



RESEARCH BASE

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INTRODUCTION

SunSprouts from ETA/Cuisenaire provides shared and guided reading lessons and resources to effectively teach text comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and phonics to children in grades K–3. The Teacher’s Resource Guide supports the teacher by providing clear and explicit direction to deliver focused, scaffolded instruction that addresses the needs of the students. *SunSprouts* helps the teacher organize and plan instruction with flexible grouping—whole class, small groups, partners, and individuals—to provide different contexts for learning as students grow as readers and writers.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate how the *SunSprouts* program links to the latest scientifically based research recommendations for effective literacy instruction. To clearly address the research recommendations of the National Reading Panel, this document is organized into the following strands—Text Comprehension, Fluency, Vocabulary, Phonemic Awareness, and Phonics.

Each strand includes the following sections:

Research Findings on Effective Instruction

This research summary references specific recommendations found in the *Report of the National Reading Panel*; *Teaching Children to Read*; and *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read* and cites primary sources of the report as well as some of the latest research studies.

Instruction with *SunSprouts* Shared and Guided Reading

This section describes specific instructional features of the shared and guided reading lessons to illustrate how and where *SunSprouts* addresses the research recommendations. Direct references to the *SunSprouts Teacher’s Resource Guide*, Peach Level, are cited for closer examination.

TEXT COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION WITH SUNSPROUTS

“Text comprehension is important because comprehension is the reason for reading. Text comprehension is purposeful and active.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 57

Research Findings on Effective Text Comprehension Instruction

Text comprehension research supports explicit teaching of comprehension strategies and scaffolding of instruction to help students become purposeful, active readers who have control over their own reading comprehension. The RAND Reading Study Group, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Research and Improvement, concluded that “effective teachers of comprehension enact practices that reflect the orchestration of knowledge about readers, texts, purposeful activity, and contexts for the purpose of advancing students’ thoughtful, competent, and motivated reading.” (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, pp. 29–30) Effective comprehension strategy instruction is built upon the premise that “...elementary students can learn to comprehend actively—they can learn to predict, question, and make mental images, seek to clarify confusions, and summarize as they read.” (Pressley, 1998, p. 220)

Role of the Teacher and Student in Comprehension Strategy Instruction

The teacher’s role of modeling and guiding readers is prevalent in comprehension strategy instruction studies. Tregaskes & Daines (1989) focused on the teacher guiding students to “analyze the reading task, to make efficient plans for purposeful reading, and to use appropriate strategies to enhance their ability to comprehend and reason from the text.” Stevens, Slavin & Farnish (1991) described direct instruction that involved “teachers presenting comprehension and metacomprehension strategies, and students practicing the strategies with teachers guiding them and giving them corrective feedback.”

The National Reading Panel defined explicit instruction during which the teacher gives direct explanation, models, guides, and assists students as they learn how and when to use the strategies, and helps the students practice the strategies until they can apply them independently. (*Put Reading First*, 2001) Duke & Pearson (2002) presented a research-based model for comprehension strategy instruction that clearly defines both the teacher’s and student’s roles. “The model of comprehension instruction we believe is best supported by research does more than simply include instruction in specific comprehension strategies and opportunities to read, write, and discuss texts—it connects and integrates these different learning opportunities. Instructional method includes explicit description of strategy, teacher and or student modeling of strategy, collaborative use of strategy, guided practice using the strategy with gradual releases of responsibility, and independent use of the strategy.” (Duke & Pearson, 2002, pp. 208–209)

Researched-Based Comprehension Strategies

Researchers have identified specific comprehension strategies that help students learn to be strategic readers. “A set of specific comprehension strategies that have firm scientific basis for improving text comprehension include:

- monitoring comprehension
- using graphophonic and semantic organizers
- answering questions
- generating questions
- recognizing story structure
- summarizing.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, pp. 49–53

“Metacognition, which is needed to use comprehension strategies well, can begin during direct teacher explanations and modeling of strategies but develops most completely when students practice using comprehension strategies as they read. It seems especially helpful if such practice includes opportunities to explain one’s strategy use and to reflect on the use of strategies over time...”

—Pressley, 2002, p. 292

Techniques for Engaging Students

Effective text comprehension instruction fosters students' understanding of comprehension strategies as well as the metacognitive awareness of strategies used to comprehend different types of texts for different purposes (Pressley, 2002). Student engagement before, during, and after reading is supported by the teacher who encourages students over time to practice, reflect, and flexibly use strategies to solve problems and make meaning with a range of texts. The following research-based techniques are purposeful for students and effective for comprehension strategy instruction with all types of texts:

- Building and activating background knowledge before reading engages students during reading to better comprehend the text. (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Pressley, 2002)
- Modeling the skills and strategies of proficient readers by reading aloud and thinking aloud is effective in enhancing students' comprehension monitoring abilities. (Bauman, Seifert-Kessell & Jones, 1992)
- The use of visual tools or graphic organizers such as story boards, story maps, charts, and webs improves comprehension by helping students recognize text structure, summarize, and monitor their reading. (Reutzel, 1985; Baumann & Bergeron, 1993; Armbruster, Anderson & Ostertag, 1987) Rubman & Waters (2000) found that the use of a story board helped students monitor comprehension and integrate ideas to create meaning better than when the text was read without a visual tool.

Text Comprehension Instruction with *SunSprouts* Shared and Guided Reading

SunSprouts text comprehension instruction explicitly teaches comprehension strategies and engages students in purposeful activities with fiction and nonfiction texts. The teacher's role in explicit instruction involves **explaining and modeling** comprehension strategies and **guiding and assisting** students as they practice and independently apply the strategies. *SunSprouts* Shared and Guided Reading lessons explicitly teach the following specific research-based comprehension strategies:

- responding to and generating questions
- summarizing
- self-monitoring
- analyzing text/story structure
- using graphic/semantic organizers
- predicting outcomes
- visualizing images from a story/text

To view the sequence of comprehension strategies in the shared and guided reading lessons for one level, refer to the Skills Chart below that appears in the *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 26–27.

LOCUS OF INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE	WHOLE GROUP	SMALL GROUP	PARTNERS	INDIVIDUALS
Skill/Activity	Shared Reading & Writing	Guided Reading and Writing	Guided and Independent Practice	Independent Reading & Writing
Text Comprehension Accessing prior knowledge Picturing images from a story Finding information in illustrations Picture/text matching Predicting outcomes Analyzing text/story structure Self-monitoring strategies Graphic/Semantic organizers Responding to questions Creating questions Summarizing	Big Book: build background by connecting prior knowledge to text; model strategies for accessing meaning from text and text structure (plot, setting, character, problem, solution); model predicting outcomes based on what you know and see; question students about text; use sentence strips to reconstruct text patterns	Small Book: build background by connecting prior knowledge to text; model problem-solving strategies for getting meaning from text, illustrations, and text structure (plot, setting, character, problem, solution); help students predict outcomes; question students about text; help students summarize and respond to a text; use sentence strips to reconstruct text patterns	Big Book or Small Book: repeated partner reading will foster better fluency and therefore better comprehension	Big Book or Small Book: repeated reading will foster better fluency and therefore better comprehension

For complete chart see *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 26–27.

The *SunSprouts* Teacher's Resource Guides provide a visual planning tool that illustrates the organization of text comprehension instruction with flexible grouping in the classroom.

SunSprouts Shared Reading Lessons

With **SunSprouts** shared reading lessons, the teacher models fluent reading and provides direct instruction by explaining and modeling the use of strategies to comprehend text. The students practice and apply the strategies through multiple readings of the book for different purposes as the teacher guides and supports. To view the following highlighted features of text comprehension instruction throughout a shared reading lesson, refer to the **SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide**, Peach Level, pp. 35–36, *Share Bear*, or a shared reading lesson of your choice.

- Each **SunSprouts** shared reading lesson focuses on a specific comprehension strategy for explicit text comprehension instruction. (Lesson Features: Comprehension Strategies)
- Activities and prompts **create interest** and help students access and build **prior knowledge** so they can better comprehend the text. (Warm-up, Build Background Knowledge, Introduce the Book)
- Teacher prompts and questions encourage students to use the **comprehension strategies** of predicting outcomes and generating questions to set a purpose for reading different types of texts. (Introduce the Book)
- The teacher **models fluent reading** with expression and encourages children to join in to practice reading fluently. Children also learn to read for meaning as they collaboratively use the comprehension strategies. (Read the Book)
- **Text structures and features** are highlighted during the reading, and the teacher assesses students' recognition of structures and patterns to improve comprehension. (Read the Book, Assess Understanding)
- Students have opportunities to **share their personal responses** as they discuss and revisit their predictions and questions. (Share Personal Responses)
- **Rereading and retelling activities** ensure practice and application of the comprehension strategy focus of the lesson and also encourage students to use the comprehension strategy of **summarizing**. (Revisit the Big Book: Comprehension)
- **Fluent reader strategies** are highlighted and described to help students develop metacognitive awareness of strategy use to assist in comprehending different types of texts. (Revisit the Big Book: Good Reader Strategy)
- Extension activities include **reading, writing, and listening activities** to help students make connections and to enhance comprehension through independent use of strategies. (Extend the Experience)

SunSprouts Guided Reading Lessons

With **SunSprouts** guided reading lessons, the teacher coaches the students as they practice and apply comprehension strategies while reading texts at the appropriate instructional level. The structure of the lessons, which engages students before, during, and after reading, provides guidance and modeling yet releases responsibility for reading to the students. To view the following highlighted features of text comprehension instruction throughout a guided reading lesson, refer to the **SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide**, Peach Level, pp. 87–92, *Guinea Pigs*, or a guided reading lesson of choice.

- The Before Reading discussions and activities that are used to explain important words and concepts engage students as they access and build prior knowledge needed to derive meaning from the instructional-level text. (Before Reading: Build Background Knowledge, Introduce the Book)
- Graphic organizers such as KWL charts are used as visual tools to aid comprehension throughout the lesson. (Before Reading: Build Background Knowledge; After Reading: Discuss and Respond to the Book)
- Each **SunSprouts** guided reading lesson introduces or provides practice with a specific comprehension strategy. (Lesson Plan Title Page)
- Prompts and questions guide students to use the comprehension strategies of predicting and generating their own questions to enhance comprehension of the text. (Before Reading: Introduce the Book)
- **Fiction and nonfiction text structure, features, and patterns** are highlighted with prompts to encourage students to use their knowledge of the text type to comprehend. (Before Reading: Introduce the Book; During Reading: Guide the Reading; After Reading: Discuss and Respond to the Book) The teacher **assesses** students' recognition of text type and their use of structures, features, and patterns to integrate information for comprehension. (Assess Understanding: Informal Observation)
- The teacher supports **guided practice** by coaching and prompting the students during reading and giving them **corrective feedback as they practice and apply comprehension strategies**. Prompts for **monitoring comprehension** help students attend to making meaning as they read. (During Reading: Guide the Reading)
- Students have opportunities to share their reactions to the book as they **discuss their predictions and questions, their use of comprehension strategies, and text types**. (After Reading: Discuss and Respond to the Book)
- **Rereading** the book provides the opportunity **for practicing and independently applying comprehension strategies**. (After Reading: Reinforce the Reading)
- If further explicit instruction or practice with specific comprehension strategies is needed, as determined through observation and assessment with a Record of Oral Reading, the lesson plan provides additional activities and blackline master activities for **independent practice** of strategies presented in the lesson. (Skills and Strategies: Comprehension Strategies)

To read more about text comprehension instruction with **SunSprouts**, refer to the *Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 10–11.

To read more about assessment with **SunSprouts**, refer to the *Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 20–23.

FLUENCY INSTRUCTION WITH SUNSPROUTS

“Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluency is important because it frees students to understand what they read.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 31

Research Findings on Effective Fluency Instruction

Research on fluency instruction, which focuses on how fluency develops and how it relates to comprehension, supports approaches that provide opportunities for students to listen to good models of fluent reading and to practice through repeated and monitored oral reading. The National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that repeated and monitored oral reading that involved guidance from teachers, peers, or parents had a significant impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across a range of grade levels.

“Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus their attention on what the text means.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 22

Texts for Fluency Instruction

The report of the National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998), states, “Adequate progress in learning to read English (or any other alphabetic language) beyond the initial level depends on sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts written for different purposes.” (p. 223) Using appropriate levels of texts in fluency instruction includes exposing students to a variety of fiction genres and nonfiction text types. *Put Reading First* (2001) recommends that students practice oral repeated reading with connected texts at their independent reading level and that students read a variety of materials including stories, nonfiction, and poetry. Rasinski (2000) suggests that the selections for fluency instruction are written in the reader’s independent-instructional range and are meant to be read aloud with expression. In their review of repeated reading practice and assisted reading studies, Kuhn & Stahl (2000) concluded that having children read easy texts for instruction does not seem to improve their oral reading and that texts might be at instructional level or a bit more difficult. They recommend that the ideal classroom provides time for instruction using somewhat challenging texts and time for recreational reading with relatively easy texts.

“Teachers should formally and informally assess fluency regularly to ensure that students are making progress.... The most informal assessment is simply listening to students read aloud and making a judgment about their progress in fluency.... Other procedures that have been used for measuring fluency include Informal Reading Inventories, miscue analysis, and running records.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 22

Instructional Approaches for Teaching Fluency

Modeled, shared, and small-group reading approaches provide different levels of teacher support to promote oral reading as well as comprehension. Explicit fluency instruction involves the teacher modeling oral reading and teaching specific oral reading strategies. The teacher read-aloud exhibits a model of fluent reading to help students learn what fluency sounds like with different types of texts. (Worthy & Broadus, 2002; Stahl & Kuhn, 2002) The shared reading approach provides the opportunity for the teacher to model fluent reading and teach strategies as well as the opportunity for the students to listen and practice oral reading with feedback from the teacher. In their comparison study of the effectiveness of round robin reading and shared reading, Eldredge, Reutzel & Hollingsworth (1996) concluded that “...the SBE (Shared Book Experience) is effective in reducing young children’s oral reading errors, improving their reading fluency, and increasing their vocabulary acquisition. Reading errors, reading fluency, and vocabulary knowledge all affect reading comprehension. It is therefore not surprising that the SBE had its greatest impact on students’ reading comprehension.” (p. 221)

Small-group reading instruction is effective for teaching oral reading strategies as well as for building confidence in readers. Allinder and colleagues (2001) found that students who were taught and encouraged to use specific oral reading strategies made better progress on comprehension measures than students who

were simply encouraged to do well. The oral reading strategies included reading with inflection, not adding words, pausing at commas and periods, self-monitoring for accuracy, reading at an appropriate pace, and attending to word endings. The students who were engaged in small-group reading instruction were willing to read orally and “profited when encouraged to apply a specific oral reading strategy while engaging in small-group reading instruction.” (Allinder, et al., p. 54) Samuels (2002) contends in his review of research that repeated reading practice produces significant improvement in reading speed, word recognition, and oral reading expression on practiced passages and that the ability to read orally like a skilled reader after a few rereadings of a text is a confidence builder for readers with poor oral reading skills.

Effective approaches for fluency instruction engage and assist students with oral reading as they listen and practice by reading, rereading, and performing. In their review of repeated and assisted oral reading studies, Stahl & Kuhn (2000) found that assisted approaches, such as reading-while-listening, seem to be more effective than unassisted approaches such as just repeated reading. Both repeated readings and listen-while-reading were effective in fostering fluency in a study of the two approaches (Rasinki, 1990). Recommended classroom techniques for repeated oral reading practice include student-adult reading, choral reading, tape-assisted reading, and partner reading. (*Put Reading First*, 2001, pp. 27–28)

Fluency Instruction with *SunSprouts* Shared and Guided Reading

SunSprouts provides multiple opportunities for students to listen to models of fluent reading, to learn specific oral reading strategies, and to practice repeated oral reading with guidance and feedback from teachers, peers, and parents. The *SunSprouts* shared and guided reading books offer a wide range of leveled fiction and nonfiction for **modeling and practicing expressive, fluent reading with instructional and independent-level texts.**

The *SunSprouts* Teacher’s Resource Guides provide a visual planning tool that illustrates the organization of fluency instruction in the classroom.

LOCUS OF INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE	WHOLE GROUP	SMALL GROUP	PARTNERS	INDIVIDUALS
Skill/Activity	Shared Reading & Writing	Guided Reading and Writing	Guided and Independent Practice	Independent Reading & Writing
Fluency Effortless, expressive oral reading Appropriate phrasing for text Correct pauses and inflection per punctuation Comfortable pace	Big Book: Model fluent reading of text Discuss fluent reading techniques Students read repeated refrain Choral Reading Echo Reading Reader’s Theater	Small Book: Model fluent reading of text Students read repetitive refrain and teacher reads other parts Choral reading Passage reading with guidance Echo reading Reader’s Theater	Big Book or Small Book: Partners alternate reading or read together to improve fluency	Big Book or Small Book: Repeated oral reading Tape-assisted reading

For complete chart see *SunSprouts Teacher’s Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 40–41.

SunSprouts Shared Reading Lessons

With *SunSprouts* shared reading lessons, the teacher **models fluent reading with different types of texts** by reading the Big Book with students. The students have opportunities to listen and join in the reading for repeated reading practice. To view the following highlighted features of fluency instruction throughout a shared reading lesson, refer to the *SunSprouts Teacher Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 35–36, *Share Bear*, or a shared reading lesson of your choice.

- The teacher reads the Big Book with expression and emphasizes the features of the texts—poetry, stories, and nonfiction—to **help students learn what fluency sounds like with different types of text**. (Share the Big Book: Read the Book)
- Students read with the teacher and are invited to read repeated refrains for an assisted **repeated reading** experience to practice and improve fluency. (Share the Book: Read the Book)
- The **teaching of specific oral reading strategies**, such as pausing at commas and periods, enables students to see how print concepts and conventions are used in context and how they affect their oral reading fluency. (Revisit the Big Book: Print Concepts and Conventions)
- The teacher models **specific oral reading strategies** that are based on the features of the text, such as reading at an appropriate pace and reading with inflection; the students then practice these strategies. (Revisit the Big Book: Fluency)
- Students reread the books while **listening to audio recordings** for a **reading-while-listening** assisted reading experience. (Extend the Experience: Listening)
- **Student and adult reading** is encouraged with school-to-home connections to provide students with an additional opportunity for repeated reading practice with feedback. (Extend the Experience: School-Home)
- Shared reading books serve as appropriate texts for practicing meaningful repeated readings with **choral reading, echo reading, and reader’s theater**.

SunSprouts Guided Reading Lessons

With *SunSprouts* guided reading lessons, the teacher models fluent reading and coaches students as they read and reread to practice fluency. The small group setting enables the teacher to listen to students read orally, give students feedback, and assess their reading fluency before, during, and after reading. To view the following highlighted features of fluency instruction throughout a guided reading lesson, refer to the *SunSprouts Teacher Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 87–92 *Guinea Pigs*, or a guided reading lesson of your choice.

- The **instructional level books** provide challenges to help students practice and improve their oral reading fluency.
- Students **listen to the teacher model fluent reading** during the first reading of the text. (During Reading: Guide the Reading)
- The teacher assists fluent reading by encouraging students **to apply specific oral reading strategies such as self-monitoring for accuracy, attending to word endings, and reading with expression** as they read the guided reading text. (During Reading: Guide the Reading)
- Students may **reread the text on their own or with a partner** for fluency practice. (After Reading: Reinforce the Reading)
- Students reread the books while **listening to audio recordings** for a **reading-while-listening** assisted reading experience. (After Reading: Reinforce the Reading)
- Teachers **assess students’ fluency through informal observations or Records of Oral Reading** to determine the need for further fluency-building activities. (Assess Understanding)
- If the assessments show that further fluency instruction or practice is needed, the teacher reads the text to model oral expression, speed, and accuracy. Then the students **practice repeated reading in choral readings, partner readings, and reader’s theater**. (Skills and Strategies: Fluency)

To read more about fluency instruction with *SunSprouts*, refer to the *Teacher’s Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 12–13.

To read more about assessment, refer to the *SunSprouts Teacher’s Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 20–23.

VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION WITH SUNSPROUTS

“Vocabulary is important because

- beginning readers use their oral vocabulary to make sense of the words they see in print.
- readers must know what most of the words mean before they can understand what they are reading.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001

Research Findings on Effective Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary research, which focuses on developing and increasing students’ listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies, supports indirect and direct teaching of vocabulary in meaningful contexts to enhance comprehension. The National Reading Panel findings indicated that “vocabulary can be developed indirectly, when students engage daily in oral language, listen to adults read to them, and read extensively on their own” and “... directly, when students are explicitly taught both individual words and word learning strategies.” (*Put Reading First*, p. 45) “This relationship between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension is extremely complex, confounded, as it is, by the complexity of relationships among vocabulary knowledge, conceptual and cultural knowledge, and instructional opportunities.” (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, p. 35)

Indirect Vocabulary Instruction

Reading aloud to students and providing opportunities for students to interact and participate in the reading enables them to learn vocabulary from book reading. (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Senechal, 1997; Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). Wasick & Bond (2001) found “children whose teachers provided multiple opportunities to interact with vocabulary words learned more book-related vocabulary compared with children who were exposed to just the books.” In the interactive, shared book reading, teachers introduced vocabulary in a meaningful context, and children were given the opportunity to talk and ask questions about the story and to listen to the other children’s conversations about the book. Shared reading, story props, and extension activities motivated students and provided multiple opportunities for students to hear and use the vocabulary from the story. Brabham & Lynch-Brown (2002) examined the effects of teachers’ reading-aloud styles—reading aloud, performance, and interactional reading—on students’ vocabulary development. They found that “verbally mediated, interactional, and performance reading-aloud styles are more effective for vocabulary acquisition than just reading aloud with no discussion.” (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2000, p. 471)

Book reading enhanced with teacher explanation of vocabulary has been shown to be an effective method for teaching children the meaning of new words. (Brett, Rothlein & Hurley, 1996; Elley, 1989) Penno, Moore & Wilkinson (2002) found that children acquired new vocabulary from listening to stories, with both the frequency of exposure and the teacher explanation of the target words enhancing vocabulary learning. The repeated exposure to a story was accompanied by “contextually relevant direct explanation” of vocabulary words. (Penno, Moore & Wilkinson, 2002, p. 23)

Direct Vocabulary Instruction

Direct vocabulary instruction involves the selection and teaching of specific words to students at all stages of reading development. Specific words selected for direct instruction relate to context and to students' oral and reading vocabulary knowledge and development. "Vocabulary words should be words that the learner will find useful in many contexts." (National Reading Panel, pp. 4–26) The three types of words suggested for teaching include words that are important for the understanding of a concept or a text; useful words that students see and use frequently; and difficult words, such as words with multiple meanings (*Put Reading First*, 2001). Graves and his colleagues (Graves et al., 2001) suggest vocabulary instruction that "teaches students to read words already in their oral vocabularies, teaching new labels for known concepts, teaching words representing new concepts, and clarifying and enriching the meanings of already known words." (Graves & Watts-Taffe, p. 143) Biemiller & Slonim (2001) based their study on root-word vocabulary of children in second and fifth grade and found that second-grade children who had a more extensive vocabulary continued to have a larger vocabulary in fifth grade than the lower-performing children in second grade. The implications from their findings suggest that "greater efforts should be made to foster vocabulary acquisition in the primary years and that a rough vocabulary curriculum sequence can be identified for the elementary years." (Biemiller & Slonim, 2001, p. 498)

"Vocabulary instruction is most effective when learners are given both definitional and contextual information, when learners actively process the new word meanings, and when they experience multiple encounters with the words."

—Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002, p. 143

Direct vocabulary instruction helps students develop effective word learning strategies to utilize when they are reading. Researched-based word-learning strategies include using context clues, word parts, and dictionaries and reference aids (*Put Reading First*, 2001). Teaching students to use context clues to determine meaning has been shown to provide an advantage for students as they integrate words and context. (Fukkink & de Glopper, 1998; Graves & Watts, 2002; McKeown, et al., 1985) Effective instruction in using word parts includes teaching affixes, base words, and root words. (*Put Reading First*, 2001) Bauman and colleagues (Baumann, et al., 2002) examined the effects of instruction in morphemic analysis (select prefixes) and contextual analysis (select context clue types). They validated that students were just as effective at inferring word meanings when the two types of instruction were provided in combination as when they were presented separately. Using dictionaries and reference aids engages students as they learn to use the resources and expand their knowledge of words. (*Put Reading First*, 2001)

Vocabulary Instruction with *SunSprouts* Shared and Guided Reading

SunSprouts provides direct and indirect vocabulary instruction and multiple opportunities for students to learn and use new vocabulary words in different contexts. High-frequency sight words and content words are identified and both directly and indirectly taught in each *SunSprouts* shared and guided reading lesson. *SunSprouts* provides a list of high-frequency words for vocabulary acquisition introduced at each level of *SunSprouts* books. (See the *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, p. 168, for an example list.)

The *SunSprouts* Teacher's Resource Guides provide a visual planning tool that illustrates the organization of direct and indirect vocabulary instruction with flexible grouping in the classroom.

LOCUS OF INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE	WHOLE GROUP	SMALL GROUP	PARTNERS	INDIVIDUALS
Skill/Activity	Shared Reading & Writing	Guided Reading and Writing	Guided and Independent Practice	Independent Reading & Writing
Vocabulary Development High-frequency sight words Direct vocabulary learning Context clues Analyzing word parts Base-word and root-word meaning Affixes and endings Dictionary use Indirect vocabulary learning Repeated exposure to words Discussion	Big Book: Focus on word meaning in context of story Use pocket chart cards or word walls to categorize and sort words Match high-frequency words on self-stick notes to those in the story	Small Book: Focus on automatic word recognition of high-frequency words and word meaning of content words in context of story Use chart paper, pocket chart cards, or word walls to categorize and sort words Word-Building and Sentence-Construction Manipulatives: Direct teacher instruction on compound words, homonyms, prefixes, suffixes, and root words	Big Book or Small Book: Use pocket chart cards to practice sight words and new vocabulary; match cards to text; repeated partner reading will build vocabulary indirectly Word-Building and Sentence-Construction Manipulatives: Literacy center work on compound words, homonyms, prefixes, suffixes, and root words	Big Book or Small Book: Repeated readings will build vocabulary indirectly Word-Building and Sentence-Construction Manipulatives: Literacy center work on compound words, homonyms, prefixes, suffixes, and root words

For complete chart see *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 40–41

SunSprouts Shared Reading Lessons

With *SunSprouts* shared reading lessons, teachers read aloud and students are engaged in interactive shared reading experiences during which they hear, read, and purposefully use the vocabulary words. To view the following highlighted features of vocabulary instruction throughout a shared reading lesson, refer to the *SunSprouts Teacher Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 35–36, *Share Bear*, or a shared reading lesson of your choice.

Book Title	Comprehension Strategy	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Vocabulary • High-Frequency • Content	Writing • Shared or Interactive • Independent
Share Bear GRL D DRA 6 EI 5 Word Count 96	Make Connections	Phoneme Identity /f/	Initial Consonant <i>h</i>	H-F: can, do, had, half, have, I, like, not, said, some, you C: melon, pie, pizza, honey, ice cream	Shared: Write a new story about Bear and Wolf. Independent: Write about something to share.

For complete chart see *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 40–41

- Each shared reading lesson identifies and lists useful **high-frequency words and important content vocabulary words** that can be indirectly and directly taught with the reading of the Big Book. (Lesson Features: High-Frequency Words, Vocabulary)
- Interactive story introductions and book discussions provide opportunities **to build from students' oral and reading vocabulary knowledge**. (Share the Big Book: Warm-Up; Build Background Knowledge; Share Personal Responses)
- The teacher expressively reads aloud with students to provide **a mediated, interactional, and performance reading-aloud style for more effective vocabulary acquisition**. (Share the Big Book: Read the Book)
- **Repeated exposure** to the Big Book though rereading accompanied by teacher explanation of words enhances vocabulary development.
- Activities that use the Big Book after reading help **students identify and read high-frequency sight words, which are words in their oral vocabulary**. (Revisit the Big Book: High-Frequency Words)
- Activities that use the Big Book after reading help students **learn new words, clarify meanings of known words, and learn new meanings for known words**. (Revisit the Big Book: Vocabulary)
- Extension activities provide opportunities for students **to hear, write, and use the vocabulary from the book** to increase vocabulary development. (Extend the Experience)

SunSprouts Guided Reading Lessons

With **SunSprouts** guided reading lessons, students learn vocabulary indirectly from reading and through direct instruction as the teacher guides them in discussion and explanation of important vocabulary words and concepts, when needed, and introduces them to a variety of word-learning strategies. Students read instructional level books with the appropriate count of high-frequency and content words to develop vocabulary. (To view the word count, high-frequency words, and content words for a guided reading book, refer to **SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide**, Peach Level, p. 41, *Guinea Pigs*.) To view the following highlighted features of the vocabulary instruction throughout a guided reading lesson, refer to the **SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide**, Peach Level, pp. 87–92, *Guinea Pigs*, or a guided reading lesson of your choice.

- Teacher-directed text introductions may include the teaching of **words that are important for the understanding of a concept or the text to enhance vocabulary-learning and comprehension**. (Before Reading: Build Background Knowledge, Introduce the Book)
- Teacher explanation and prompts help students **use context clues** as a **strategy** to determine meaning as they integrate words within meaningful context.
- Discussions and responses to the text provide opportunity for the teachers to **explain vocabulary words** and for the students to **practice using the vocabulary words**. (During Reading: Guide the Reading; After Reading: Discuss and Respond to the Book)
- Rereading the guided reading book provides **multiple encounters with the words** to help students process new word meanings. (After Reading: Reinforce the Reading)
- **Direct vocabulary instruction on word-learning strategies such as analyzing word parts, base-word and root-word meanings, and affixes** employs word-building and sentence-construction manipulatives, word walls, and pocket chart cards. (Skills and Strategies: Focus on Words)
- Writing activities and blackline masters provide opportunities for students to **write and practice the vocabulary words** from the book to increase reading, speaking, and writing vocabulary. (Writing, Worksheets)

To read more about vocabulary instruction refer to the **SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide**, Peach Level, pp. 18–19.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS INSTRUCTION WITH SUNSPROUTS

“Phonemic awareness is important because

- it improves children’s word reading and reading comprehension.
- it helps children learn to spell.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001

Research Findings on Effective Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Phonemic awareness research, which focuses on the relationship of phonemic awareness and early reading development, supports explicit phonemic awareness instruction that helps students hear individual sounds, identify sounds, and manipulate sounds in spoken language as they learn to read words, spell words, and comprehend text. As part of a comprehensive reading program, “phonemic awareness instruction is more effective when it was taught with letters than without letters, when one or two PA skills were taught than multiple PA skills, when children were taught in small groups than individually....” (Ehri, et al., 2001)

Effective phonemic awareness activities engage students in manipulating and segmenting phonemes. “Phonemic awareness can be developed through a number of activities, including asking children to

- identify phonemes
- categorize phonemes
- blend phonemes to form words
- segment words into phonemes
- delete or add phonemes to form new words, and
- substitute phonemes to make new words.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 10

Teaching Phonemic Awareness with Letters

Integrating phonemic awareness instruction with the teaching of letters helps students develop as readers, writers, and spellers. Phonemic awareness instruction, in which students are taught to manipulate phonemes by using the letters of the alphabet, makes a stronger contribution to reading and spelling than when instruction is limited to phonemes alone. (*Put Reading First*, 2001) Bus & van Ijzendoorn (1999) found that phonemic awareness training combined with letter-sound knowledge was more effective than phonemic awareness training alone. Castiglioni-Spalten & Ehri (2003) found that students who were taught to segment words with both articulatory instruction and Elkonin boxes (Elkonin, 1973) performed better on decoding measures than students who were trained with Elkonin boxes alone. The researchers’ interpretation suggests that awareness of articulatory gestures facilitates graphophonemic connections, which helps students identify and remember written words. Fuchs, et al., (2001) found that a treatment group participating in a phonological awareness training with beginning decoding instruction did better on alphabetic (reading and spelling) tasks.

Frost (2001) examined the relationship between phonemic awareness and reading and spelling and focused on the development of early self-directed writing. He concluded that phonemic awareness is an important prerequisite in the development of functional letter knowledge and basic word-processing skills, and that functional letter competence seems to emerge on the basis of phonemic awareness through word production and through invented spelling activities. Dixon, Stuart & Masterson (2002) found that children’s phoneme segmentation ability was related not only to learning words more quickly but also to “building up detailed representation useful for reading, proofreading and eventually spelling.” (p. 313)

“[Instruction] that heightens phonological awareness and that emphasizes the connections to the alphabetic code promotes greater skill in word recognition—a skill essential to becoming a proficient reader.” (Blachman, 2000, p. 495)

Phonemic Awareness Instruction with *SunSprouts* Shared and Guided Reading

SunSprouts provides explicit phonemic awareness instruction with purposeful phonemic awareness activities to help students hear individual sounds, identify sounds, and manipulate sounds. The *SunSprouts* Teacher's Resource Guides provides a visual planning tool that illustrates the organization of phonemic awareness instruction in the classroom.

To view the sequence of explicit phonemic awareness instruction at a level of *SunSprouts*, refer to the *SunSprouts* Teacher's Resource Guide, Peach Level pp. 40–42, Peach Level Skills Chart, Phonemic Awareness column.

LOCUS OF INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE	WHOLE GROUP	SMALL GROUP	PARTNERS	INDIVIDUALS
Skill/Activity	Shared Reading & Writing	Guided Reading and Writing	Guided and Independent Practice	Independent Reading & Writing
Phonological/Phonemic Awareness Hear individual sounds Identify sounds Manipulate sounds	Big Book: Use text to focus on particular sounds and rhymes	Small Book: Use text to focus on particular sounds and rhymes Sound and Word-Study Manipulatives: Teacher-led, hands-on work with rhymes, words, syllables, onsets and rimes, and phoneme manipulation	Big Book or Small Book: Partners find rhyming words or words with similar beginning sounds; repeated readings of strong rhyming texts will make students more aware of similar words	Big Book or Small Book: Repeated reading of text with strong rhyme patterns gives individual students practice in the sounds of words

For complete chart see *SunSprouts* Teacher's Resource Guide, Peach Level, pp. 40–41

SunSprouts Shared and Guided Reading Lessons

SunSprouts Big Books for shared reading and small books for guided reading are designed to focus instruction on particular sounds or rhymes before, during, and after reading. *SunSprouts* shared reading and guided reading lessons integrate phonemic awareness instruction with the teaching of letters, and the teacher models and guides students as they focus on sounds during whole-group and small-group instruction. Hands-on activities involve the use of sound and word-study manipulatives such as the Reading Rods® Alphabet and Phonemic Awareness Kit and pocket charts. The words used with phonemic awareness activities are selected from the *SunSprouts* books to focus specifically on **one of the types of sound manipulation**.

- **Phoneme identity** activities guide students to listen for and identify the same sound in different words.
- **Phoneme isolation** activities guide students to recognize specific sounds in words.
- **Phoneme blending** activities guide students to listen to a sequence of spoken phonemes and blend the sounds to form new words.
- **Phoneme categorizing** activities guide students to listen to a set of words and determine the word that does not match the beginning, middle, or end sound of the others.
- **Phoneme segmentation** activities guide students to listen to sounds heard in words and determine what sounds and how many sounds they hear.
- **Phoneme deletion** activities guide students to identify the word or word part left over when a phoneme is deleted from the word.
- **Phoneme addition** activities guide students to identify a new word or word pattern created when a phoneme is added to a word.
- **Phoneme substitution** activities guide students to listen and recognize where one phoneme is substituted for another to make a new word.

To view the phonemic awareness activities throughout a shared reading lesson, refer to the *SunSprouts* Teacher's Resource Guide, Peach Level, pp. 35–36, *Share Bear*, or a shared reading lesson of your choice. (Revisit the Book: Phonics and Extend the Experience)

To view the phonemic awareness activities throughout a small-group, guided reading lesson, refer to the *SunSprouts* Teacher Resource Guide, Peach Level, pp. 87–92, *Guinea Pigs*, or a guided reading lesson of your choice. (During Reading: Guide the Reading; Skills and Strategies: Sounds, Letters, and Words: Focus on Sounds)

To read more about phonemic awareness instruction, refer to the *SunSprouts* Teacher's Resource Guide, Peach Level, pp. 14–15.

PHONICS INSTRUCTION WITH SUNSPROUTS

“Phonics instruction helps children learn the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. Phonics instruction is important because it leads to an understanding of the alphabetic principle—the systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 19

Research Findings on Effective Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction research, which focuses on why phonics instruction is important to early reading development and how best to teach phonics, supports explicit, systematic phonics instruction integrated into a total literacy program. Adams (1990) acknowledged that “deep and thorough knowledge of letters, spelling patterns, and words, and of the phonological translation of all three, are of inescapable importance to both skillful reading and its acquisition.” (p. 416)

Teaching Phonics Skills

The National Reading Panel determined that “systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than nonsystematic or no phonics instruction.” (*Put Reading First*, 2001) Systematic phonics is the direct teaching of letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence, and the set includes major sound/spelling relationships of both consonants and vowels. In a recent key study whose results support the findings of the National Reading Panel, Connelly and colleagues (2001) investigated whether two groups of beginning readers taught to read according to a systematic phonics approach and a “book experience” non-phonics approach would differ in reading comprehension and in the processes of word recognition. The two groups matched for word recognition, but the phonics group had higher comprehension scores, produced more contextually appropriate errors, and made more attempts at reading unknown words when reading text. Research studies focusing on specific phonics skills indicate that students benefit from the direct instruction. Foorman and colleagues (1991) found that instruction in segmenting and blending sounds helps students relate their knowledge of regular word spellings to correct word readings, and it leads to accelerated growth. Haskell, Foorman & Swank (1992) investigated whether instruction at the onset-rime level improved word-reading accuracy more than instruction at the phoneme or whole-word level. Results indicated that onset-rime and phoneme groups were more accurate in word reading than the whole-word groups.

“Programs of phonics instruction are effective when they are

- systematic—the plan of instruction includes a carefully selected set of letter-sound relationships that are organized into a logical sequence.
- explicit—the programs provide teachers with precise directions for the teaching of these relationships.”

—*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 19

Phonics Activities

Effective phonics instruction provides opportunities for students to transfer the phonics skills to their reading and writing. In their review of scientific research on phonics instruction, Cunningham & Cunningham (2002) concluded that “children need to develop phonemic awareness and sequential decoding and have regular opportunities to apply their phonics skills.”

Reading to, with, and by students provides them with opportunities to learn and apply phonics skills as they read and build comprehension. *Put Reading First* recommended that students should be “solidifying their knowledge of the alphabet, engaging in phonemic awareness activities, and listening to stories and informal texts read aloud to them. They should also be reading texts (both out loud and silently) and writing letters, words, messages, and stories.” (*Put Reading First*, 2001, p. 15) In reviewing research on the types of texts for students to read and practice phonics skills, Cunningham & Cunningham (2002) determined that researchers are in general agreement that students need text in which they have to apply their decoding skills to some words, but there does not seem to be support in research for exclusively using decodable texts. Heibert (1999) maintains that children should read texts that provide practice with high-frequency words, along with opportunities to apply decoding skills and to use meaning-based cues. She recommends that children be exposed to some texts that are more sight-word oriented, some that are more decoding oriented, and some that are more meaning-cue oriented so that they learn to use all the word-identification cues fluent readers use. Cunningham & Cunningham (2002) concluded that phonics instruction, like all reading instruction, must be as multifaceted and multileveled as possible. They recognized self-selected reading, guided reading, and writing as effective approaches for scaffolding and integrating phonics instruction.

Research-based activities involve “teaching children orthographic patterns and analogy decoding, as well as morpheme patterns common in multisyllabic words.” (Cunningham & Cunningham, p. 107) The use of manipulative activities is effective for explicitly teaching these phonics skills and for students to transfer their learning of the phonics skills. Laurice (2000) compared first-grade students who received phonics instruction with Word Boxes manipulatives and students who were trained with a traditional phonics program. With the Word Boxes, students segmented words into individual phonemes with counters and placed the counters in boxes to represent each phoneme. Then the counters were replaced with letters, and the students segmented the words by using the letters and writing the letters in the boxes. The findings indicated that the students who received instruction with word boxes had better decoding and spelling skills. Other manipulative activities, such as using letter and word cards to blend, sort, rhyme, and use patterns, engage students with letters, sounds, and words to learn to use phonics skills to decode and comprehend.

Phonics and Reading Programs

The National Reading Panel, while identifying the need for systematic and explicit phonics instruction, also stresses the importance of a comprehensive reading program that focuses on all areas of reading instruction.

“It is important to emphasize that systematic phonics instruction should be integrated with other reading instruction to create a balanced reading program. Phonics instruction is never a total reading program. Phonics should not become the dominant component in a reading program, neither in the amount of time devoted to it nor the significance attached. It is important to evaluate children’s reading competence in many ways, not only by their phonics skills but also by their interest in books and their ability to understand information that is read to them. By emphasizing all of the process that contribute to growth in reading, teachers will have the best chance of making every child a reader.”

—*National Reading Panel*, 2000, Section 2, p. 136

Phonics Instruction with *SunSprouts* Shared and Guided Reading

SunSprouts helps the teacher facilitate systematic and explicit phonics instruction that is integrated into the literacy program. Meaningful phonics instruction is an important feature in each *SunSprouts* shared and guided reading lesson plan. Each lesson offers a range of activities to give students the tools they need to practice, reinforce, and extend their knowledge of sounds and letters. Both explicit and inquiry phonics activities encourage children to pay attention to visual details in words. Phonics skills taught in *SunSprouts* include naming and identifying letters of the alphabet, consonant sounds, blends (initial, middle, final), digraphs, short and long vowels, vowel patterns, and word families.

The *SunSprouts* Teacher’s Resource Guides provide a visual planning tool that illustrates the organization of phonics instruction in the classroom.

SunSprouts may be correlated with a core reading program to provide additional practice with phonics skills. Refer to the *SunSprouts* Teacher’s Resource Guide, Peach Level, pp. 40–42 for a skills chart.

SunSprouts Shared Reading Lessons

With *SunSprouts* shared reading lessons, teachers read aloud and students listen and read as they attend to the visual text features. Many shared reading texts have repetitive and rhyming text structures that offer students a context within which to see patterns in words. The shared reading texts provide ample space in the print, enabling students to identify single letters, larger word chunks, and spelling patterns in context. To view the following highlighted features of phonics instruction throughout a shared reading lesson, refer to the *SunSprouts* Teacher’s Resource Guide, Peach Level, pp. 35–36, *Share Bear*, or a shared reading lesson of your choice.

Book Title	Comprehension Strategy	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Vocabulary • High-Frequency • Content	Writing • Shared or Interactive • Independent
Share Bear GRL D DRA 6 EI 5 Word Count 96	Make Connections	Phoneme Identity /f/	Initial Consonant <i>h</i>	H-F: can, do, had, half, have, I, like, not, said, some, you C: melon, pie, pizza, honey, ice cream	Shared: Write a new story about Bear and Wolf. Independent: Write about something to share.

For complete chart see *SunSprouts* Teacher’s Resource Guide, Peach Level, pp. 40–41

- Each shared reading lesson identifies a **phonics skill explicitly taught** with the reading of the big book. (Lesson Features: Phonics)
- The teacher explicitly explains and models specific phonics skills, and the students **practice the phonics skills** while revisiting the book. (Revisit the Big Book: Phonics)
- **Manipulatives** such as Reading Rods, magnetic letters, and pocket chart cards are used with activities to **focus on sound-letter relationships**. (Revisit the Big Book: Phonics)
- Rereading the text gives students practice with **using decoding skills** to comprehend.
- **Writing** and listening activities enhance instruction by giving students opportunities to **practice and apply the phonics skills** to their reading, writing, and spelling. (Extend the Experience: Writing, Listening)

SunSprouts Guided Reading Lessons

With *SunSprouts* guided reading lessons, the teacher directs students' attention to the features of words and strategies for decoding words. Students read instructional-level fiction and nonfiction books with features that provide practice with high-frequency words and offer **opportunities to apply decoding skills** and use meaning-based cues.

To view the following highlighted features of the phonics instruction throughout a guided reading lesson, refer to the *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 87–92, *Guinea Pigs*, or a guided reading lesson of your choice.

Book Title	Comprehension Strategy	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Vocabulary • High-Frequency • Content	Writing • Shared or Interactive • Independent
At the Beach GRL C DRA 4 EI 4 Word Count 73	Summarize Details	Phoneme Isolation /n/	Initial Consonant n	H-F: A, I, in, it, made, my, on ,put, too C: crab, seaweed, starfish, sponge	Shared: Write a new text. Independent: Design a special necklace.
Ben and the Cold GRL B DRA 3 EI 3 Word Count 76	Make Connections	Phoneme Identity /p/	Initial Consonant p	H-F: am, he, his, I, now, on, put, said C: cold, hot	Interactive: Write about a cold day. Independent: Write a sentence about favorite weather.
Ben's Bath GRL C DRA 4 EI 3 Word Count 56	Make Connections	Phoneme Identity /t/	Initial Consonant t	H-F: a, come, goes, has, in, off, out, the, water C: plug	Shared: Write steps for taking a bath. Independent: Write about a favorite bath toy.
The Cake GRL C DRA 4 EI 3 Word Count 40	Sequence Events	Phoneme Categorization /k/	Initial Consonant c	H-F: a, house, in, is, out, the C: shop	Shared: Write about something else to put in a box. Independent: Write a personal story.
The Fish and the Cat GRL C DRA 4 EI 3 Word Count 91	Summarize Details	Phoneme Categorization /f/	Initial Consonant f	H-F: cat, do, I, like, not, said, the, water C: splash	Interactive: Use the sentence structure to make a flipbook. Independent: Write a cat and fish story.
The Fish Bowl GRL C DRA 4 EI 4 Word Count 48	Note Details	Phoneme Isolation /f/	Initial Consonant f	H-F: a, I, it, me, see, the C: weed	Shared: Write a description. Independent: Draw and label a fish.
Grandpa and Me GRL C DRA 4 EI 4 Word Count 36	Make Connections	Phoneme Categorization /g/	Initial Consonant g	H-F: are, dig, digs, he, I, in, is, me, pushes, the, this, we C: digs, picks, snips, rakes, lifts, pushes	Interactive: Create a Big Book. Independent: Write a list of jobs to do at home.

For complete chart see *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 40–41

- Each guided reading lesson identifies a **phonics skill explicitly taught** with the reading of the book. (Lesson Features: Phonics)
- The teacher models how to take apart words and apply phonics skills to new words that students meet in the connected text.

- The teacher prompts and coaches to **help students learn and use effective decoding strategies** to read words and make meaning. (During Reading: Guide the Reading)
Sample prompts include—
How did you figure out this word?
Did you look at the first letter?
What part of the word do you know?
What two letters does this word begin with?
Do you know a word that begins the same way?
What did you notice at the end of these words?
- If further phonics instruction is needed as determined the informal observation and the Record of Oral Reading assessments, the teacher uses a variety of activities and resources, including **manipulatives** such as Reading Rods, magnetic letters, and pocket chart cards, to **focus on sound-letter relationships and word families**. (Skills and Strategies: Sounds, Letters, and Words)
- Shared and independent **writing activities offer another context for students to apply their knowledge of sounds and letters**. (Writing: Shared Writing and Independent Writing)

To read more about phonics instruction, refer to the *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 14–15.

To read more about assessment, refer to the *SunSprouts Teacher's Resource Guide*, Peach Level, pp. 20–23.

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