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, Non-fiction, Foundational skills
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening, and
- Language.

Because the Reading (Literature and Non-fiction strands) standards 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.

Segmenting is a foundational reading skill. It is the ability to identify the words within sentences and the syllables within words. At greater levels of proficiency, students can segment individual phonemes (sounds) within words. The standards document the importance of students being able to successfully segment syllables within words. To round out the instructional sequence, this module addresses segmentation of words within sentences and segmentation of syllables within words.

CCSS-ELA Reading: Foundational Skills – Segmenting

Kindergarten
Phonological Awareness

2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sound (phonemes).
   b. Count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words.

Grade 1
Phonological Awareness

2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sound (phonemes).
Phonological Awareness: Segmenting

Success in **early** reading depends on achieving a certain level of phonological awareness. All students benefit from instruction in phonological awareness. Many students will need ongoing practice with phonological skills while some will exhibit ownership immediately.

Phonological Awareness is the conscious sensitivity to the sound structure of language. It includes the ability to auditorily distinguish units of speech, such as individual words in a sentence, or the number of syllables in a word.

**For example:**
How many words are in the sentence?
(The teacher reads the sentences aloud. Then the student repeats the sentence while moving objects to indicate each word.)
- Dad can jump. (3)
- The dog ran fast. (4)

How many syllables are in each word?
(The teacher reads the sentences aloud. Then the student repeats the word while moving objects to indicate each syllable.)
- mailbox (2)
- banana (3)

Beginning phonological awareness instruction should involve students manipulating words within sentences and syllables within words. Instruction should always involve students orally and aurally as they use manipulatives. It is important to provide multisensory instruction that involves a student
- visually
- auditorily
- verbally, and
- tactually
within a single lesson.
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.

| Teacher Explains Task | **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.  
**Explain and Demonstrate the Skill** – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery.  
**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. |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher Models Task   | **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, with manipulatives, and with 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.  
**Explain and Demonstrate the Skill** – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery. “Think Aloud” procedures are most helpful.  
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 purpose is to assist students’ comprehension as they gain insight to how the mind can respond to what is known with what is being 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.”  
**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. |

**Teacher Explains Task**

- 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.
- Explain and Demonstrate the Skill – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery.
- 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.

**Teacher Models Task (I do)**

- 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, with manipulatives, and with 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.
- Explain and Demonstrate the Skill – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery. “Think Aloud” procedures are most helpful.
  - 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 purpose is to assist students’ comprehension as they gain insight to how the mind can respond to what is known with what is being 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.”
- 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.
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<th>Teacher and Student Practice Task Together (we do)</th>
<th><strong>Engage Every Student</strong> – 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.</th>
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| 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. |
Best Practices for Segmentation

Begin by reminding students about syllables, smaller parts that when blended together make a word. Remind students, also, that words can have different number of syllables.

Have students make “duck” lips by gently placing their lips between their forefingers and thumb. As they say a word, they will feel a slight vibration or buzz for each syllable or word part.

Provide students with blocks or other manipulatives to move for each syllable that is spoken. Our youngest learners are very concrete in their thinking. The teacher can enhance a child’s understanding of phonemes, syllables and words by using different size manipulatives. Felt squares and rectangles are perfect for this purpose; they can be sized for phonemes, syllables, or words to provide a visual and tactile representation of the unit being segmented.
Example Activity for Word Segmentation: Multi-Syllable Words

**Teacher:** Today we will review the number of syllables we hear in words with more than one syllable, or word part. We call these multi-syllable words.

I will say a word, you will repeat the word.

You will then say the word again as you move a block for each syllable.

**Teacher:** Our first word is ‘baby.’ What is the word?

**Student:** ‘baby.’

The student moves a block for each syllable as they say each syllable: ‘ba’ ‘by’

**Student:** ‘baby.’

The student slides their finger under the word after segmenting, pronouncing the word as a complete unit.

Continue with three to five additional words, following the format shown above. In Grade K, use familiar two- and three-syllable words. In Grade 1, add a few familiar four- and five-syllable words.

**Assessment and Feedback**

Corrective feedback should be part of *every* phonemic awareness lesson in Grades K and 1. Corrective feedback can also be utilized after an assessment.

Often, an instructional activity can be adapted for use as an informal assessment of student’s level of comfort with sentence segmentation and word segmentation.
References

