



HOW BENCHMARK ADVANCE ©2022
SUPPORTS KEY TENETS OF
**STRUCTURED
LITERACY**

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B E N C H M A R K E D U C A T I O N C O M P A N Y

Benchmark Advance Instruction

Key Tenets of Structured Literacy

Definitions

Dyslexia

“Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”

Adopted by the IDA Board of Directors, Nov. 12, 2002. Many state education codes, including New Jersey, Ohio, and Utah, have adopted this definition. Learn more about how consensus was reached on this definition: Definition Consensus Project. Found at <https://dyslexiaida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/>

Structured Literacy

Structured Literacy™ is “an approach to reading instruction where teachers carefully structure important literacy skills, concepts, and the sequence of instruction, to facilitate children’s literacy learning and progress as much as possible” (IDA, 2019, p. 6). “This term refers to both the content and the methods or principles of instruction” (IDA, 2020, p. 1). “Structured Literacy™ is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the structure of language across the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the relationship among words (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse” (IDA, 2019, p. 6).

Content of Structured Literacy™: Language¹

Structured Literacy Tenet	How <i>Benchmark Advance</i> ©2022 Supports It
<p>Phonemic awareness: The ability to notice or become consciously aware of individual speech sounds (phonemes), allowing for the identification of and manipulation (segmentation, blending, and deleting) of sounds in spoken words. A large proportion of individuals with dyslexia has difficulty with this level of language analysis and needs prolonged practice to grasp it.</p>	<p>Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness activities appear each week in <i>Benchmark Advance</i> in Kindergarten and Grade 1. There is a focus on oral blending and oral segmentation since these skills are most closely associated with early reading and writing growth. After that, the focus is on phonemic manipulation tasks (e.g., sound addition, substitution, and deletion), which is associated with orthographic mapping. Students are assessed on their phonological awareness skills and additional tools are available for students needing more intensive support. Some students will need this support past Grade 1. (e.g., <i>Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 3: Phonological Awareness: Phoneme Segmentation</i>)</p>
<p>Sound-symbol (phoneme-grapheme) correspondences: Graphemes are letters and letter combinations that represent phonemes in print. The correspondences between letters and speech sounds can be taught through systematic, explicit, cumulative instruction over time.</p>	<p>Sound-spelling correspondences are taught explicitly. The teacher states the sound and the spelling (e.g., the /u/ sound is spelled with the letter u). The teaching of these sound-spellings is sequenced from easier to more complex and includes a review and repetition cycle for mastery so students can more readily transfer the skills. Students read words with the target phonics skills both in isolation (e.g., <i>Blend Words</i>) and in context (e.g., “<i>I Read</i>” decodable texts).</p>
<p>Patterns and conventions of print (orthography): Patterns and conventions (e.g., some letters, like v and j, cannot be used at the ends of words; only some letters can be doubled; and the six basic syllable types) can be taught. Through explicit instruction and practice, students with dyslexia can be taught to understand and remember patterns of letter use in the writing system.</p>	<p>Patterns and conventions of print are taught and reinforced throughout the program during the initial introduction of the target skill, during dictation (<i>Spell Words</i>), while word building (<i>Build Words</i>), and during all syllabication instruction. (e.g., <i>Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 2: Spell Words [dictation]</i>; <i>Grade 3, Unit 5, Week 2, Lesson 9: Consonant-le Syllable Pattern</i>)</p>

¹ Information for this section came from IDA, 2019; IDA, 2020; Hasbrouck, 2020; Moats, 2019; and Spear-Swerling, 2019.

Structured Literacy Tenet

How *Benchmark Advance* ©2022 Supports It

Morphology: Morphemes, the smallest unit of meaning in a language, include prefixes, roots, base words, and suffixes. Recognizing morphemes helps students figure out and remember the meanings of new words. Knowledge of morphology is an aid for remembering spellings of words.

Students learn base words and affixes throughout the program, beginning with common inflectional endings in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and progressing to prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin roots as they go through the grades. Attention is paid to using word parts for both decoding and accessing a word's meaning. Students develop strategies to read multisyllabic words, including seeing whole words, recognizing parts for pronunciation and meaning, and building words. Activities such as Build Words, Sort Words, Decode by Analogy (Grades 3 and up), Using Reading Big Words Strategy, and Build Automaticity drills focus on these patterns. (*e.g., Grade 2, Unit 10, Week 2, Days 1–5: Prefixes; Grade 3, Unit 5, Week 2, Days 1–5: Vowel-r Syllables*)

Syntax: Syntax is the system for ordering words in sentences so that meaning can be communicated. The study of syntax includes understanding parts of speech and conventions of grammar and word use in sentences. Syntax lessons include interpretation and formulation of simple, compound, and complex sentences, and work with both phrases and clauses in sentence construction.

Students write about the decodable, accountable texts they read every week. It is through this application of the phonics skills that they also have opportunities to apply their knowledge of grammar/sentence structure and receive targeted feedback from their teachers. (*e.g., Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 4: Write About the Text: Encode; Grade 3, Unit 5, Week 2, Day 3: Writing Follow-Up*)

Semantics: Semantics is the aspect of language concerned with meaning. Meaning is conveyed both by single words and by phrases and sentences. Teaching word meanings (vocabulary), interpretation of phrases and sentences, and understanding of text organization leads to comprehension of both oral and written language.

The goal of teaching phonics is to access words in sentences and build fluency in reading so that students can focus more of their mental energies to deeply comprehending the text. Although words used in the decodable texts are simple, students who need vocabulary instruction on these words receive that support during small-group work. During whole-group instruction, students use their Vocabulary Word Bank words to discuss and write about the stories they read. This visual vocabulary glossary enables teachers to build word knowledge while developing phonics skills. As students progress through the grades, instruction focuses on morphological awareness (*e.g., prefixes, suffixes, Greek and Latin roots*) that will help students access word meanings while reading. (*e.g., Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 2: We Read and Write: Build Vocabulary; Grade 3, Unit 8, Weeks 1 and 2, Days 1–5: Negative Prefixes, Greek and Latin Roots*)

Principles and Methods of Structured Literacy™ Instruction²

Structured Literacy Tenet	How <i>Benchmark Advance</i> ©2022 Supports It
<p>Explicit: Explicit instruction includes: a clear statement of the lesson’s goals; teachers explaining each concept and providing step-by-step demonstrations using a range of examples and non-examples; students applying each new concept to reading and writing words and text; and teachers providing sufficient amounts of guided practice and support with immediate feedback and guidance.</p>	<p>Deliberate, clear teaching of all aspects of foundational skills is provided in the program. The lessons are explicit and systematic. The focus is on daily application to both reading and writing—not isolated skill practice. The lessons are also active, engaging, and thought-provoking, guiding students to observe and discuss aspects of how English words work. See the program’s instructional routines for details on each research-based routine used (e.g., blending, word building, dictation, reading decodable texts, writing about decodable texts). (<i>See Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 1</i>)</p>
<p>Systematic and cumulative: Language concepts are taught systematically, with the teacher explaining how each element fits into the whole. This is done by creating a reasonable scope and sequence of skills that progresses from easier to more difficult, with concepts building on another.</p>	<p>The teaching of the sound-spellings is sequenced from easier to more complex (separating confusing letter and sounds, built so words can be formed early on, etc.) and includes a review and repetition cycle for mastery so students can more readily transfer the skills. Students go from the known to the new during instruction to provide connections across learning. (<i>e.g., Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 1: Spelling-Sound Correspondence and Day 2: Spiral Review; See also Grade 1, Unit 5, Week 1, Day 1: Blend Words</i>)</p>
<p>Intensive, hands-on, engaging, and multimodal: Increasing the intensity of instruction requires frequent responses from students to ensure there is a high level of student-teacher interaction. Moving tiles into sound boxes, using hand gestures, building words with letter tiles, and color-coding sentences in paragraphs are all examples of hands-on learning that keep students engaged in learning. Multimodal instruction pairs sensory modalities (i.e., auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities, leading to enhanced learning of all students, including those with dyslexia.</p>	<p>The lessons in the program are multimodal—focusing on reading, writing, speaking, and listening to sounds, letters, and words. Many of the activities engage students in multisensory learning, such as dictation (in which students use sound boxes and counters to physically mark sounds as they segment the sounds in words), word building (in which students use letter cards to build a series of words), Heidi Songs (in which students sing and move to actions as they learn sounds and letter formation), and so on. (<i>e.g., Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 1: Spelling-Sound Correspondences, Day 2: Write Words</i>)</p>
<p>Diagnostic and responsive: During instruction, teachers use student response patterns to adjust pacing, presentation, and amount of practice given. During and after instruction, progress monitoring helps identify who needs extra help, what type of help is needed, and whether the instruction is working so appropriate modifications can be made in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Students are assessed three times a year using a comprehensive phonics assessment (Jan Hasbrouck’s Quick Phonics Assessment), and weekly cumulative assessments are provided to assist teachers in determining skill mastery versus skill decay and to make immediate course corrections before learning issues develop. (<i>e.g., Grade 1, Unit 2, Week 2, Day 5: Cumulative Assessment. See also unit assessments for decoding and spelling.</i>)</p>

² Information for this section came from IDA, 2019; IDA, 2020; Hasbrouck, 2020; Moats, 2019; and Spear-Swerling, 2019.

RTI, RTI2, MTSS—Where Do Programs Fit?

Tier 1 includes high-quality instruction, with universal screening, for all children in the general education classroom. The goal of Tier 1 is to help every student achieve the designated learning standards for that state, district, or school. See sample Tier 1 instruction.

Focus Skill: Short u (15–20 min.)

Phonological Awareness: Phoneme Segmentation (2–3 min.)

Model: bugs

Model how to segment the word bugs into individual sounds.

Listen carefully as I say the sounds in the word bugs: /b/ /u/ /g/. The word bugs has four sounds.

Say the sounds and the word with me: /b/ /u/ /g/ /u/. bugs.

Practice: us, bus, dug, rug, hug, tubs

Repeat the routine with the words above, having students segment the words, saying each individual phoneme.

For Differentiated Phonological Awareness Activities, see the progression of routines provided in Additional Resources section online.

Reread: "Come Here, Friend" (3–4 min.)

Build Automaticity

Remind students that they know these high-frequency words: come, here, to, of. Students should be able to read these words fluently. Remind students that they have also been learning about decoding short u words.

When they come to a word with short u, such as bug, remind them to use what they know about the sound to read the word.

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

Day 3

PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

UNIT 2 • WEEK 2

Day 3

PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

I Write (6–7 min.)

Plan Writing

Have students turn to page 22 in *My Reading and Writing*. To deepen comprehension, have students draw a picture and write a description of a friend from the story after reading "Come Here, Friend."

Talk to Write: To clarify their ideas, have partners describe, act out, or have a conversation as their character with their partner.

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

Spelling (2–3 min.)

Model/Practice: rug, bug, hug, cup, up, fun, run, sun

- Using the procedure from Day 2, model how you spell each word by listening to the sounds and writing what you hear.
- Have students write the letters that stand for the sounds they hear in each word.

Ethnic Boxes

Spiral Review: men, ten, pen, fed, bed, let, met, wet

High-Frequency Words (2–3 min.)

Practice/Dictation: come, here, to, of

- Display each word.
- Have students read and spell each word together.
- Dictate each word without showing it.
- Have students close their eyes, picture the word, and write it as they see it.
- Display the word again and have students self-correct their writing.

✶Pocket Chart

Practice: come, here, to, of

Read, Build, Write: Have partners build each word with Letter Cards. Then they rebuild the word, and use it in a sentence.

Spiral Review: are, sold, two, look, my

Review last week's words using the same procedure.

Day 3

PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

UNIT 2 • WEEK 2

Students who are found to be struggling with just the Tier 1 instruction need to be provided with appropriate interventions at increasing levels of intensity (Tiers 2 and 3). See sample Tier 2 instruction. Tier 3 instruction is provided in the *Benchmark Phonics Intervention* program.

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 the Text: Decode

You may wish to conduct a second reading of "Come Here, Friend," having partners read to each other while you circulate and monitor the reading.

You may wish to use *Big Bus Gets Stuck* in the Unit 2 decodable reader lap book for additional practice with accountable text.

I Write

Provide students with extra support for the I Write activity.

- Have one partner draw a picture of one of the friends from the story. Then have the other partner describe the picture using words from the story.
- You may wish to provide sentence frames for the writing such as: *The sun is a friend. It is _____. The bug is a friend. It is _____.*

Independent Practice/Partner Work

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

- Reread "Come Here, Friend" in *My Reading and Writing* and share other friends they find on nice, warm days.
- Read *Big Bus Gets Stuck* in the Unit 2 decodable reader lap book.

Alternate Learning Path

Before reading the text, have students listen to a reading of "Come Here, Friend." Assign one part for each student to practice ahead of time, helping them become more comfortable with reading as a group.

Integrated ELD

Meaningful Vocabulary and Sequencing

- Read "Come Here, Friend" with students, using the gestures to support words and phrases such as *up, hot, Come here, big bug, fast, little, run, and jump*.
- Write the following sentence pairs on the board.
 - The ____ is my friend. It is as ____.
 - The ____ is my friend. It has ____.
 - The ____ is my friend. It can run and jump. (dog)
 - ____ is my friend. It has a lot of fun. (cat)
- Review the bold vocabulary words. Have students look back at the text and illustrations to discuss the meaning of the words.
- Next, read the sentence pairs and have students complete each pair with a word from the text. Write the words in the sentences.
- Reread the completed sentences with students. Then have them make a list of all the friends in "Come Here, Friend" (sun, bug, dog, cat).

Day 3

PHONICS AND WORD STUDY

UNIT 2 • WEEK 2

In *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, a quarterly publication from IDA, an article on reading instruction approaches by Moats (2017) describes the features and characteristics of programs that include Code-Emphasis or Phonics-Emphasis. The following chart shows how *Benchmark Advance* ©2022 aligns with this approach.

***Benchmark Advance* ©2022**

Feature of Program	Code-Emphasis or Phonics-Emphasis	<i>Benchmark Advance</i> ©2022
Organization	Scope and sequence of phonics and word reading skills determines lesson design and sequence of reading practice.	The scope and sequence serves as the “spine” of the instruction. All the instruction, decodable text readings, and so on are derived from this carefully constructed scope and sequence with its built-in review-and-repetition cycle for mastery.
Texts for Reading Instruction	Decodable until about Grade 2; high proportion of pattern words that have been taught	Decodable texts are the key student reading materials used in Kindergarten and Grade 1. They appear in the <i>My Reading and Writing</i> student book. Additional decodable books (<i>Benchmark Decodable Reader</i> small books) are also available for students needing extra support.
Content	Phonemic awareness, phoneme-grapheme relationships, syllabication and morphology, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing; use of decodable text at K-1 level	All aspects of Structured Literacy are included in the <i>Benchmark Advance</i> program. A strong reading-writing connection exists, and the focus of the instruction is on the application of these skills—where the learning “sticks.”
Instructional Time	In K-1, about half the time is spent on word work (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency in word recognition), the rest on language comprehension and oral reading. In Grades 2-4, more instructional time is spent on language and comprehension, and less on word work.	<i>Benchmark Advance Phonics and Word Study</i> lessons are created with built-in repetition and spiral review of foundational skills within the context of each unit’s topic. Explicit instruction is followed by practice and application to various reading and writing situations. Approximately 30 minutes per day should be spent focusing on these critical phonics skills in Kindergarten and Grade 1. The time needed decreases a bit in Grades 2 and up. However, the phonics lessons include both reading and writing.
Method/Teacher Role	Mostly teacher-led; teacher actively leads students through decoding activities and guided practice. Until students can read words with a variety of phonics patterns, comprehension instruction is with read-alouds.	The “We Read” selections and other read-alouds are used to build vocabulary and comprehension in the program, while the decodable accountable texts focus on phonics fluency.

Feature of Program	Code-Emphasis or Phonics-Emphasis	Benchmark Advance ©2022
Corrective Feedback	Students are asked to look carefully at the word, sound it out, and check to see if the word they read makes sense.	Students are guided to focus on the use of letter-sound and spelling-sound aspects of words while reading. The decodable texts ensure that this skill is reinforced throughout the daily lessons. There is also a focus on analyzing word parts to increase students' curiosity and awareness of how English words work. Discussions about words (e.g., in sorts) lead to improved reading and spelling.
Types of Practice	Synthetic skill-building from sounds to words to sentences to text with high percentage of words with phonics patterns that have been taught	Students practice reading decodable words in isolation and in connected text through daily readings of decodable accountable texts and the writing about them. This reinforces these skills and deepens text comprehension.

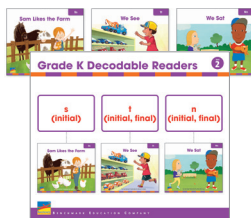
Phonics Components

Grade K

Decodable Readers and Lap Books



Unit 1



Unit 2



Unit 3



Unit 4



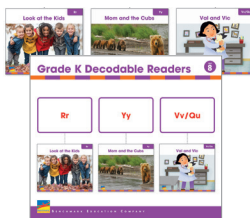
Unit 5



Unit 6



Unit 7



Unit 8



Unit 9



Unit 10

Grade 1

Decodable Readers and Lap Books



Unit 1



Unit 2



Unit 3



Unit 4



Unit 5



Unit 6



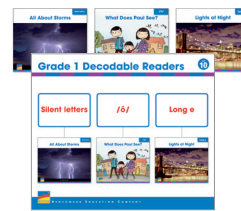
Unit 7



Unit 8



Unit 9



Unit 10

Phonics Resources



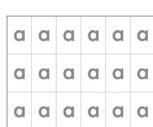
Alphabet Frieze Cards



Sound-Spelling Cards



High-Frequency Word Card Sheets



Letter Card Sheets



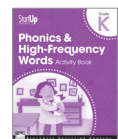
Workmats



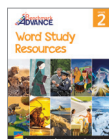
Picture Word Cards



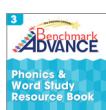
ePocket Chart



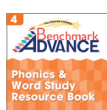
Phonics & High-Frequency Words Activity Book



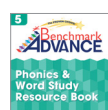
Word Study Resources



Phonics & Word Study Resource Book with Lessons



Phonics & Word Study Resource Book with Lessons



Phonics & Word Study Resource Book with Lessons



Articulation Videos



Phonics and Letter Songs



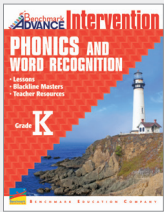
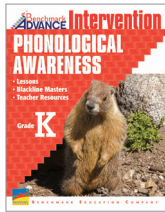

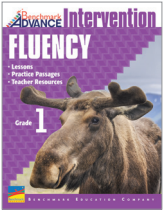
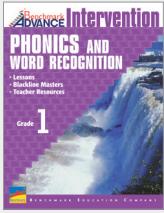
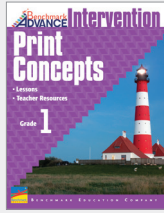

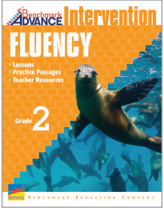
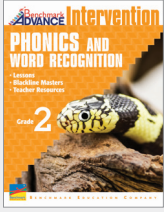
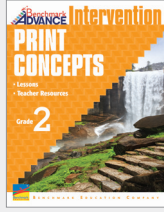

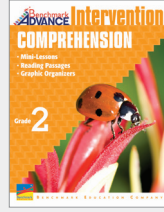
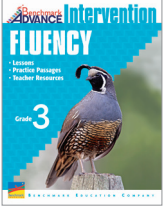
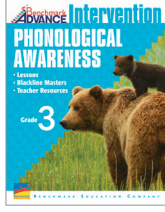
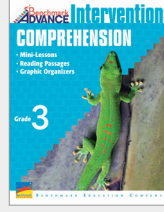
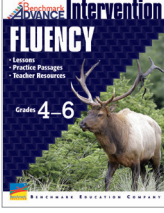

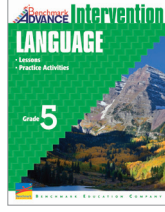


Interactive Learning Games



High-Frequency Word Videos

Students who are found to be struggling with just the Tier 1 instruction need to be provided with appropriate interventions at increasing levels of intensity (Tiers 2 and 3). See the sample Tier 2 instruction below. Tier 3 instruction is provided in the *Benchmark Phonics Intervention* resources.

Intervention

Fluency	Phonics and Word Recognition	Phonological Awareness	Print Concepts	Language	Comprehension
					
					
					
					
					
					
					

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