

Suggested Daily Lesson Sequence-

The 5-Step Plan

Step 3 of 5 – Developing word reading fluency



3. Practice reading decodable words and high-frequency irregular words (e.g. *said*) to build fluency

Once children can construct words and decode them *accurately* on the sound board, they need to practise reading words with the same phonetic pattern to develop word reading *fluency*. Again, this is a quick-paced step, taking fewer than 5 minutes, where children practise reading words in isolation. A simple technique is to put words on flash cards, colour-coding the vowel initially (write it in red) and fading the colour cues as children become more proficient. Have the children practice reading the words quickly. This usually requires the children read the words more than once — the first time for accuracy and a second or third time for fluency.

Simple kitchen timers or stop watches can be used to encourage the children to read more quickly. Students enjoy beating their previous time and seeing how much more fluently they can read the words on their second or even third attempt. They also enjoy graphing their progress as the number of words they can read in a minute, for example, increases.



Correcting Errors

You may notice that when a child misreads a word, the error is often on the medial vowel, for example reading **lip** incorrectly as **lap**. This is a good opportunity to have the child review the sound of the vowel /i/ and also review blending from left to right, reading the consonant and vowel as a unit — /li/— the strategy learned from Engelmann blending described in Step 2. To reinforce this strategy, you might say:

- “Look at this word again. What is the vowel? What sound does the vowel make?”
- Good, now let's try the word again. What do the first two letters say?”

Draw your finger underneath the word from left to right as the child reads **liiii**, drawing out the vowel. Now, ask the child to start again, this time adding the final sound — reading first **liiii** and then **liiiip**. Finally, ask the child to read the word quickly— **lip**.

A few high-frequency words that are not phonetically regular (e.g. said, would) can also be added to the pack of cards. It is helpful to print these words in a different coloured font if you are using computer generated word cards (or write these words on different coloured index cards) to indicate that they are not phonetically regular. High-frequency words can be selected from the core curriculum that is being used in the classroom or from published lists that include the most frequently used words in English (see, for example, the lists of Instant Words in *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists* by Fry & Kress, 2006).

Reference:

Teaching Tutorial: Decoding Instruction

Benita A. Blachman and Maria S. Murray

In association with Teaching LD.org

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Teacher Tips:

- As an alternative to the sound board, kindergarten children might enjoy using a set of magnetized letters on a cookie sheet when they start to make simple three letter words.
- For older students, Scrabble® tiles are especially useful, giving the activity a more mature look. Scrabble® tiles can also be used when students are building longer, phonetically regular multi-syllable words such as **pineapple** and **lawn mower**. Blank Scrabble® tiles can be purchased and a black marker can be used to create special tiles by writing two letters that make a single sound (e.g. consonant digraphs, such as **sh**, **ch** and vowel teams, such as **ai** and **ee**) on the back of one of the tiles.