already noticed this year how much you enjoy poetry." When Emily nods, Mr. Bill says, "Me, too! I love poetry that rhymes and also tells a story. One of my favorite poems is by a man named Pek Gunn. He was from Tennessee and liked to tell stories from his childhood."

Mr. Bill continues, "Pek Gunn wrote a poem called 'June Bug on a String'* that talks about how children a hundred years ago used to catch June bugs. They're bugs kind of like bumblebees, except they don't sting. Kids would tie a thread around a June bug and then let it fly around while they held the string and watched."

"That sounds mean," responds Emily.

"I see your point. But they didn't hurt the bug—they just watched it fly slowly around."

"I guess that's okay," says Emily. "As long as they let the June bug go after they played awhile."

"They did. The point of the poem is that whoever holds the string in life is in control. So, the child in the poem holding the string was in control!"

"Mr. Bill, I see what you mean. But what are you trying to tell me?" Emily queries.

"Only this. When I see how well you are coming along with your reading, I see a girl who is getting control over reading like a grown-up! This year we are



David Mager/Pearson Learning Photo Studios

* The poem "Junebug on a String" was written by the late poet laureate of Tennessee, Richard "Pek" Gunn. His two self-published books of poetry, *Keep On Laughin': It's Good for What Ails You: Nostalgic in Verse and Short Story*; and *Tumblin' Creek Tales and Other Poems* are out of print, but can be found for purchase from online bookstores.

going to learn new ways to make sure that, whenever you come to a new word in a book, you'll be able to pronounce that new word as fast as lightning. That way, you will be the one holding the string. You'll be in control of reading all the time!"

How Do Children Learn to "Decode" Words?

What do you think of when you hear the word *phonics*? Does it call to mind the old phrase "sounding out words"? If so, you're not alone. But the truth is, there is much more to learning to unlock the code of written language than you may think. An understanding of the development of phonics and other decoding skills is essential for effective assessment and teaching. In this chapter we take a close, evidence-based look at what children must know and be able to do to effectively "decode" words using phonics and related word identification skills, and the teacher's role in fostering the learning process.

What Is Phonics?

Phonics refers to how alphabet spellings relate to speech sounds in systematic and predictable ways (letter-sound relationships or **graphophonemic knowledge**), and how this knowledge can be used to identify words in print (National Research Council, 1998; Rasinski & Padak, 1996). Before we go further in this conversation about phonics, let's clarify the difference between two important skills: word identification and word recognition.

Word identification has to do with the skills students learn that help them to figure out the pronunciation of a word in print. This is what the old phrase, *sound out* means. When a reader sees a new word in print (for example, *preamble*), he or she must be able to blend the speech sounds together that are represented by the letters *pre/amb/le* to pronounce the word correctly. The act of correctly pronouncing the word in print is what we mean by *word identification*. Word identification skills are sometimes referred to as *word attack skills* because the purpose is to break the code of written words and translate the letters, affixes, syllables, and so forth back to a spoken word.

Word recognition, on the other hand, has to do with connecting a printed word's pronunciation with its meaning. It is possible for a student to use word identification skills to pronounce a word in print, yet not be able to connect the pronunciation of the word to its meaning, thereby failing at word recognition. For instance, a child may well be able to use word identification skills to pronounce the word *mordant*, yet have no idea what the word means. By the way, do you know the meaning of the word *mordant*? If not, then you now know the difference between word identification (the ability to pronounce a word in print—*mordant* is pronounced /more•dent/), and word recognition (the ability to understand the word's meaning). Thus, when we think of phonics, structural analysis, application of onset and rime, and so forth, we are talking about word identification.

Learning the Alphabetic Principle



While the spelling of most words in American English remains the same, some ELs have learned English in countries that use British English spelling (like Canada and India), so words like "color" are spelled "colour," "recognize" is "recognise," and "judgment" is "judgement."

Research informs us that, from birth, children begin learning oral language (which never stops, of course) then learn, either on their own or with help, that spoken words have individual speech sounds called *phonemes*. By developing an awareness of phonemes in words, they have learned to hear the parts of spoken words. We call this ability to pull apart spoken words and attend to the individual phonemes as **segmentation**. Next in children's literacy learning journey comes an awareness of the alphabetic principle.

The **alphabetic principle** is the concept that letters or letter combinations represent speech sounds in whole, spoken words.

Understanding of the alphabetic principle is the first step toward learning to decode words using phonics. It is a critical conceptual connection between spoken language and written language that young children must acquire to profit from phonics instruction. Primary-grade teachers create instructional strategies that help children learn the following:

- Speech is made up of individual speech sounds (phonemes) that are represented by specific letters (graphemes) and letter combinations (e.g., the speech sound /r/ is always written using the letter *r*).
- The 26 letters of the English alphabet represent certain sounds.
- The spelling of most words remains the same across the various books and texts students will encounter (i.e., the words *open* and *weather* are always spelled the same in print).

In summary, when phonemic awareness is combined with letter-name knowledge, students attain a new conceptual understanding—the alphabetic principle (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1989). This understanding is necessary for students to progress in their reading development, particularly in learning phonics. As students become aware of the alphabetic principle, teachers can expect to effectively provide them phonics instruction.

Phonics and Related Word Attack Skills

Surveys conducted by the International Reading Association (IRA) found that "phonics" is one of the most talked-about subjects in the field of reading education. Before we plunge into an "executive briefing" for teachers of phonics and related decoding and word recognition skills, we invite you to take a short pretest to find out what you already know—or what you need to know—about phonics. Complete the *Phonics Quick Test* (Figure 2.1) before reading further. The results may surprise you!

Important Phonics Patterns

Most states and local school districts have either developed or purchased a reading program with a *scope and sequence* of reading skills to help teachers know which reading skills should be taught at each grade level. The primary value of a scope and sequence of skills is that it helps teachers approach decoding instruction systematically. A secondary value is that it helps coordinate instruction across the state, which

Figure 2.1 The Phonics Quick Test

Phonics Quick Test*

1. The word *chuckle* is broken into syllables between _____ and _____. The *a* has an _____-controlled sound, and the *e* is _____.
2. In the word *small*, *sm-* is known as the onset and *-all* is known as the _____.
3. *Ch* in the word *chair* is known as a _____.
4. The letter *c* in the word *city* has a _____ sound, and in the word *cow* has a _____ sound.
5. The letters *bl* in the word *blue* are referred to as a consonant _____.
6. The underlined vowels in the words *author*, *spread*, and *blue* are known as vowel _____.
7. The words *tag*, *run*, *cot*, and *get* fit which vowel pattern? _____
8. The words *glide*, *take*, and *use* fit the _____ vowel pattern.
9. The word part *work-* in the word *working* is known as a _____.
10. The word part *-ing* in the word *working* is known as a _____.
11. Teaching students the meaning of prefixes, suffixes, and root words to help them better understand word meanings is part of word attack skills known as _____.
12. Writers often provide _____, which help readers discover the meaning of unknown words in print.

*Answers to the *Phonics Quick Test* are found at the end of this chapter, on p. 60.

is especially useful in maintaining continuity in learning for highly mobile students. Texas, California, Mississippi, Kansas, and Oklahoma are just a few states that have developed their own scope and sequence of reading skills. Following are a few phonics skills that seem to be included in virtually all commercial or locally developed scope and sequence charts of reading skills.

Beginning Consonant Sounds in Words. Arguably the single most efficient phonics generalization to teach has to do with identifying beginning consonant sounds in words. This is the best starting point for phonics instruction because consonants more regularly represent consistent phonemes than do vowels. It is easy to see this consistency of grapheme-phoneme relationship of consonants with the sounds they represent in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 that follow. In other words, consonant sounds tend to be more constant or reliable compared to vowel sounds. However, not all consonants are created equal—some are much more stable than others! The most consistent or stable consonants and their sounds are listed in Table 2.1.

Just to prove the point that not all consonants are created equal (i.e., some consonants are not as consistent as others), we share in Table 2.2 some of the not-very-consistent consonants that should not be taught until after students make some significant gains in phonics knowledge.

The C Rule. The letter *c* is an irregular consonant because it represents more than one phoneme. Rather, it can be used to represent two other phonemes that are already represented by the letters *k* and *s*. In general, when the letter *c* is followed by the letters *a*, *o*, or *u*, it will represent the sound we associate with the letter *k*, also known as the *hard c* sound. Some examples are the words *cake*, *cosmic*, and *cute*.

Table 2.1 Most Consistent Consonants

Sound	Spelling and Percentage of Use in English	Example(s)
/b/	b (97%)	ball
/d/	d (98%)	doll
/h/	h (98%)	hall
/l/	l (91%)	lost
/m/	m (94%)	Molly
/n/	n (97%)	not
/p/	p (96%)	put
/r/	r (97%)	road
/t/	t (97%)	tell
/v/	v (99.5%)	vault

Table 2.2 Some Not-Very-Consistent Consonants

Sound	Spellings and Percentage of Use in English	Example(s)
/f/	f (78%), ff, ph, lf	fun, staff, phone, wolf
/g/	g (88%), gg, gh	good, egg, ghost
/j/	g (66%), j (22%), dg	giraffe, jelly, judge
/k/	c (73%), cc, k (13%), ck, lk, q	can, stucco, rock, Chuck, chalk, bisque
/s/	s (73%), c (17%), ss	some, cent, stress
/y/	i (55%), y (44%)	onion, yell
/z/	z (23%), zz, s (64%)	zip, jazz, easy

On the other hand, the letter *c* can sometimes represent the sound associated with the letter *s*. This is referred to as the *soft c* sound. The *soft c* sound is usually produced when *c* is followed by *e*, *i*, or *y*. Examples of the *soft c* sound are found in the words *celebrate*, *circus*, and *cycle*.

The G Rule. *G* is the key symbol for the phoneme we hear in the word *get* (Hull, 1989, p. 35). The consonant *g* is also irregular, having both a soft and a hard sound. The rules are the same as for the letter *c*: When *g* is followed by the letters *e*, *i*, or *y*, it represents a soft *g* or /j/ sound, as with the words *gently*, *giraffe*, and *gym*. If *g* is followed by the letters *a*, *o*, or *u*, then it usually represents the hard or regular sound, as with the words *garden*, *go*, and *sugar*.

The CVC Pattern. When a vowel comes between two consonants, it usually represents what is referred to as a *short* vowel sound. Examples of words following the CVC pattern include *sat*, *ran*, *let*, *pen*, *win*, *fit*, *bot*, *mop*, *sun*, and *cut*.

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Vowel Digraphs (CVVC). When two vowels come together in a word, the first vowel usually carries what is referred to as a *long* sound and the second vowel is silent. This occurs especially often with the *oa*, *ee*, and *ay* combinations. Some examples are *toad*, *fleet*, and *day*. A common slogan used by teachers to help children remember this generalization is "When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking."

The VCE (Final Silent E) Pattern. When two vowels appear in a word and one is an *e* at the end of the word, the first vowel is generally long and the final *e* is silent. Examples include *cape*, *rope*, and *kite*.

The CV Pattern. When a consonant is followed by a vowel, the vowel usually produces a long sound. This is especially easy to see in two-letter words such as *be*, *go*, and *so*.

R-Controlled Vowels. Vowels that appear before the letter *r* are usually neither long nor short but tend to be overpowered or "swallowed up" by the /r/ sound. Examples include *person*, *player*, *neighborhood*, and *herself*.

Other Important Phonics Terms and Skills to Be Taught

Even though the phonics generalizations just noted are some of the most useful, most commercially published reading programs focus attention on many others. Following are several more terms, definitions, and examples of other phonics skills related to consonants and vowels not already discussed in this chapter.

Consonant Digraphs. Two consonants that produce only one speech sound (*th*, *sh*, *ng*) are called **consonant digraphs**. Examples of words containing consonant digraphs follow.

- ch*—children, change, merchant, search, which, branch
- th*—thank, author, both, that, mother, smooth
- ng*—sling, gang, long, fang, hung, wrong

Consonant Blends or Clusters. Two or more consonants coming together in which the speech sounds of all the consonants may be heard (*bl*, *fr*, *sk*, *spl*) are referred to as **consonant blends** or **clusters**. Examples of words containing consonant blends follow:

- bl*—black, block, blast, blur, oblige, nimbly
- fr*—frost, fruit, afraid, befriend, leapfrog, refresh
- sk*—sky, skunk, outskirts, desk, task
- spl*—splash, splat, split, splotch

Vowel Digraphs. Two vowels together in a word that produce only one speech sound (*ee*, *oo*, *ie*, *ai*) are called **vowel digraphs**. The usual rule is "When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking," but this is not always so. Examples of words containing vowel digraphs follow:

- ee*—eel, sleep, week, three, spree
- ea*—head, each, threat, heaven
- oa*—houseboat, oak, coat, loaf, toad

* consonant digraph / phonograms

* vowel digraph / diphthongs

→ toad, fleet
day (because of giving vowel sound)

* CVVC: See

⇒ i, before 'e' except before 'c'

believe, receive

receive, perceive

Chapter 2 Phonics and Word Identification

Symbol


← schwa (schwa symbol)

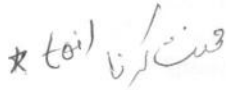
Schwa. Some vowel letters produce the *uh* sound (*a* in *America*). The schwa is represented by the backward upside-down *e* symbol: *ə*. Examples of words containing the schwa sound follow:

uh sound

a—*about, ago, several, canvass, china, comma*

e—*effect, erroneous, happen, children, label, agent*

o—*other, mother, atom, riot, second, objection*

* tail


APP for words
 for advance levels.

Diphthongs. Two vowels together in a word that produce a single, glided sound (*oi* in *oil*, *oy* in *boy*) are known as **diphthongs**. Here are some examples:

ow—*down, flower, crowd, towel, how, bow, avow*

oi—*oil, voice, exploit, soil, void, typhoid*

ou—*out, hour, doubt, our, around, count*

It don't make single sound but produced as single

Support/
 enhance

Onset and Rime

Because many phonics generalizations are not as consistent in English as we would like, teachers buttress their instruction with other word attack strategies. Adams (1990b) states that linguistic researchers have found an instructionally useful alternative form of word identification involving onsets and rimes. An **onset** is that part of the syllable that comes before the vowel; the **rime** is the rest (Adams, 1990b, p. 55). Although all syllables must have a rime, not all have an onset. The following are a few examples of onsets and rimes in words.

Word	Onset	Rime
<i>a</i>	—	<i>a</i>
<i>in</i>	—	<i>in</i>
<i>aft</i>	—	<i>aft</i>
<i>sat</i>	<i>s-</i>	<i>-at</i>
<i>trim</i>	<i>tr-</i>	<i>-im</i>
<i>spring</i>	<i>spr-</i>	<i>-ing</i>

One may wonder about usefulness of onset and rime in the classroom, at least as far as word identification instruction is concerned. First, some evidence indicates that children are better able to identify the spelling of whole rimes than of individual vowel sounds (Adams, 1990b; Barton, Miller, & Macken, 1980; Blevins, 1997; Mustafa, 1997; Treiman, 1985). Second, children as young as 5 and 6 years of age can transfer what they know about the pronunciation of one word to another that has the same rime, such as *call* and *ball* (Adams, 1990b). Third, although many traditional phonics generalizations with vowels are very unstable, even irregular phonics patterns seem to remain stable within rimes! For example, the *ea* vowel digraph is quite consistent within rimes, with the exceptions of *-ear* in *bear* compared to *bear*, and *-ead* in *bead* compared to *bead* (Adams, 1990b). Finally, there appears to be some utility in the learning of rimes for children. Nearly 500 primary-level words can be derived through the following set of only 37 rimes (Adams, 1990b; Blachman, 1984):

-ack	-al	-ide	-ock	-ain	-ate
-ight	-oke	-ake	-aw	-ill	-op
-ale	-ay	-in	-or	-all	-eat
-ine	-ore	-ame	-ell	-ing	-uck
-an	-est	-ink	-ug	-ank	-ice
-ip	-ump	-ap	-ick	-ir	-unk
-ash					

The application of onset and rime to reading and word identification instruction seems almost obvious. Many students will find it easier to identify new words in print by locating familiar rimes. Spelling efficiency may also increase as rimes are matched with onsets to construct "invented" spellings. (We prefer to call them "temporary" spellings so that children and parents understand that we intend to develop correct spellings.)

One teacher remarked that the easiest way to teach rimes is through *rhymes*! She was exactly right. Children learn many otherwise laborious tasks through rhymes, songs, chants, and raps. Any of these that use rhyming words can be very useful to teachers. For example, a teacher may wish to use an excerpt like the one shown below from the book *Taxi Dog* by Debra and Sal Barracca to emphasize the *-ide* and *-ill* rimes. The rimes are noted in bold type for easy identification by the reader.

It's just like a **dream**,
 Me and Jim—we're a **team!**
 I'm always there at his **side**.
 We never stand **still**,
 Every day's a new **thrill**—
 Come join us next time for a **ride!** (1990, p. 30)

From *The Adventures of Taxi Dog* by Debra and Sal Barracca, pictures by Mark Buehner, copyright © 1990 by Debra and Sal Barracca, Text. Used by permission of Dial Books for young Readers, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. 345 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014. All rights reserved.

✕ Structural Analysis: An Important Decoding Tool

Another strategy readers use to decode unfamiliar words in print is called **structural analysis**. Rather than attacking words on the letter-phoneme level or on the onset and rime level, this kind of word identification uses a reader's knowledge of meaning "chunks" in words. Here's how it works. A reader encounters a word, usually a multi-syllabic word, that is unknown to him in print (that is, the word is known to him when he hears it; just not familiar in print)—let's say the word is *unbelievable*. Let's say our reader in this example has heard the word part or root word *believe* dozens of times in conversations and has seen it in print (e.g., in sentences like "Yes, I believe you" or "I believe that all children should have a nice birthday party") and immediately recognizes it. The prefix *un-* is likewise very familiar to the reader from other words he has learned to read, such as *untie*, *unreal*, and *unbook*. He is able to infer from his prior knowledge of words that *un-* means something like "not" or "to reverse." Finally, the reader's mind focuses briefly on the suffix (and word) *-able* and its meaning, also deduced from his prior knowledge of words like *workable*. In our example, then, the reader has found a new way of decoding words at something larger than the sound-symbol level. He progressed from the root word (*believe*), to the prefix (*un-*), to the suffix (*-able*). Furthermore, it was the meaning of these word parts that led to successful decoding. Structural analysis of words takes decoding to a new and higher

level. This is a particularly important strategy for children in second and third grade, during which multisyllabic words become more common and must be decoded in chunks!

How Structural Analysis Works. Words are made up of basic meaning units known as **morphemes**. Morphemes may be divided into two classes—bound and free. Bound morphemes must be attached to a root word (sometimes called a base word) to have meaning. Prefixes and suffixes are bound morphemes (e.g., *pre-*, *un-*, *dis-*, *en-*, *inter-*, *extra-*, *-ed*, *-ies*, *-er*, *-ing*). Free morphemes (base words or root words) are meaning units that can stand alone and have meaning. The word *replay* has both a bound and free morpheme: *re-*, the bound morpheme (prefix) meaning “again,” and *play*, the free morpheme that has meaning on its own. Sometimes two free morphemes combine to form a new compound word, such as *doghouse*, *outdoors*, *playground*, and *tonight*.

Teachers can help children begin to practice structural analysis of words in the same ways as they do onset and rime. The idea to get across to students is that whenever a good reader comes to a word she cannot identify through context and phonics alone, she sometimes looks within the word for a recognizable base (root) word

and its accompanying prefix, suffix, or endings (Durkin, 1989; Lass & Davis, 1985). In other words, we tell our students to “look for something you know within the word.”

Figure 2.2 shows selected examples of affixes adapted from *The Reading Teacher’s Book of Lists* (Fry, Kress, & Fountoukidis, 2000).

Figure 2.2 Examples of Affixes

Prefixes					
Prefix	Meaning	Example	Prefix	Meaning	Example
<i>intro-</i>	inside	<i>introduce</i>	<i>ad-</i>	to, toward	<i>adhere</i>
<i>pro-</i>	forward	<i>project</i>	<i>para-</i>	beside, by	<i>paraphrase</i>
<i>post-</i>	after	<i>postdate</i>	<i>pre-</i>	before	<i>predate</i>
<i>sub-</i>	under	<i>submarine</i>	<i>per-</i>	throughout	<i>pervade</i>
<i>ultra-</i>	beyond	<i>ultramodern</i>	<i>ab-</i>	from	<i>abnormal</i>
<i>dis-</i>	opposite	<i>disagree</i>	<i>trans-</i>	across	<i>transatlantic</i>
Suffixes					
Suffix	Meaning	Example	Suffix	Meaning	Example
<i>-ant</i>	one who	<i>servant</i>	<i>-ee</i>	object of action	<i>payee</i>
<i>-ist</i>	one who practices	<i>pianist</i>	<i>-ary</i>	place for	<i>library</i>
<i>-ence</i>	state/quality of	<i>violence</i>	<i>-ity</i>	state/quality of	<i>necessity</i>
<i>-ism</i>	state/quality of	<i>baptism</i>	<i>-ette</i>	small	<i>dinette</i>
<i>-s, -es</i>	plural	<i>cars</i>	<i>-ard</i>	one who	<i>coward</i>
<i>-kin</i>	small	<i>napkin</i>	<i>-ing</i>	material	<i>roofing</i>

English Learners
 ELs may apply their knowledge of cognates when they come across unfamiliar vocabulary words. Romance languages like Spanish, Italian, French, and Germanic-based English have a large number of cognates. (Latin heavily influenced English and the romance languages' linguistic roots are distinctly Latin). Examples of Spanish/English cognates are: curioso/curious, decidir/to decide, naturalmente/naturally, and novelas/novels.
 Same meaning & similar sounds

unlabeled
 lady
 on & like
 pre & suffix
 like
 root
 free
 bound

-> letter naming test
 person custom education course 212
 grandprix
 silent

vowel
 sound

Putting It All Together: A Sequence for Phonics and Word Identification Skill Instruction

Evidence-based reading research allows us to suggest a general sequence of early literacy skills that directly relate to word identification. This sequence is shown in Figure 2.3. Children who become proficient in these word identification skills by the end of grade 3 and who practice them regularly in reading for pleasure will attain a high degree of fluency. Note that these benchmark skills are appropriate for children learning to read in English or Spanish. We also include benchmark skills for the closely related areas of spelling and writing.

Figure 2.3 End-of-year benchmark skills: K–3

Kindergarten End-of-Year Benchmarks for English and Spanish
DECODING AND WORD RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recognizes and names all uppercase and lowercase letters ✓ Knows that the sequence of written letters and the sequence of spoken sounds in a word are the same ✓ (Spanish only) Applies letter sound knowledge of consonant-vowel patterns to produce syllables
SPELLING AND WRITING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writes independently most uppercase and lowercase letters ✓ Uses phonemic awareness and letter knowledge to spell independently (invented/temporary spelling)
ORAL READING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recognizes some words by sight, including a few common words
First Grade End-of-Year Benchmarks for English and Spanish
DECODING AND WORD RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Decodes phonetically regular one-syllable words and nonsense words accurately ✓ (Spanish only) Decodes two-syllable words, using knowledge of sounds, letters, and syllables including consonants, vowels, blends, and stress
SPELLING AND WRITING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Spells three- and four-letter short vowel words correctly (English only) ✓ Uses phonics to spell independently ✓ Uses basic punctuation and capitalization ✓ Uses graphic organizers to plan writing with guidance ✓ Produces a variety of types of compositions like stories, descriptions, journal entries, and so on.

(continued)

Figure 2.3 (Continued)

- ✓ (Spanish only) Recognizes words that use specific spelling patterns such as *r/rr, y/ll, s/c/z, q/c/k, g/j, j/x, b/v, ch, h, i/y, gue, and gui*
- ✓ (Spanish only) Spells words with two syllables using dieresis marks, accents, *r/rr, y/ll, s/c/z, q/c/k, g/j, j/x, b/v, ch, h, and i/y* accurately
- ✓ (Spanish only) Uses verb tenses appropriately and consistently

ORAL READING

- ✓ Reads aloud with fluency any text that is appropriate for the first half of grade 1
- ✓ Comprehends any text that is appropriate for the first half of grade 1
- ✓ Uses phonic knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text
- ✓ Recognizes common, irregularly spelled words by sight

Second-Grade End-of-Year Benchmarks for English and Spanish

DECODING AND WORD RECOGNITION

- ✓ Decodes phonetically regular two-syllable words and nonsense words
- ✓ (Spanish only) Decodes words with three or more syllables using knowledge of sounds, letters, and syllables including consonants, vowels, blends, and stress
- ✓ (Spanish only) Uses structural cues to recognize words such as compounds, base words, and inflections such as *-mente, -ito, and -ando*

SPELLING AND WRITING

- ✓ Spells previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in own writing
- ✓ Represents the complete sound of a word when spelling independently
- ✓ Begins to use formal language patterns in place of oral language patterns in own writing
- ✓ Uses revision and editing processes to clarify and refine own writing with assistance
- ✓ Writes informative, well-structured reports with organizational help
- ✓ Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products
- ✓ Produces a variety of types of compositions like stories, reports, correspondence, and so on
- ✓ Uses information from nonfiction text in independent writing
- ✓ (Spanish only) Spells words with three or more syllables using silent letters, dieresis marks, accents, verbs, *r/rr, y/ll, s/c/z, q/c/k, g/j, j/x, b/v, ch, h, and i/y* accurately

ORAL READING

- ✓ Reads aloud with fluency any text that is appropriate for the first half of grade 2
- ✓ Comprehends any text that is appropriate for the first half of grade 2

Figure 2.3 (Continued)

- ✓ Uses phon ic knowledge to sound out words, including multisyllable words, when reading text
- ✓ Reads irregularly spelled words, diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word endings accurately

Third-Grade End-of-Year Benchmarks for English and Spanish

DECODING AND WORD RECOGNITION

- ✓ Uses phon ic knowledge and structural analysis to decode words

SPELLING AND WRITING

- ✓ Spells previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in own writing
- ✓ Uses the dictionary to check and correct spelling
- ✓ Uses a variety of formal sentence structures in own writing
- ✓ Incorporates literary words and language patterns in own writing (elaborate descriptions, figurative language)
- ✓ Uses all aspects of the writing process in compositions and reports with assistance
- ✓ Combines information from multiple sources in written reports
- ✓ Suggests and implements editing and revision to clarify and refine own writing with assistance
- ✓ Reviews written work for spelling, mechanics, and presentation independently
- ✓ Produces a variety of written work (response to literature, reports, semantic maps)
- ✓ Uses graphic organizational tools with a variety of texts
- ✓ (Spanish only) Writes proficiently using orthographic patterns and rules such as *qu*, use of *n* before *v*, *m* before *b*, *m* before *p*, and changing *z* to *c* when adding *-es*
- ✓ (Spanish only) Spells words with three or more syllables using silent letters, dieresis marks, accents, verbs, *r/rr*, *y/ll*, *s/c/z*, *q/c/k*, *g/j*, *j/x*, *b/v*, *ch*, *h*, and *i/y* accurately

ORAL READING

- ✓ Reads aloud with fluency any text that is appropriate for the first half of grade 3
- ✓ Comprehends any text that is appropriate for the first half of grade 3

How Do Effective Teachers Assess Letter and Word Identification?

We have seen in this chapter that word identification skills proceed from grasp of the alphabetic principle to early phonics skills, then to structural analysis and onset and rime. In this section we present essential assessment strategies used by effective teachers in determining student needs.