Common Core Standards and Best Practices

Introduction: The Common Core
The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) represent a coherent progression of learning expectations in English language arts and mathematics. They are designed to prepare K-12 students for college and career success.

The English Language Arts (ELA) K-5 standards focus on six strands:
- Three Reading strands – Literature, Informational Text, Foundational Skills
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening, and
- Language.

Because the Reading standards for Literature and for Informational Text place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read, they speak to the importance of all students having ownership of the Reading: Foundational Skills strand.

Phonics and Word Study skills are fundamental to becoming a proficient reader. Teachers need to understand the connection between and among four processors:
- orthographic (letters),
- phonological (sounds),
- semantic (word meaning), and
- context (reference for the word meaning).

Refer to Appendix A that accompanies the CC-ELA standards. This document should be read, studied and discussed with colleagues.

CCSS-ELA Reading: Foundational Skills – Phonics and Word Recognition

Grade 2
Phonics and Word Recognition
3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
   a. Distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words.
   b. Know spelling-sound correspondences for additional common vowel teams.
   c. Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels.
   d. Decode words with common prefixes and suffixes.
   e. Identify words with inconsistent but common spelling-sound correspondences.
   f. Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.

Language
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
   d. Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words (e.g., cage → badge: boy → boil).
Direct Instruction

Utilizing Direct Instruction ensures that students will get the support they need to “own” new skills and concepts. The table below outlines the process used in direct instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Explains Task</th>
<th>Discuss How and When the Skill is to be Used – Involve students in a conversation concerning why the skill should be learned and applied in their lives.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain and Demonstrate the Skill – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage Every Student – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Models Task</td>
<td>The Teacher (I do) - Model the new strategy explicitly (work to see the strategy from your students’ current background) and let your students see you use the strategy throughout the day, with lots of “I do it” on the part of the teacher. Students have to be actively engaged throughout the lesson, even when the teacher is “doing”—make sure they are NOT passive listeners. Engage them verbally and through response cards: yes/no cards, stop/go cards. Keep an ongoing list of how you keep your students actively involved throughout the lesson; this serves as a “reality check” to make sure students are kept actively engaged/involved, and also provides a quick-reference for effective methods you have used with your students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I do)</td>
<td>Explain and Demonstrate the Skill – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery. “Think Aloud” procedures are most helpful.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In a “Think Aloud,” the teacher models the thought processes that take place when difficult or unfamiliar material is read aloud. Teachers verbalize their thoughts as they read orally to students. The goal is to assist students’ comprehension. By observing the teacher’s verbalized thought processes, students learn how to use what they already know to help them understand and respond to new material as it is read. Work to increase the complexity of your examples and student work until the work is at grade-level or beyond. Move students to doing their own “Think Aloud.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage Every Student – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teacher and Student Practice Task Together (we do)**

**Engage Every Student** – Invite volunteers to attempt the strategy on their own. Give corrective feedback as needed, allowing for follow-up questions. All feedback (including praise) needs to be specific. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Focus on higher order questions.

**Student Practice (you do)**

**Access Student Ownership** – After many “I do it” and “we do it” examples, ease into “you do it” opportunities under your careful eye. Applying new learning accurately is crucial to future success. Student responses should give you a clear picture of their level of understanding and level of application.

**Engage Every Student** – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Invite volunteers to attempt the strategy on their own. Give corrective feedback as needed, allowing for follow-up questions. All feedback (including praise) needs to be specific. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions.

**Constructive Feedback** – Remember to begin with less complex examples with the goal of moving to grade level and above examples. Students may work independently, in pairs and or small groups. This is the perfect time for students to verbally state each step of the strategy, while giving their reason for the choices they are making.

**Scaffolding/Constructive Feedback**

**Constructive Feedback** – Remember to begin with less complex examples with the goal of moving to grade level and above examples. Students may work independently, in pairs and or small groups. This is the perfect time for students to verbally state each step of the strategy, while giving their reason for the choices they are making.

**Scaffolding and Differentiation** – At this time the teacher will need to provide additional opportunities for student practice (with immediate feedback and reteaching—with possible accommodations) to ensure all students have every opportunity to learn.

**Engage Every Student** – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Give corrective feedback as needed, allowing for follow-up questions. All feedback (including praise) needs to be specific. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions.
Effective Instruction for Phonics and Word Recognition
Linnea Ehri has developed a useful framework for understanding the phases of word recognition (1998).

- Pre-Alphabetic Phase (the ability to read “visual clues”)
- Partial Alphabetic Phase (beginnings of some sound/spellings)
- Full Alphabetic Phase (ability to use most common sound/spellings accurately).
- Consolidated Alphabetic Phase (ability to recognize chunks of words—reads fluently).

Decoding and strong word recognition skills are related to all aspects of reading. Effective phonics instruction builds on a strong understanding of phonemic awareness:

- Teachers transition students from purely phonemic awareness activities to using letters to represent the phonemes practiced during phonemic awareness activities.
- Students then blend sounds to build words, which leads to automatic word recognition.
- These skills are then applied to decodable text.
- Work with word recognition continues, so that students become able to decode most any word with relative ease.
Instructional Procedures
The manner in which a teacher delivers a phonics lesson is just as important as the instructional format underlying the content being taught.

- Teacher monitoring is critical to ensuring that students are gaining accurate ownership of phonics and word study skills.
- Timely corrective feedback allows students to have a clear understanding of correct responses.
- Phonics and word study lessons should proceed at a rather lively pace—doing so keeps students engaged throughout the lesson.
- Effective signaling and use of key words allows students to participate at greater levels and to follow the teaching sequence within the lesson. Signaling cuts down on the need for so much “teacher talk” during the lesson.

Continuum of Instruction
Phonics skills build continually, with the bulk of phonics instruction occurring in Grade 1. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), phonics instruction should continue through Grade 6 and beyond if a student needs it. In Grade 2 instruction begins to focus more on automatic and accurate word recognition and word study.
## Possible Phonics Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonics Skill</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter names: upper case and lower case</td>
<td>A, B, C, D, E, etc. m, o, p, r, u, a, f, etc.</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter-Sound Correspondence (consonants)</td>
<td>b, m, r, p, c, s, t, h, f, d, l, k, n, z, etc.</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter-Sound Correspondence (short vowel sounds)</td>
<td>a, e, i, o, u</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Sound Correspondence (long vowel sounds)</td>
<td>a, e, i, o, u</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Vowels/Silent e</td>
<td>/a/ as in cake, /o/ as in note, etc.</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endings</td>
<td>-ing, -s, -es, -er, -ed</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonant Digraphs: beginning ending</td>
<td>ch, ph, sh, th, wh</td>
<td>mid 1st to mid-2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonant Blends: beginning</td>
<td>br, cr, fr, gr, pr, tr, bl, cl, fl, gl, sl, pl</td>
<td>mid 1st to beginning 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sc, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw</td>
<td>mid 1st to beginning 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scr, spl, spr, squ, str</td>
<td>mid 1st to beginning 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonant Blends: ending</td>
<td>ft, ld, lt, mp, nd, nk, nt, sk, st,</td>
<td>mid 1st to beginning 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Sound Variations</td>
<td>qu, soft g, soft c, x</td>
<td>mid 1st to end of 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel Digraphs</td>
<td>ai, ay, ei, ea, ey</td>
<td>mid 1st to 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oa, oe, ow, ou, ew</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ee, ea, ie, ey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ew, oo, oe, ue, ui</td>
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<td>oo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ou</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>au, aw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel Diphthongs</td>
<td>oi, oy</td>
<td>mid 1st to 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ou, ow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-controlled</td>
<td>er, ir, ur, ar, or</td>
<td>mid 1st to 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Consonants</td>
<td>wr, kn</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multisyllabic Words</td>
<td>open—baby closed—magnet</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vowel-consonant-e—complete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutlisyllabic Words</td>
<td>r-controlled vowel teams</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consonant –le</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Phoneme Grapheme Mapping

Phoneme/grapheme mapping provide strong multisensory practice for students as they transition from purely phonemic awareness activities—purely sounds—to phonics activities that involve manipulation of sounds along with the letters they represent.

The alphabetic principle states that:
- Words are composed of letters that represent sounds, and
- There are systematic relationships between letters and phonemes (letter-sound correspondence).

Students learn to use these relationships to retrieve the pronunciation of known and unknown words.

In phoneme grapheme mapping, each box represents one phoneme (speech sound).

In the example below, the word “street” has five speech sounds. The letters “str” make up a three-letter blend; however, each letter maintains its own sound.

“Plate” has four sounds. The “e” is silent. It is written small in the corner of the box with the “t”. A line is drawn from the “e” to the “a”, to show that the “silent-e” causes the “a” to be long.
Syllables
Words are composed of pronounceable word parts called *syllables*. Each syllable contains one vowel sound; that vowel sound may be spelled with a vowel combination or even with a consonant letter as in baby or happy (the *y* sounds like a long *e*). EXCEPTIONS: ‘*thm*’ in rhythm, algorithm and ‘*sm*’ in chasm, schism.

As students encounter increasingly complex texts, their repertoire of word recognition skills needs to include syllable recognition. They need to learn

- How to divide a word into word parts, read each part accurately, and combine the parts to read the word.
- To recognize syllables that are composed of common prefixes, suffixes and root words.
- To use a flexible approach when a word has a part or parts that may be phonetically irregular.

There are six basic syllable patterns:

- **Closed**: This is the most common spelling unit in the English language; it accounts for approximately 50 percent of the syllables in connected text. Closed syllables have one vowel closed in by one or more consonants—the vowel is “short.”
  
  Examples: hat, shop, sad, mag-net bed, fish, at

- **Vowel-Consonant-e**: The final *e* in a vowel-consonant-*e* (VCe) syllable makes the vowel “long.”
  
  Examples: lake, complete, time, same, invite

- **Open**: An open syllable contains a vowel at the end of the syllable. The vowel is usually “long.”
  
  Examples: he, she, me, hi, va-ca-tion, so, ba-by
• **Vowel Pair:** Also known as a *vowel team* or *vowel digraph*—vowel pair syllables have two adjacent vowels. Diphthongs ou/ow and oi/oy are included in this syllable pattern.

  **Examples:** rain, meat, sail-boat, pause

• **Consonant-le:** Also known as the stable final syllable—syllable ending in –le is usually preceded by a consonant that is part of that syllable. This final syllable is unaccented—contains a consonant before the /l/, followed by a silent e.

  **Examples:** can-dle, tum-ble, bug-gle

• **-R Controlled:** A vowel-r syllable is a vowel followed by r (or, ar, er, ir, ur)

  **Examples:** far, part, fern, per-form, mir-ror, purse

• **Odd and Schwa Syllables:** Usually described as final, unaccented syllables with “odd” spellings.

  **Examples:** man-age, sta-tion

**Syllable Division Rules**

• **Each syllable contains a vowel sound.**

  All English syllables have a vowel sound with the exception of “thm” as in rhythm and algorithm.

  When dividing a word into syllables, vowel teams stay together.

  **Examples:** ai, ay, ea, ee, oa, ow, oo oi, oy, ou, ie, ei

• **Divide between two middle consonants.**

  **Examples:** hap/pen, bas/ket, bet/ter, des/sert, sup/er.

  NEVER split up consonant digraphs because they represent one sound. Digraphs include: /th/, /sh/, /ph/, /ch/ /wh/

• **Usually divide before a single middle consonant.**

  **Examples:** ‘o/pen”, “i/tem”, ‘e/vil”, “re/port”.

  Exceptions are those times when the first syllable has an obvious *short sound*, as in “cab/in”.

• **Divide before the consonant before and “-le” syllable**

  **Examples:** ble, gle, ple, as in ta/ble, bu/gle, pur/ple. The only exception is “ckle” words like tick/le

• **Three-letter blends stay together.**

  **Examples:** con/struct

• **Prefixes and suffixes are separate syllables.**

  **Examples:** un/hap/py, hope/less, farm/er, re/turn
Decoding Larger Words
Larger words often contain prefixes and/or suffixes. Students can use their knowledge of prefixes and suffixes to help them decode long words.

Teach students this procedure:
- Underline the base word.
- Draw a triangle around the prefix.
- Draw a box around the suffix.

Here are some words students can practice with:
- returned
- colorful
- mismatch
- unopened
- buses
- brushing
- skates
- dislikes

Pull words from students’ current reading material in all subject areas (including math). Practicing words from current material allows students to experience success more quickly. Students who experience success/growth are often more likely to keep trying and not give up when tasks become difficult.

If students are asked to use new words in sentences, the teacher should set guidelines that:
- Requires using more than one new word in a sentence.
- Write all types of sentences—Declarative, Imperative, Exclamatory, Interrogative
- No more than one sentence can begin with the word “I”.

References


