

Phonics Strand Overview



What is phonics?

Phonics is an essential component of effective reading instruction that's based on the relationships between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes).

Understanding these relationships sets the foundation for decoding new words and storing and accessing words. Effective phonics instruction involves a systematic and order-based approach that includes cumulative review with application in reading and writing. Instruction that builds knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences as well as knowledge of syllable types, morphemes, rules for syllable division, and simple spelling generalizations is essential.

What is the role of phonics in learning how to read?

Knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondence is necessary for developing accurate, and ultimately automatic, word-reading skills. In learning to read, children initially rely heavily on phonic decoding. They learn that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds, and they begin to use this knowledge to decode words. Over time, they remember these patterns and eventually become increasingly automatic in their recognition of regular and irregular words. This automaticity is essential for developing reading fluency and contributes to efficient and effective reading comprehension. Phonic decoding continues to be important in the later grades when students encounter unfamiliar words in text.

What is the approach to developing phonics in Lexia® Core5® Reading?

The phonics activities in Lexia Core5 are based on key principles derived from the science of reading. Students receive explicit and systematic instruction that builds their knowledge of the alphabetic principle and phoneme-grapheme correspondence with frequent opportunities to apply this knowledge to reading connected text. Initial phonics activities begin with identification of letter symbols and the alphabetic sequence. Letter-sound correspondences are then introduced with keywords aligned to the pure phoneme being taught. Phonics instruction is supported through various practice routines, including word sorting, word building, and word chaining, and further bolstered using multisensory techniques that are reinforced through offline instructional resources. Phonics activities also aim to sharpen phonemic awareness skills as students continually analyze and manipulate the sequence of sounds in words and then represent those sounds using graphemes.

Advanced word study activities in both the Phonics and Structural Analysis strands teach students complex phonic patterns, syllable types, morphemes, and word origins. Activities that introduce and reinforce multisyllabic word decoding strategies include explicit instruction in all six syllable types (open, closed, Silent e, long vowel teams, vowel-r, vowel combinations, and consonant-le), recurring morphemes (simple suffixes; Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots; and Greek combining forms), and common spelling rules based on the morphological structure of words. Throughout the vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency activities at each level of the program, students apply their phonics knowledge to read sentence- and paragraph-level text.