

*Benchmark Advance Alignment to the*

# LETRS<sup>®</sup> LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE



Dear Educator,

Many are benefitting from the extensive professional development training known as LETRS®. While Benchmark Education Company is not affiliated with LETRS® or Dr. Louisa Moats, we share a commonality in our commitment to grounding our work in research and best practices. For this reason, we have put together a guide that helps you connect your professional training to the *Benchmark Advance*® curriculum.

In the following pages, we have identified where the **nine components** of the **LETRS® Lesson Plan Template** appear across *Benchmark Advance*’s **five-day lesson cycle**. You will see key phonics lesson components appear multiple times throughout this cycle.

We hope this document helps you in connecting your LETRS® professional development to the *Benchmark Advance* curriculum.

Sincerely,  
The Benchmark Education Professional Development Team

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When teachers can apply their professional knowledge with high-quality instructional materials, it creates an environment for success.

— Jennifer, Benchmark Education’s Professional Development Team



# Putting Research, Theory & Professional Learning into Instructional Practice

*Benchmark Advance* offers a curriculum to put the research you are learning into practice. As to be expected, there are points of divergence between the curriculum and suggestions provided in your LETRS® training.

## Daily Lesson Template vs. Five-Day Lesson Cycle

LETRS® suggests a daily lesson structure, however, *Benchmark Advance* uses a five-day lesson cycle that repeats each week. This cycle allows the curriculum to build across the week as students progress with the focus skill and continue to spirally review previously taught skills.

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Phonological Awareness</li><li>Spelling-Sound Correspondence</li><li>Blend Words</li><li>High-Frequency Words</li><li>Small-Group and Independent Practice (including rereading decodable texts for fluency and differentiation)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Phonological Awareness</li><li>Blend and Build Words (with embedded Phonemic Awareness: Phonemic Substitution)</li><li>Spelling/Dictation</li><li>I Read (decodable text)</li><li>Small-Group and Independent Practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Phonological Awareness</li><li>I Read (reread decodable text)</li><li>I Write (write about decodable text)</li><li>Spelling</li><li>High-Frequency Words</li><li>Small-Group and Independent Practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Apply Phonics in Context (read decodable text)</li><li>Write About Texts (spelling and dictation in context with embedded Phonemic Awareness: Oral Segmentation)</li><li>Small-Group and Independent Practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reread for Fluency (decodable text)</li><li>High-Frequency Words</li><li>Spelling/Dictation (with embedded Phonemic Awareness: Oral Segmentation)</li><li>Additional Spiral Review</li><li>Cumulative Assessment</li></ul>

*Benchmark Advance*’s 5-Day Instructional Cycle

## Time Allocation Differences

TOPIC	LETRS® LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE	BENCHMARK ADVANCE LESSON CYCLE
<b>Whole-Group/ Small-Group Instruction</b>	<b>Whole-Group Instruction:</b> 45–60 minutes daily	<b>Whole-Group Instruction and Practice:</b> Approximately 30 minutes daily*  <b>Small-Group Instruction and Practice:</b> Approximately 15–30 minutes daily. Small-group time is critical for independent practice to build fluency and encoding skills and to support English Learners and language transfer, and for other critical work needed as part of the instructional cycle.
<b>Lesson Components</b>	Based on a daily template with minutes allocated per lesson component	Based on five-day lesson cycle that builds across the week, with time emphasis that shifts among lesson components throughout the cycle.
<b>Sentence Dictation</b>	Suggests daily sentence dictation	Students have sentence dictation, but not every day. This is because they are also writing about the decodable texts they read, which accomplishes the same encoding instructional goals while also working on additional goals related to writing and comprehension.

\*National surveys indicate most schools devote an average of 30 minutes per day to whole-group phonics instruction. For that reason, *Benchmark Advance* whole-group lessons are also 30 minutes. Small-group instruction of 15–30 minutes is also included.



# DAY 1

## Phonics and Word Study Instruction

Benchmark Advance phonics and word study lessons align to and reflect the components of the LETRS® Lesson Plan Template.

On **Day 1** of the instructional cycle, explicit phonics and word study instruction is focused on the following:

- Introducing the new skill/concept
- Spiral review of previously taught skills
- Phonological awareness
- Sound-spelling correspondence
- Blending
- High-frequency word instruction
- Rereading decodable texts for fluency and differentiation
- Small-group and independent practice

LETRS® Lesson Plan Template includes key elements such as stating the goal and purpose, practicing phonological awareness, reviewing previous lessons, introducing new concept, providing guided and extended practice, dictation, connecting to word meaning, and reading text.

### Systematic Instruction with Built-In Spiral Review

A research-based scope and sequence where skills develop and progress from Grades K–6.



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#### ADVANCED MORPHOLOGY WITH GREEK AND LATIN ROOTS

- Applying syllable types to complex words
- Greek and Latin roots
- Morphological study

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#### ADVANCED MORPHOLOGY WITH GREEK AND LATIN ROOTS

- Applying basic syllable types to more complex words
- Learning Greek and Latin roots
- Increasing morphological awareness

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#### SYLLABLE TYPES AND MORPHOLOGY

- Applying basic syllable types to more complex words
- Exploring more sophisticated affixes
- Increasing morphological awareness

3

#### MULTISYLLABIC WORDS AND SYLLABLE TYPES

- Ensuring fluency of basic phonics skills
- Transition to multisyllabic words
- Exploration of common affixes and syllable types

2

#### TRANSITION TO MULTISYLLABIC WORDS

- Fluency with basic phonics skills (taught in Grades K–1)
- Transition to multisyllabic words

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#### BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

- Phonological awareness (more complex)
- Basic phonics skills using short, long, and complex vowels
- Building a store of high-frequency sight words

K

#### BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

- Phonological awareness
- Basic phonics skills in CVC words
- Building a store of high-frequency sight words

**State Goal and Purpose**  
The target skill and lesson goal are clearly identified and communicated to students. This is where teachers display or state the related standard in schools where that is required.

**Practice Phonological Awareness**  
The initial instruction focuses on students listening for, identifying, and articulating the week's target sound and words with that sound.

**Introduce New Concept**  
The new concept is explicitly introduced, teacher models are provided, and visual aids to support learning are available. Additional resources, such as highly engaging interactive multisensory videos, are also provided.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
Ample guided practice opportunities are provided, along with teacher support for students needing more.

### Focus Skill: Consonant Digraphs th, sh, ng (15–20 MIN.)



#### Phonological Awareness: Phoneme Identification (3–5 MIN.)

**Model:** thing, thumb, teeth

Listen carefully as I say three words: *thing, thumb, teeth*. The words all have /th/. Where do you hear /th/? *Thing* and *thumb* begin with /th/. *Teeth* ends in /th/.

**Model:** shape, shark, bush

Listen as I say three words: *shape, shark, bush*. Which sound do you hear in all three words? Where do you hear /sh/? *Shape* and *shark* begin with /sh/. *Bush* ends in /sh/.



**Practice:** thump, thick, path; shirt, shell, wish; cash, ship, wash; thing, ring, sang  
Ask students to identify the sound that is the same in each set of words. Then have them tell where in the words the sound appears.

#### Spelling-Sound Correspondences (4–5 MIN.)

**Introduce:** swing

Display the Picture Word Card for *swing*.

This picture shows a swing. The ending sound in *swing* is /ng/. The /ng/ sound is spelled with the letters *ng*. Say the sound with me: /ng/. This is the sound at the end of the word *swing*. Listen again to the sound: /ng/.

Repeat with the Picture Word Card for *shirt*.

**Model:** th, sh, ng

Display the Sound-Spelling Cards for consonant digraphs *th*, *sh*, and *ng*. Using the model above, introduce /th/.

Read aloud the action rhymes, and invite students to chime in.

Display the picture side of the Frieze Card for consonant digraphs *th*, *sh*, and *ng*. Have students say the name for each picture. Explain that each name includes a consonant digraph—two consonant letters together that stand for one sound.

Say the name of each picture, and repeat the digraph in each word. Ask which two letters stand for this sound.



Picture Word Card



Picture Word Card



Sound-Spelling Card



Sound-Spelling Card



Sound-Spelling Card



Frieze Card

**Practice:** shop, fish, thin, that, bring, song

Say the consonant digraph words one at a time. Ask students to listen for the consonant digraph at the beginning or end of each word and write the two letters on paper or a workmat.

Point out the two sounds for *th* (unvoiced in *thin*, voiced in *that*).

Explain that *th* and *sh* can appear at the beginning or end of a word, but *ng* cannot appear at the beginning of a word.



Interactive Music Video: Consonant Digraphs

DAY 1 continued  
Phonics and Word Study Instruction

**Review Previous Lesson**  
As part of the systematic review and repetition cycle to ensure phonics skills mastery, students spirally review words with previously taught skills.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
Explicit models and practice opportunities for students to read words with the new target phonics skills and get corrective feedback are provided. The word meaning is differentiated (e.g., Spiral Review for students still working on previously taught skills and Challenge Words to provide enrichment for students above grade-level expectations) so all students benefit from the whole-group lesson.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
New high-frequency words are introduced using the multisensory and multimodal research-based Read/Spell/Write routine, which accelerates orthographic mapping of words into memory for automatic retrieval. This is the same process used in other similar instructional techniques such as Heart Words, whereby the individual sounds and spelling of words are attended to instead of learning words as whole units.

**Practice Phonological Awareness**  
Students are guided to orally segment the individual sounds in the word. For orthographic mapping to occur (to aid in automatic retrieval), students must attend to the individual sounds and spellings of a word, even the irregularly spelled word. So this is a critical part of the high-frequency word instructional routine.

**Review Previous Lesson**  
As part of the systematic review and repetition cycle to ensure high-frequency word mastery, students spirally review previously taught words.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
Ample guided practice opportunities are provided, allowing the teacher to collect important formative assessment data for use during small-group instruction.

Day 1  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

**Blend Words (4–5 MIN.)**

**Model:** **this**  
Display Letter Cards for **this**. Model blending the letter sounds sequentially.

*This is the letter t. This is the letter h. When the letters t and h are put together, they make a new sound. It stands for /th/. This is the letter i. It stands for /i/. Listen as I blend the two sounds: /thii/. This is the letter s. It stands for /s/. Listen as I blend all three sounds: /thiiiss/, this. Say the word with me: this.*

**Model:** **mash**  
Display Letter Cards for **mash**. Model blending the letter sounds.

*This is the letter m. It stands for /m/. This is the letter a. It stands for /aaa/. Listen as I blend the two sounds: /mmaaa/. These are the letters s and h. When s and h are put together, they stand for /sh/. Listen as I blend all three sounds: /mmaaash/, mash. Say the word with me: mash.*

Repeat the activity for the word **hang**.

✓ **Check to see:** If students have difficulty blending words, then use strategies provided for **Small-Group Instruction**.

e-Pocket Chart

t h

t h i

t h i s

m

m a

m a s h

**Practice:** **thin, wish, shop, sing**

**Spiral Review**

**Final Consonant Blends:** **plant, send, last, lift**

**Initial Consonant Blends:** **clock, sled, grass, trap, black, stop**

**Challenge:** **thing, singer, strong, stronger, cashing, frothing, shocking**

Have students use Letter Cards to build and read each word.

**High-Frequency Words (4–5 MIN.)**

**Introduce:** **were, our, could, these**  
Use the **Read, Spell, Write, Apply** routine to introduce high-frequency words.

**Read:** Display the High-Frequency Word Cards one at a time. Point to and say the word. Have students repeat after you. Point out the sounds and spellings in the word—both regular and irregular.

**Spell:** Spell the word as you point to each letter. Have students read and spell the word.

**Write:** Have students write the word as they spell it aloud.

**Apply:** Have partners take turns using each word in an oral sentence.

e-Pocket Chart

were our could these

who good by them

**Practice:** **were, our, could, these**

Have students use the **Read, Spell, Write, Apply** routine to practice this week's high-frequency words.

**Spiral Review:** **who, good, by, them**

Review last week's words using the same procedure.

Day 1  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

UNIT 4 • WEEK 1

**Small-Group and Independent Practice (10–15 MIN.)**

Use the following activities during small-group time to reteach and reinforce the whole-group mini-lesson.

**Meeting Individual Needs**

**Acceleration** For students above grade-level expectations, continue to teach a skill further in the phonics scope and sequence during small-group time.

**Remediation** For Students below grade-level expectations, continue to teach previously taught skills they have not yet mastered. Focus on blending, dictation, word building, and reading and writing about decodable texts.

**Blend Words**

Display Letter Cards for the word **shop**. Use an Elkonin box or workmat.

*Find the letters s and h. Which sound does s and h stand for together? /sh/. Push sh into the first box. (In Elkonin boxes, digraphs appear in one box.) Now find o. Which sound does o stand for? /o/. Push the o next to the digraph sh. Blend: /shooo/. Now find p. Which sound does p stand for? /p/. Push p into the third box. Blend: /shoop/. One more time: /shoop/. Say the word with me: shop.*

Repeat with other words containing consonant digraphs (ship, shut, wish, fish, thin, think, that, ring, bring, sung).

**Language Transfer Support**

Check for transferability of phonemes and graphemes. The digraphs **sh** and **th** (sound and spelling) do not transfer in Spanish and most Asian languages. Model how to make the sound. Point out the position and shape of your mouth, especially the tongue and lips. Have students make each sound while looking at a small mirror or having a partner watch them. Provide feedback. Practice articulation with a few simple sentence frames, such as: *This is a \_\_\_\_ (object name); That is a \_\_\_\_ (object name); and She can \_\_\_\_ (action verb).*

**Independent Practice/Partner Work**

While meeting with small groups, have students complete the following independently or with their partners.

- Reread the previous week's texts in *My Reading and Writing* and the decodable reader lap book to build fluency throughout the week.
- Write a sentence for each high-frequency word in their notebooks.

**Alternate Learning Path**

After rereading the song, have partners work together to create a new stanza for "Fairy Tale Song" and then sing it to each other.

**Handwriting**

Provide students with the Handwriting Practice Page for Unit 4, Week 1. As students write their own sentences, encourage them to write legibly, using words with familiar sound-spellings and high-frequency words they know.

**Provide Extended Practice**  
Based on the teacher's formative assessment observations during the lesson, additional multisensory and multimodal practice opportunities are provided for students who need more lesson follow-up to keep them on track for skill mastery. This provides additional opportunities for the teacher to slow down the instruction and practice, offer more corrective feedback, and address any other instructional or fluency issues.

**Review Previous Lesson & Read Text**  
A rereading routine of previously read decodable texts is a key part of the lesson cycle that is necessary to extend the learning and build fluency. Students read decodable text every day of instruction.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
Based on the teacher's formative assessment observations during the lesson, additional practice opportunities are provided for students who need more lesson follow-up to keep them on track for skill mastery.

**Practice Dictation**  
Formal dictation does not occur on the initial day of instruction. Rather, the focus is on students' handwriting of the letter. Students say the sound as they write the letter to accelerate the sound-letter connection and connect (via neurological and motor routes) the physical motion of making the letter with its sounds. This better prepares students for dictation on subsequent days.

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- Phonological awareness
- Word blending and word building (with embedded phonemic awareness)
- Spelling/dictation
- “I Read” decodable text
- Spiral review of previously taught skills
- Small-group and independent practice

Explicit teacher modeling is provided along with multisensory/multimodal opportunities for students.



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DAY 2 continued  
Phonics and Word Study Instruction

**Practice Phonological Awareness**  
Students are guided to orally segment the individual sounds in the word using the multisensory Elkonin (Sound) boxes as a scaffold, and then connect each sound to a spelling. This is the type of application of both phonemic awareness and phonics. It is necessary to build spelling mastery and is an ideal way to connect phonemic awareness tasks to print to accelerate learning.

**Practice Dictation**  
Students are guided through the process of spelling through formal dictation exercises where they orally segment the sounds and then connect each sound to a spelling. Following this supportive, multisensory scaffolding, students are then given a series of words to spell as the teacher offers corrective feedback during this guided spelling exercise.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
Ample guided practice opportunities are provided, allowing the teacher to collect important formative assessment data.

Day 2  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

Spelling/Dictation (4–5 MIN.)

**Model:** **than, shop**  
Display Elkonin boxes.

*Watch and listen as I say **than** slowly: /thaan/.*

As you say each phoneme, move a marker into a box. (The digraph **th** makes one sound and requires one marker. The letters appear in one box, unlike blends.)

*I hear /th/. I know the letters **th** stand for /th/. I'll write **th** in the first box. Listen for the next sound: /thaa/. I hear /a/. I know that the letter **a** stands for /a/, so I'll write **a**.*

*Listen for the last sound: /thaan/. I know the letter **n** stands for /n/. I'll write **n**.*

Repeat for **shop**. (Like **th, sh** requires one marker and the letters appear in one box.) Have students practice on their workmats.

Elkonin Boxes

th	a	n
sh	o	p

My Reading and Writing, p. 7

**Practice:** **sing, bring, thing, ship, shut, this**

**Apply**  
Have students turn to page 7 in *My Reading and Writing*.

*I will say a word. Listen to the sounds in the word. Write the letters for the sounds in the boxes.*

**Ship.** /shiiip/. **Ship.** /sh/ /i/ /p/.  
**Moth.** /mmmooth/. **Moth.** /m/ /o/ /th/.

Note whether students correctly identify the digraphs.

*Now I will say more words. Listen to the sounds. Think about the letters that make the sounds. Write the letters on the lines to spell the words.*

**Sing.** /sssiing/. **Sing.** /s/ /i/ /ng/.  
**Shut.** /shuuut/. **Shut.** /sh/ /u/ /t/.

*Now I will say a sentence. Listen carefully. Think about the words you have learned. Write the words on the line to spell the sentence: **I will shut this thing fast.***

Day 2  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

UNIT 4 • WEEK 1

I Read: "The King's Wish" (5–7 MIN.)

Read the Text

Have students turn to page 8 in *My Reading and Writing*. Guide students through a reading of "The King's Wish." Read the title. Have students whisper-read the story as you circulate and listen in, offering corrective feedback as needed.

Model how to blend decodable words and read high-frequency words that students struggle with. Then prompt students to reread the sentence from the beginning.

Connect Phonics to Comprehension

When completed, guide students through a choral-reading of the text. Ask questions about the text that can be answered by the words and illustrations. Include new unit vocabulary in the questions.

*Why is the king not happy at the beginning of the story?*

*At the end, do you think the king is happy? How do you know?*

Independent Reading

Prompt students to reread the story with a partner during independent work time. Partners should complete the Partner Work checklist on page 11 of *My Reading and Writing* and sign their names.

Small-Group and Independent Practice (10–15 MIN.)

Use the following activities during small-group time to reteach and reinforce the whole-group mini-lesson.

Blend and Build Words

Give students workmats and Letter Cards **s, h, p, w, d, f, o,** and **i**. Say the word **hop**, and ask students what letters they need to make the word. Have them push forward the Letter Cards to spell the word. If the word doesn't look right, have them try again.

Have students add the letter **s** at the beginning to change the word from **hop** to **shop**. Then have them change the letter **o** to **i** to change the word from **shop** to **ship**. (In the e-Pocket Chart, the letters **s** and **h** for digraph **sh** appear in separate boxes for spelling.) Remind students that the consonant digraph **sh** stands for one sound. Repeat with **wish/dish/fish**.

Independent Practice/ Partner Work

While you are meeting with small groups, have students complete the following independently or with partners.

- Read all of their high-frequency word sentences.

Spelling: Word Sort

Write these words in random order: **sing, bring, thing, shop, ship, shut, this, than**.

Have student pairs write the words on index cards and sort them according to their consonant digraph spelling pattern (**sh, th, ng**). Have pairs read aloud the words with each spelling pattern. Model self-correcting an error by saying each phoneme slowly in the word.

Send home the spelling word list found on page 166.

**Read Text & Provide Guided Practice**  
Ample guided practice opportunities are provided through the reading of decodable texts for students to apply their growing phonics skills and receive corrective feedback from their teacher.

**Connect to Word Meaning**  
Comprehension questions and discussion deepen understanding, build fluency through rereading, and focus on word meanings.

**Provide Extended Practice**  
Based on the teacher's formative assessment observations during the lesson, additional multisensory and multimodal practice opportunities are provided for students who need more lesson follow-up to keep them on track for skill mastery. This provides additional opportunities for the teacher to slow down the instruction and practice, offer more corrective feedback, and address any other instructional or fluency issues.

**Review Previous Lesson**  
Students reread high-frequency word sentences to build fluency with these high-impact words in context.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
Based on the teacher's formative assessment observations during the lesson, additional practice opportunities are provided for students who need more lesson follow-up to keep them on track for skill mastery.



# DAY 3

## Phonics and Word Study Instruction

Benchmark Advance phonics and word study lessons align to and reflect the components of the LETRS® Lesson Plan Template.

On **Day 3** of the instructional cycle, explicit phonics and word study instruction is focused on the following:

- Phonological awareness
- “I Read” decodable text
- “I Write”—write about decodable text
- Spelling
- High-frequency word instruction
- Spiral review of previously taught skills
- Small-group and independent practice

### Multisensory/Multimodal Activities

Supports learning through senses beyond hearing and sight, helping students with conditions such as dyslexia.



**State Goal and Purpose**  
The target skill and lesson goal are clearly identified and communicated to students. This is where teachers display or state the related standard in schools where that is required.

**Practice Phonological Awareness**  
Students engage in more complex phonemic manipulation tasks, such as phoneme substitution, to increase their sound awareness abilities linked to early reading and writing growth.

**Provide Guided Practice & Read Text**  
Ample guided practice opportunities are provided through the reading of decodable texts for students to apply their growing phonics skills and receive corrective feedback from their teacher.

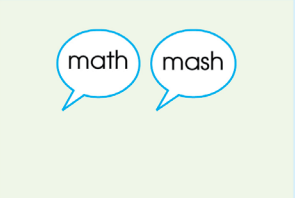
**Provide Guided Practice**  
Ample guided practice opportunities are provided, allowing the teacher to collect important formative assessment data.

### Focus Skill: Consonant Digraphs th, sh, ng

(15–20 MIN.)  
Multisensory Learning

#### Phonological Awareness: Phoneme Substitution (2–3 MIN.)

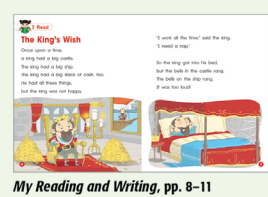
**Model:** math, mash  
Model how you substitute the initial or final sound in a word to make a new word.  
*Listen as I say a word: /m/ /a/ /th/, math. Now I am going to change /th/ in math to /sh/. What is the new word? The new word is mash.*



**Practice:** with/wish, thin/shin, ding/dish, mush/bush, ring/sing  
Repeat the routine, having students supply each new word.

#### Reread: “The King’s Wish” (3–4 MIN.)

**Build Automaticity**  
Remind students that they know these high-frequency words: **these, could**. Students should be able to read these words fluently.  
Remind students they have also been learning about decoding consonant digraphs. When they come to a word with a consonant digraph, such as **king** or **wish**, remind them to use what they know about the sound to read the word.



**Practice**  
Invite students to whisper-read “The King’s Wish.”  
Circulate, listen in, and provide corrective feedback.  
You may wish to have smaller groups of students take turns rereading the story aloud for additional practice.

✓ **Check to see:** If students have difficulty reading the text, then use strategies provided for **Small-Group Instruction**.



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# DAY 4

## Phonics and Word Study Instruction

Benchmark Advance phonics and word study lessons align to and reflect the components of the LETRS® Lesson Plan Template.

On **Day 4** of the instructional cycle, phonics and word study instruction is focused on the following:

- Applying phonics in context through reading a decodable text
- Writing about texts—spelling and dictation in context with embedded phonemic awareness (oral segmentation)
- Small-group and independent practice

### Equal Emphasis on Decoding and Encoding

Application is where the learning sticks.



**State Goal and Purpose**  
The target skill and lesson goal are clearly identified and communicated to students. This is where teachers display or state the related standard in schools where that is required.

**Read Text & Provide Guided Practice**  
Ample guided practice opportunities are provided through the reading of decodable texts for students to apply their growing phonics skills and receive corrective feedback from their teacher.

**Connect to Word Meaning**  
Comprehension questions and discussion deepen understanding, build fluency through rereading, and focus on word meanings.

### Apply Phonics and Vocabulary in Context (15–20 MIN.)

**Read the Text: Decode (7–10 MIN.)**

#### Introduce

Read the title “I Wish, I Wish” aloud. Have students look at the cover illustration.

*What is this story about? Are the characters real? How do you know?*

Have students point out specifics in the title and illustrations to support their answers.

#### Read the Text

Conduct a guided/choral-read with students.

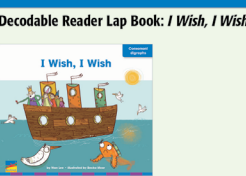
If students need modeling, model for them how to blend decodable words and read high-frequency words. You may wish to conduct a second reading, having partners read to each other from the student books while you circulate and monitor the reading.

#### Grade 1 Decodable Readers

th, sh, -ng ch, -tch, wh 3-letter blends



Decodable Reader Lap Book: *I Wish, I Wish*



Decodable Reader: *I Wish, I Wish*

### Day 4 PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

#### Connect Phonics to Comprehension

Ask the following questions, and have students discuss their answers with a partner:

*Why is the fish sad? What makes the fish wish to be a fish?*

Encourage students to use vocabulary that they have learned this week in their discussion of the questions.

✓ **Check to see:** If students have difficulty decoding, then use strategies provided for **Small-Group Instruction**.





DAY 4 continued  
Phonics and Word Study Instruction

**Practice Dictation**  
Students are guided through an interactive writing about a decodable text they have read. This addresses the same goal of formal dictation but extends beyond that to include other goals related to writing and comprehension. In addition, the teacher guides the students in isolating the sounds in the word to be written and connecting each sound to a spelling—dictation practice during authentic application.

**Practice Phonological Awareness**  
As students engage in interactive writing, the teacher guides the students in isolating the sounds in the word to be written and connecting each sound to a spelling. This is the type of multisensory and multimodal application of both phonemic awareness and phonics skills necessary to build spelling mastery and is an ideal way to connect phonemic awareness tasks to print to accelerate learning.

Day 4  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

Write About the Text: Encode (8–10 min.)

**Model**  
Let's write about the story we read. What can we write?  
We can write our own sentences about what happened first, next, and last. Let's use the pictures to help us. We can start by writing about what happened first in the story.


**Retell**  
Have students turn and talk to a partner about what happened in the story. Then ask them to propose sentences and select one or more for the class to write.  
  
Support students in applying their phonics and high-frequency word knowledge during interactive writing. Be sure that the final sentence includes high-frequency words and words that begin or end with consonant digraphs students have been practicing.

**Write**  
Call on students to help write the final sentence. Have them come up to the board and write words or letters they know.  
  
As they write, have students say the words slowly and write all the sounds they hear. (This is not a copying task.)

Sample Interactive Writing  
The fish is sad.  
The fish makes lots of wishes.  
The fish makes a final wish.

**Support**  
Help students make connections to previously learned skills, and support them as needed.

Check to see: If students have difficulty encoding words, then use strategies provided for Small-Group Instruction.



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Day 4  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

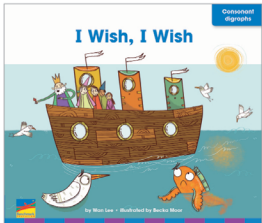
UNIT 4 • WEEK 1

Small-Group and Independent Practice (10–15 min.)

Use the following activities during small-group time to reteach and reinforce the whole-group mini-lesson.

Reread I Wish, I Wish: Decode

- Remind students that they know these high-frequency words: **were, our, could, these**. Students should be able to read these words fluently.
- They have also been learning about decoding consonant digraphs. When they come to a word with a consonant digraph, remind them to use what they know about the sound the digraphs stands for to read the word.
- Invite students to whisper-read *I Wish, I Wish*. Circulate, listen in, and provide corrective feedback.
- Have partners take turns rereading the text aloud for additional practice.



Decodable Reader: *I Wish, I Wish*


Independent Practice/Partner Work

While you are meeting with small groups, have students complete the following independently or with partners.

- Draw a picture of the fish from *I Wish, I Wish* making different wishes from the story, then describe the picture to a partner.

Spelling: Speed Sort

- Write these words in random order: **sing, bring, thing, shop, ship, shut, this, than**.
- Have student pairs write the words on cards and sort them according to their consonant digraph spelling pattern (**ng, sh, th**).
- Then have pairs mix up the cards and challenge themselves to sort the words at a faster rate.



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**Provide Extended Practice**  
Based on the teacher's formative assessment observations during the lesson, additional multisensory and multimodal practice opportunities are provided for students who need more lesson follow-up to keep them on track for skill mastery. This provides additional opportunities for the teacher to slow down the instruction and practice, offer more corrective feedback, and address any other instructional issues.

**Review Previous Lesson**  
A rereading routine of previously read decodable texts is a key part of the lesson cycle necessary to extend the learning and build fluency.

**Provide Guided Practice**  
Students read a set of words with the target phonics skill and then sort them according to common spelling patterns.

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# DAY 5

## Phonics and Word Study Instruction

Benchmark Advance phonics and word study lessons align to and reflect the components of the LETRS® Lesson Plan Template.

On **Day 5** of the instructional cycle, phonics and word study instruction is focused on the following:

- Rereading decodable text for fluency
- High-frequency words
- Spelling/dictation with embedded phonemic awareness (oral segmentation)
- Additional spiral review
- Cumulative assessment

State Goal and Purpose

The target skill and lesson goal are clearly identified and communicated to students. This is where teachers display or state the related standard in schools where that is required.

Provide Extended Practice

Students reread decodable texts throughout the week to extend the learning and practice and develop fluency.

Provide Guided Practice & Read Text

Ample guided practice opportunities are provided through the reading of decodable texts for students to apply their growing phonics skills and receive corrective feedback from their teacher.

Provide Guided Practice

Ample guided practice opportunities are provided, allowing the teacher to collect important formative assessment data.

Review Previous Lesson

As part of the systematic review and repetition cycle to ensure high-frequency word mastery, students spirally review previously taught words and engage in additional multisensory activities.

Day 5  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

Review and Monitor Progress (20 min.)

Reread for Fluency (7–8 min.)

For fluency practice, have students chorally read “The King’s Wish” on pages 8–11 of *My Reading and Writing*. Then ask partners to read together. For additional fluency practice, use *I Wish, I Wish* in the Unit 4 decodable reader lap book or have students use the decodable readers. Alternatively, you may choose to use the decodable reader *Trish’s Birthday* as a fresh read for students. Use this new read to determine fluency with phonics skills and high-frequency words. For students who need additional practice, guide their reading of the text.

Grade 1 Decodable Readers

Ih, sh, -ng ch, -ch, wh 3-letter blends

I Wish, I Wish

Decodable Reader Lap Book: *I Wish, I Wish*  
Decodable Reader: *I Wish, I Wish*

Trish’s Birthday

Decodable Reader: *Trish’s Birthday*

The King’s Wish

My Reading and Writing, pp. 8–11

Note students’ speed, accuracy, and intonation. Provide general feedback.

High-Frequency Words (3–4 min.)

Introduce/Model: were, our, could, these

Display each word. Have students read and spell each word as a group. Then have students use each word in a sentence.

e-Pocket Chart

were our could these

who good by them

Spiral Review: who, good, by, them

Read, Build, Write: Have students build each word with Letter Cards. Then have them write the words.

Day 5  
PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

UNIT 4 • WEEK 1

Spelling and Dictation (3–5 min.)

Use the following procedure to monitor progress of students’ spelling. Conduct a dictation of a subset of the week’s spelling words.

Say each spelling word and use it in the sentence provided. You will not cover all the spelling words.

Have students write either the word or sentence, based on time available. Continue with the next word.

Also look in students’ writing from this week for evidence of using the week’s spelling patterns correctly.

bring The men bring in the food.

shut The wind shut the door.

our Our class has fun.

this This trash bin is full.

thing That thing is hot.

shop We like to shop for socks.

these These trucks are fast.

than Can you jump higher than I can?

Spiral Review: Initial and Final Blends (3 min.)

Review: hand, trip

Display Letter Cards for the word hand. Blend the sounds.

Which sounds do these letters stand for? Let’s blend the sounds: /haand/. Let’s read the word together: hand. Repeat for the word trip.

e-Pocket Chart

h a n d

t r i p

Practice: trusting, sending, jumping, blocking, stamping

Point out the inflectional ending -ing on the end of each word. Have students use each word in a sentence to show that an action is happening right now.

Cumulative Assessment

Select 5–6 students to assess using this week’s assessment for accuracy and fluency on students’ phonics skills. Take note of fluency issues and decayed learning. Use your findings to form small groups.

IELD Integrated ELD

Light Support (Bridging, Reaching)

1. Offer additional practice with consonant digraphs using Elkonin boxes with decodable words from the week’s stories, such as that, king, things, ship, them, this, rang, bells, sang, song, long, land.

Moderate Support (Developing, Expanding)

1. Offer additional practice with consonant digraphs using Elkonin boxes with decodable words from the week’s stories, such as that, king, things, ship, them, this, rang, bells, sang, song, long, land.

2. Focus specifically on the consonant digraph. Guide students to write the letters for the consonant digraph in each word but push markers for the remainder of the word.

Substantial Support (Entering, Beginning)

1. Offer drawings of words being orally used as exemplars and non-exemplars.

2. Verbally define and translate words into students’ native language if possible when beginning instruction.

3. Offer additional practice with Elkonin boxes, but focus only on the consonant digraphs. Students should just push markers for the remainder of the word.

Practice Dictation

Students are given a series of words to spell to apply their growing encoding skills. Their answers are assessed, and follow-up support is provided in subsequent lessons.

Review Previous Lesson

As part of the systematic review and repetition cycle to ensure phonics skill mastery, students spirally review words with previously taught skills.

Provide Guided Practice

Students read a cumulative list of words with taught phonics skills.

Review Previous Lesson

Unique to Benchmark programs, cumulative assessments of students’ reading and spelling skills are provided to assist teachers in more effectively monitoring mastery or being alerted to decayed learning in real time so that course corrections can be made to better impact learning.

# Common Questions from LETRS-Trained Teachers

Following are common questions received from teachers and reviewers exploring *Benchmark Advance* as their core ELA curriculum.

## Scope and Sequence with Spiral Review

Is the scope and sequence well-paced?	Yes. It was developed by phonics expert and researcher Wiley Blevins and includes gradual skill development from <b>simple to complex</b> linguistic constructions. In addition, there is careful consideration of skills as they connect to state and national standards with <b>ample time</b> for students to learn, practice, and master these skills prior to the end of the school year. Pacing can be adjusted based on student needs, and alternate pacing plans are provided (e.g., for K students who come to school knowing the majority of their letter-sounds).
Is substantial review built into each lesson?	Yes, review is built into <b>every lesson</b> . A <b>robust review and repetition cycle</b> is baked into the DNA of the program as well as the scope and sequence. Students require far more than one week of instruction to master and then transfer a skill in both reading and writing. The Spiral Review portion of lessons and the cumulative nature of many activities and the decodable texts are just some of the examples of this extended practice to ensure mastery.
Is there sufficient guided practice over a week or more?	Yes, students have multiple opportunities throughout each lesson to engage in guided practice. In addition, the practice is cumulative. Students require far more than one week of instruction to master and then transfer a skill in both reading and writing. Lessons are created with a <b>built-in review and repetition</b> of skills taught in the previous 4–6 weeks. Teachers have a predetermined roadmap to ensure that students move to mastery and ultimately transfer skills to independent reading and writing tasks.

## Practice and Application

Do lessons include application in decodable texts?	Yes, students read or reread a decodable book <b>every day</b> of instruction. On Days 2, 3, 4, and 5, students engage in guided practice with a new decodable texts. Throughout the week, students encounter at least 3 new decodable texts—including the “I Read” decodable text in their <b>My Reading and Writing student consumable book</b> and the <b>multiple decodable little books</b> . During small-group and independent time, students engage with decodable texts at a minimum on Days 1, 3, and 4, but more for students who need the additional support. Additional decodable books to <b>build fluency</b> and connected to the program’s scope and sequence are also available. The goal is to provide ample decodables for each skill to meet the needs of all students. For students needing intervention, the <i>Benchmark Phonics Intervention</i> program contains daily decodables as well.
Are skills modeled, practiced with guidance, and practiced independently?	Yes, skills are modeled, practiced with guidance, and practiced independently every day. This gradual release model is a part of the DNA of the program’s construction and instructional design.
Is dictation included as a regular part of instruction?	Yes, dictation is part of the 5-day lesson cycle on Days 2, 3, and 5, and students also write about their reading on Day 4. <b>Dictation is a key part of the encoding portion of the lessons</b> . In addition to the word and sentence dictation provided, students engage in Word Building (which reinforces transferring phonics skills to writing/spelling words), Word Sorts (which focus on common spelling patterns and highlight English rules/generalizations), and writing about the decodable texts, which is a stronger application piece than dictation alone. It requires students to bring together their spelling skills along with their vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation skills as they deepen and display their comprehension of text.

## Daily Phonics Lessons

Do your phonics lessons incorporate a routine-based lesson format?	Yes, we have a <b>5-day lesson cycle routine</b> that includes phonological awareness, blending and building words, guided practice, extended practice, and opportunities to encode, review, and develop fluency. <b>Each week teachers and students engage in the 5-day lesson cycle</b> . These whole-group lessons require approximately 30–45 minutes of daily whole-group instruction with additional lessons provided for small-group differentiation and lesson follow-up. The program recognizes that not all students are at the same place in their phonics development and, therefore, differentiation must occur BOTH in the whole-group lessons (e.g., review and challenge exercises) and during some small-group work. During that time, students working independently are engaged in additional reading of decodable texts to build fluency and writing activities to support encoding development.
Do you teach phonological awareness every day?	Yes, we do. Day 1 focuses on the identification, isolation, and articulation of the week’s target sound. Subsequent days focus on oral blending and oral segmentation—the “power” phonemic awareness skills most closely associated with early reading and spelling development. Other phonemic awareness tasks, such as phonemic manipulation, are included where most appropriate. Many critical <b>phonemic awareness</b> tasks are <b>embedded in other activities</b> . This is <b>aligned with research</b> , in which going from sound to print in the same lesson <b>accelerates learning</b> . In Spelling/Dictation lessons, students orally segment the word using counters and Elkonin (Sound) boxes. This is <b>Phonemic Awareness: Oral Segmentation</b> . Then they connect each sound to a spelling and replace the counter with that spelling, either in writing or using letter cards. This is a phonics/encoding activity. Both are in the same lesson, as supported by research. During Build Words activities, students go from one word to the next using letter cards, e.g., “sat” to “mat.” To perform this task, they must <b>orally manipulate the sounds</b> in these words to determine which sound is different and in which position of the word. This is very <b>sophisticated phonemic awareness</b> . Students then must make that phoneme manipulation concrete using letter cards to replace the physical spelling (an encoding activity), and then read the word (a decoding activity) to confirm that the correct substitution was made to create the correct word.
How are new concepts introduced in phonics lessons?	Concepts are <b>explicitly explained and introduced</b> through modeling with manipulatives when needed. Teacher “model talk” is provided to support teachers who are new to teaching phonics or have limited background in teaching these skills. In addition, supports for <b>high-impact instruction routines</b> are provided in print and via video.
How were example words chosen for phonics lessons?	Example words were chosen based on utility and grade-appropriateness following the scope and sequence. Word lists, such as frequency lists, were consulted.
Is word meaning addressed and included in phonics lesson?	Attention is paid to word meaning when students <b>apply the phonics skills</b> they’ve learned to reading decodable texts, during dictation, and when writing about what they’ve read. In addition, for <b>English Learners</b> , there is a <b>focus on learning meanings of words</b> in lesson activities and decodable texts. As the scope and sequence progresses and more word study skills are introduced, the focus on combining phonics and meaning/vocabulary increases. Lessons on roots, morphology, concept sorts, and so on are included.
Does your program include instruction for “heart words”?	“Heart words” is a term first used in a publication by Farrell, Osenga, and Hunter (2013) and is in the copyrighted program Readsters. The concept behind the practice is the basic concept of orthographic mapping where it is necessary to (1) attend to the individual sounds in a word, even if it’s irregular, <b>which we do when we ask students to “say the individual sounds they hear in the high-frequency word”</b> and (2) attend to the individual spellings in the word, highlighting in some way the irregular or unknown part that needs to be remembered “by heart,” <b>which we do in that same lesson when we highlight the irregular spelling or part to remember that might cause students confusion</b> .
What is your program’s pathway from word recognition to advanced phonics and morphology?	Skills develop and progress throughout the grade levels—from isolated phonics skills and application to <b>simple one-syllable words</b> to the reading of <b>multisyllabic words</b> and a larger focus on <b>word study skills</b> (syllabication, affixes, morphology, Greek and Latin roots, and so on). Activities such as Reading Big Words Strategy, Transition to Longer Words, and Morphology lessons illustrate that change in focus throughout the grades. See the program’s scope and sequence and/or the “stairstep” visual included in the <b>Program Guide</b> and <b>Phonics Brochure</b> .



# Glossary of Differing Terminology

Some terms used in LETRS® differ from those used in Benchmark Education yet refer to the same instructional practices. Use the chart below to help translate these terms.

TERM USED IN LETRS®	TERM USED IN BENCHMARK EDUCATION	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION
<b>Additive Blending</b>	<b>Final Blending</b>	<p>Sound-by-sound blending where students see the first letter and say the sound. Then the teacher adds the second letter and blends those two sounds with the students. Finally, the teacher presents a third letter and blends all three sounds to form the word.</p> <p><i>Phonics Routines videos provided by Benchmark Education explain and show this blending routine in action.</i></p>
<b>Heart Words</b>	<b>High-Frequency Word Routine: Say, Spell, Read, Write</b>	<p>The term “Heart Words” is one way to name a routine or protocol that promotes orthographic mapping. <i>Benchmark Advance</i> has a similar routine. It’s the <b>High-Frequency Word Routine: Say, Spell, Read, Write</b>.</p> <p>Instead of putting a heart above the irregular spelling, <i>Benchmark Advance</i> instructs students to highlight the irregular spelling or part. The result is the same—attention to the irregular or unknown spelling that students must remember.</p> <p>This is in stark contrast to a whole-word approach where students just look at the word or draw a shape box around it.</p> <p><i>Phonics Routines videos provided by Benchmark Education explain and show this high-frequency word routine in action.</i></p>
<b>Whole Word Blending</b>	<b>Continuous or Successive Blending</b>	<p>Students produce the sound represented by each grapheme and then blend the whole word together.</p> <p><i>Phonics Routines videos provided by Benchmark Education explain and show this blending routine in action.</i></p>
<b>Word Chains</b>	<b>Minimal Contrasts</b>	<p>Students build words that differ by only one phoneme-grapheme correspondence. They use a previously taught correspondence to learn a new correspondence.</p> <p>In <i>Benchmark Advance</i>’s phonics lessons, each week has a Blend and Build Words section. Students use letter cards to build words using minimal contrasts/word chains. This high-impact activity combines phonemic awareness (sound manipulation), encoding (spelling of word), and decoding (reading word to confirm). Additional minimal contrast activities are also provided in small-group lessons.</p>

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