

SECTION TWO



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TASKS

for Students at the
Emerging Level of
English Language
Proficiency

Section II • Tasks for Students at the Emerging Level of English Language Proficiency

10.	Retelling Fiction	Listening & Reading
11.	Retelling Nonfiction	Listening & Speaking
12.	Read Aloud With Simple Group Discussion	Listening & Speaking
13.	Visual Vocabulary	Listening & Speaking
14.	Zoom the Room: Sound Walls	Listening, Speaking, & Reading
15.	Shared Reading Predictable Text	Listening, Speaking, & Reading
16.	Read Aloud and Partner Talk	Listening, Speaking, & Reading
17.	Daily Activity Sequencing	Listening, Speaking, & Reading
18.	Teaching Sounds and Reading Decodable Text	Reading
19.	Word Manipulation With Onset and Rhymes	Reading
20.	Writing Dialogue Journals With Sentence Frames	Writing

Overview

In the emerging level of English language proficiency students possess a range of skills and behaviors. (See page 4 of the introduction for more details on the stages.) Some students at the emerging level may experience a silent period, which is a period of time (days, weeks, months) when they say nothing at all (Krashen, 2003; Himmele & Himmele, 2009). This is completely normal. These children most likely understand what you are saying, but don't expect them to do what you have asked. Work with students with the language they have and in the ways they are comfortable responding to engage them with lessons (Wright, 2019).

As students progress from some understanding of English to a greater understanding, they move from the **emerging level** of language acquisition to the **developing level** of language acquisition (the **developing level** tasks are in the next section). You will want to ensure a good balance of listening, speaking, reading, and writing overall in the lessons.

The tasks are designed to help students acquire language and are most engaging when you use them to meet social studies or science objectives, or other content-area goals. For example, you may read to the class about different types of clouds that make up the weather and the task involves labeling a drawing and writing a short sentence about clouds.

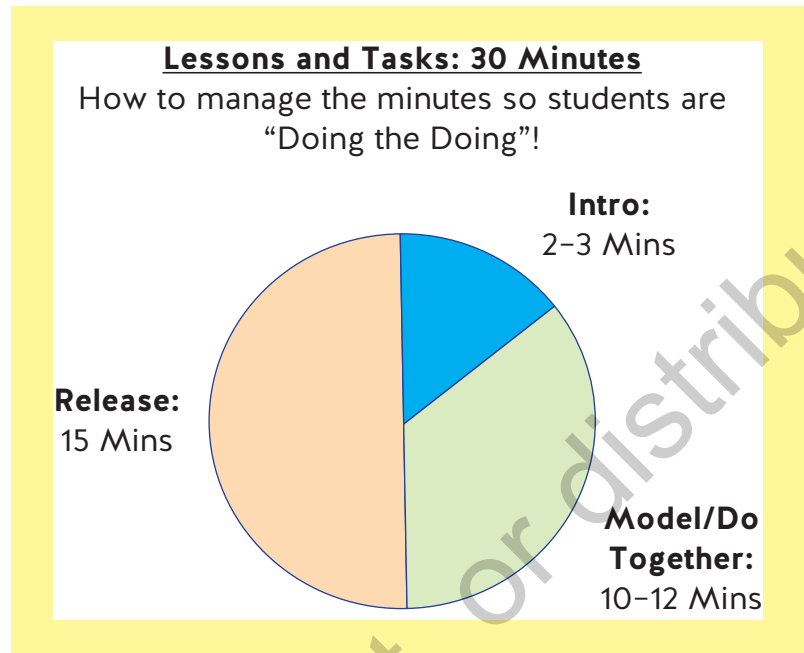
To refresh your memory of what to expect of learners at this stage, the following is information from WIDA.

WIDA's Descriptors for English Language Proficiency Level for Emerging

Level 2 Emerging	What Students Are Able to Do
Listening	Point to stated pictures, words, and phrases
	Follow one-step directions
	Match oral statements to objects, figures, or illustrations
Speaking	Name objects, people, pictures
	Answer who, what, when, where, and which questions
	Say frequently used words and phrases with emerging precision
Reading	Match icons and symbols to words, phrases, or environmental print
	Identify concepts about print and text features
Writing	Label objects, pictures, diagrams
	Draw in response to a prompt
	Copy or draw icons, symbols, words, and phrases for meaning

Source: WIDA Consortium (2012); WIDA Consortium (2020)

10 Tips for Success



1. Some tasks emphasize one or two domains of language (like listening and speaking). Other tasks involve all the domains. To choose the tasks that students are ready for, consider data you have collected about students' readiness.
2. **Keep your introduction to two to three minutes.**
3. State the purpose of the lesson and use visuals to ensure that students understand. If you speak the students' heritage language, or a student in class does, explain what will be happening during the tasks.
4. Reassure students that you are going to show them how to do everything that is asked of them and you will do a lot of the work together.
5. **Model for ten to twelve minutes.**
6. Use visuals to help you communicate your messages, expectations, and content. Look for ways to connect the visuals, real objects, and content to students' interests.
7. Focus the lessons on topics that include social studies and science. ELD content needs to be based on *content*.
8. **Plan twelve to fifteen minutes of guided work and peer work.** You may find that students need to work with you through guided activities more than working with peers at first.
9. At this stage of English language development, students need lots of support from you, so some tasks in this section don't have a “release” component.
10. Altogether—plan for thirty minutes per task.



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

When students begin speaking in short phrases and can follow along with you when listening to a story read aloud.



TARGET

Students will be able to read sentences on sentence strips to retell a simple story.

Retelling for many students is a spontaneous activity they embark on if asked what a story is about. But for the student acquiring English, retelling can be daunting. First, students may not have understood enough of the story to share the beginning, middle, and end. Second, they may not be able to say the words to retell. This is why it's good to make the retelling visual and tactile. In this task, students use pictures and sentence strips to retell a story they have heard you read aloud several times on previous days.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Picture book or short story with picture; sentences written out on sentence strips that state the beginning, middle, and end of the story

Name It: Today we are going to retell a story after I read it out loud. Let's start with a story we know.

What You Might Say Next: "After I read the story out loud, you are going to retell the story by putting sentence strips together in the correct order."

Model/Do Together: Read the story aloud, stopping often to restate what was happening in the story. Run your finger under the print and point to pictures as you go so students can follow along. After you are done reading, ask students to help you retell the story, using the pictures and sentence strips that you have prepared. Start with three sentences, one for the beginning, one for the middle, and one for the end. As students progress in their listening ability and reading ability, add in additional details from the middle and use five sentence strips.

Revisiting the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," sentences might include the following:

Beginning example:

Goldilocks ate the porridge, but it was too hot.

Goldilocks sat in the chair, but it was too big.

Goldilocks lay in the bed and it was just right.

You can also use sentences with temporal words:

First, _____.

Next, _____.

Last _____.

As students develop proficiency:

Goldilocks went into the house of the three bears.

Goldilocks ate father bear's porridge, but it was too hot.

Goldilocks sat in father bear's chair, but it was too big.

Goldilocks sat in baby bear's chair. The chair broke.

Goldilocks lay in baby bear's bed and it was just right.

Sentence frames with temporal words:

First, _____ happened.

Next, _____ did (or other verb) _____.

Also, _____ happened.

Additionally, _____ (name of character) _____
(verb).

Release: Invite students to put the sentences in the correct order. After they practice, you can invite students to try putting the sentences in order without using the pictures to help them understand the sentences. Repeat with new stories and texts as appropriate.

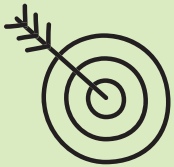
Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Continue to offer this lesson over time as you read stories out loud to students. Start with the simplest sentences with the least complicated language students can retell. Then, gradually increase the amount and sophistication of language. You can vary using and not using pictures as well. It's fine if students talk together to decide the correct order. Cooperative learning, during which students work in small groups to complete the task, is a powerful, natural extension of this activity. As you listen to student groups put sentences in order, remember it's fine if students speak in their heritage language to figure out the words in English. This is an asset and should be encouraged!



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

Once students can get the gist of nonfiction text of medium complexity read during shared reading.



TARGET

Students can retell the main points in a nonfiction text.

Stories have a structure that can be easier for students to comprehend (characters, setting, problem, solution) than informational texts. But for students acquiring English, and all students, we need to be doing more nonfiction work, not less! We can build content knowledge and students' reading skills through nonfiction read-alouds. Listening and having you point out text features helps children learn the structure of nonfiction texts, including topic sentences, supporting details, and main ideas. Retelling solidifies these understandings and supports comprehension.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Short text on a high-interest topic, with picture(s), sentences written out on sentence strips that state the main ideas from the text.

Name It: Today we are going to retell a nonfiction article (text) after I read it out loud. Let's start with a topic we are interested in. After I read the text out loud, you are going to retell the main ideas in the text by putting sentences in the correct order.

What You Might Say Next: "What do you know about this topic already?" Create a word bank (see Task 4) writing down vocabulary words and phrases they share, or that you pull from text.

Model/Do Together: Read the text aloud, stopping often to restate what the main ideas are in the text. Point to pictures as you go so students can see how the pictures help them. Once you are done reading, invite students to retell the text. Have them rely on the sentence strips that you have prepared and the pictures. (The sentence strip statements should capture either three of the main ideas or the big idea and three supporting facts.) Introduce this activity with just three sentences, one fact per sentence. As students progress in their listening and reading abilities, add in more details.

Looking at the text *Todos a Comer! A Mexican Food Alphabet Book* by Dr. Ma. Alma González Peréz, you might write the following sentences:

[G is para guacamole. The *aguacate* is mashed and then diced tomatoes, onions, and peppers are added. P es para pan dulce. Pan dulce is a rich variety of treats.]

Four example sentences from this book might be:

Two of our favorite letters are G and P.

The G stands for guacamole. Guacamole is made of *aguacates* (avocados).

The P stands for pan. Pan is good for breakfast.

You can also use sentences with order words:

The first fact _____.

The second fact _____.

The third fact _____.

As students develop proficiency, add in additional details.**Sentence frames with order words:**

The text is about _____.

The first main idea is _____.

Second _____.

Lastly _____.

Release: Invite students to put the sentences in the correct order. After they have done that practice, you can invite students to try putting the sentences in order without using the pictures to help them understand the sentences. Repeat with new texts as appropriate. For extra challenge, invite students to generate three sentence strips for a nonfiction text they have read independently.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Students are overwhelmed after you read aloud. Read an appropriate amount of the text, so as not to confuse students with too much language. It would be fine to choose only some of the sentences to read aloud from complicated or complex text.

Scaffold this lesson over time as you read informational text out loud to students. Start with the simplest sentence set with the least complicated language. Then, gradually increase the amount of words in the sentences. You can vary using or not using pictures as well. Students may talk together to figure out the correct order. Again, cooperative learning is a strong follow-up to this activity and it's more than okay for students to use their heritage language to figure out the words in English.



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

As soon as students are able to comprehend most of what is read aloud, get them to talk about the reading.

TARGET

Students can carry on a conversation after listening to text read aloud.



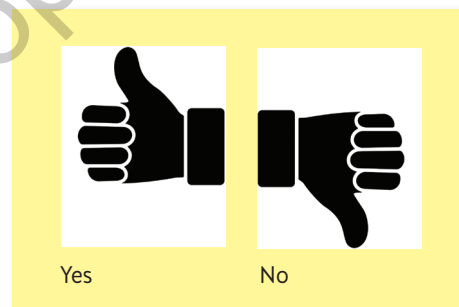
Once you have read stories aloud to students and they are comfortable discussing stories (simple one- or two-word discussions; see Task 10), students are ready to answer questions you pose that require more thinking. This read-aloud-based task provides an opportune time to bring in culturally relevant stories. Find books that reflect the backgrounds of students in your class, and look for ways to connect their interests, families, and knowledge to the ongoing discussion.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Books that have less complex text but have enough meaning in them for students to discuss. Students new to English are not yet ready for complex texts in English. Of course, as soon as they develop skills in listening comprehension, you can increase the complexity of the books you use.

Name It: Today I am going to read a story aloud and we are going to talk about the text and share what we think. I want to hear your thinking, and remember, you can share your thoughts in any way you can. You can always just answer yes or no to the questions I ask if you don't know the best answer.

What You Might Say Next: "Introduce the idea of answering questions you ask by saying yes or no. (You can use yes/no cards, or have students write yes/no on whiteboards. Ensure students know that they can say anything they are thinking about the book, but the minimum they need to think about is saying *yes* or *no* to the questions you pose.)



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Using Yes/No cards can make the task tactile and fun for students.

Model/Do Together: Introduce the book. On a piece of chart paper or a whiteboard, write a couple of questions you are going to ask about the book when you are reading it. By frontloading the questions and explicitly discussing the questions prior to reading the text, students will be able to focus on the read-aloud. Encourage them to share their ideas, but don't push them to explain why, as they may not be ready to explain their thinking. Certainly, encourage them to talk in their heritage language with a partner about their deeper thinking, perhaps answering why they think what they do, but don't press them to do all of this discussion in English.

Sample questions might include:

Do you like the character?

Do you think the character did the right (or wrong) thing?

What prediction can you make about what will happen? Or what do you think will happen next?

Do you think the characters can _____?

Release: Continue fostering discussion with students. Also continue to support as needed, by pointing to pictures in the book, the words you wrote on the chart, and so on.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Students are not engaged in talking and thinking and are simply listening to you. If you notice students are passive, that means they are not acquiring language through experience. Give them a chance to talk, gesture, or point. Encourage students to answer in any way that they can, which could be saying "yes" or "no" or answering in simple phrases (don't push for complete sentences; see the Scaffolds in the introduction, page 3 for more guidance).



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

When students are able to hold short conversations in class on social topics and get the gist of content lessons.



TARGET

Students will create a vocabulary bank (cards or notebook) by writing the word, drawing a picture, and writing a short definitional phrase in their own words.

Students need multiple exposures to new words through reading, writing, listening, and speaking for the concepts and terms to “stick.” In this routine you use the target vocabulary of a unit (either from the vocabulary cards provided in a program or a textbook) as the jumping off point to a richer sequence of exposure to the word. The important thing to remember is to include explicit discussion and demonstration, collaborative work with peers, and multimodal experiences that include a lot of visuals. For example, students can look at several pictures, view a short video, move, make gestures, draw to help them learn vocabulary words, and write definitions of words in their heritage language.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Target vocabulary. These words can come from your curriculum device for viewing multiple pictures or video, word journal.

Name It: We are going to learn new words today, but instead of just looking at cards we are going to get active with our brains and bodies!

What You Might Say Next: “We are going to do four things with each word we are learning. We are going to say the word, think about the word, and look at some pictures that show us the meaning of the word; we are going to act it out and finally we are going to write and draw a picture.”

Model/Do Together: Showing and working on one word at a time, follow this sequence:

1. Write the word down and say it; students repeat.
2. Discuss the word’s meaning. Show pictures—the more the better to build understanding of the word’s meaning.
3. Ask students to think about the word and visualize the word’s meaning in their mind.
4. Help student act out the word, or use hand gestures to remember the word.
5. Have students write the word in their journals and draw a picture.



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If the word you introduce is *misunderstand*, the hand gestures could be opening your hands out flat.

Release: Once students are used to the routine, encourage them to think of words that they want to work on together. As a group, you can facilitate the sequence for students as they work to develop their vocabularies.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Some students may not be ready to act out the word. It is perfectly fine if they need more time before acting out words. Let them watch and enjoy the process. The same goes for students not comfortable or ready to draw the meaning of words on their own. If they want to copy a picture that you display, that would be a good way to support them. Students might be comfortable doing hand gestures or acting out the word with a partner. If they speak the same heritage language, they can discuss the word's meaning in their heritage language and say the word in English, working to make connections between the word and what it means.

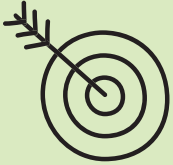
Zoom the Room: Sound Walls

Listening, Speaking, & Reading



WHEN TO OFFER IT

Once students have learned a few of the sounds and letters in English. You will offer this task using the letters and sounds they have learned. Add additional letters and sounds as they learn them.



TARGET

Students can make words and sound out words with a partner.

Students need to develop facility in knowing letters and sounds. They need practice in decoding words, whether those are real words or nonsense words, to understand that if they know the sounds the letters represent, they can say the word. While sounding out nonsense words may seem like an odd thing to practice, students throughout their reading lives will encounter words they may not know how to say but sounding them out is a good first step in determining meaning. For instance, my husband speaks Farsi. While Farsi uses the Arabic alphabet, often words in Farsi will be spelled in the Roman alphabet on products in stores. The word for *bread* using the Roman alphabet is *naan*. I can read this word because I know the sounds and the double *a* signals me to not say the short vowel sound for *a*, but the alef sound. Being able to say the word, I can ask somewhat what the word means. In this task, students will randomly be paired, and depending on the pairing and the order they put their letter card in, the resulting word may be a nonsense word.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Index cards with letters, digraphs, and diphthongs you have taught written on them. One per card. See appendix B for an example of a personal sound sheet for students to use and the different sounds to write on cards.

Name It: We are going to play our Zoom the Room game again today (see Task 7 for the other Zoom the Room activity). We will be putting sounds together to make words.

What You Might Say Next: “With your partner you will put your sound cards together in any order you want. You might find some of your words look funny. Some words will be real words, and some words will be nonsense words. That’s ok—this is about making words today!”

Model/Do Together: Show a few of the letter cards you have and model sounding out the letters on each card separately, and then put the cards together to form a word and read the word. Reverse the cards and read the word the cards make. Model this a few times so that students can see the general steps for working with their partners.

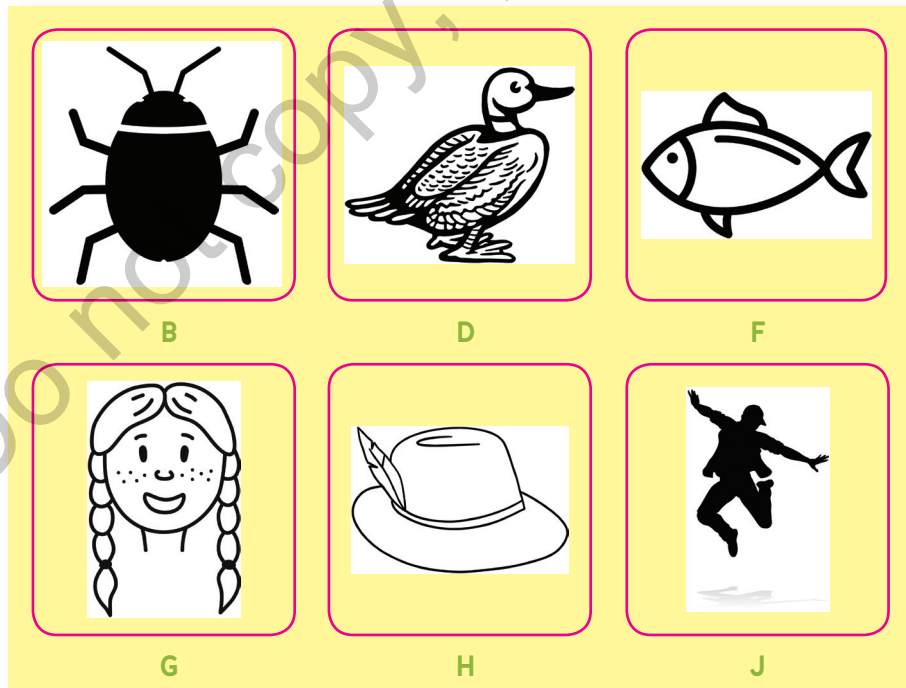
Release: Set up expectations for the procedure. Each student holds a card that you have handed out, stands, and pushes in their chair. When given the signal, students carefully walk around the room, not touching anything or anyone, no talking. When given the signal (bell or chime), students are to get back-to-back with the nearest student. Those without a partner raise a quiet hand and the teacher pairs them. Students turn to face their partner, then they work together.

Here is a typical sequence:

1. Read their letter/letter combination.
2. Listen to their partner read their card.
3. Lay out the cards on a nearby desk or the floor and read the word.
4. Trade cards and wait for the teacher to tell them to start their “zoom” again.
5. Repeat several times to give students several letter combinations to practice.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds**Students have difficulty with sounding out the letters on their card.**

Encourage them by reminding them what they know. Point to the sound wall you have up in the classroom (It’s so helpful to display letters and sounds on a classroom wall!). Guide students through associating the letter and the sound and reinforce when they get it or approximate. It is important to celebrate their efforts to do it on their own rather than just simply waiting for you to tell them the sound the letter/letter combination makes. Of course, don’t make them struggle or become extremely uncomfortable. If students are unable to figure it out for themselves, tell them the sound and encourage them to find the sound on the sound wall and make a mental note.



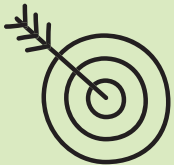
Bug: iStock.com/Victor Metelskiy; Duck: iStock.com/CSA Images; Fish: qStock.com/vectorwin; Girl: iStock.com/Oxy D; Hat: iStock.com/Elena Platova; Jump: iStock.com/ChrisGorgio

Organize a sound wall with pictures to represent the sound



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

Once students are acquiring a few words in content areas, they will be ready to read more complex texts.



TARGET

Students participate in a shared reading of text that is a little harder than they can read on their own.

In a *shared reading*, students are encouraged to see, read, discuss, and interact with the text, not just listen. As students develop their vocabularies in English, they will be ready for shared reading experiences, where students are expected to read the text along with the teacher. The teacher supports the student's ability to read the text, in which I mean the students can decode the words and comprehend (at least getting the gist of the text). If students can already read in their heritage language, these reading skills will transfer to reading in English usually easily and naturally. If students are not already readers, try Tasks 15 and 16 first to help them learn sounds in English so that they can decode words. As in Task 16, you want to encourage students to discuss the text, even if they are saying only short phrases, or answering yes or no to questions you ask.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Short predictable texts that have enough context and pictures to support language acquisition. Shorter texts are more effective as shared reading as they don't tax students during the reading. Use a document camera to display the book or text if you don't have copies for each student, but it's ideal that each student has a copy.

Name It: Today we are going to read together to develop your ability to decode words and understand what the story says.

What You Might Say Next: "We will also talk about the book and share what we think. I am excited to hear you share your ideas and thoughts."

Model/Do Together: In this context students will have the text in their hands during Shared Readings. This is a prime opportunity for students to practice in the moment with you modeling the "how." A couple of things to consider during your modeling:

Use "I" Statements when thinking aloud about the text: *I can make a prediction, I can visualize . . .*

Involve metacognition: Explaining the *because, why, or how* of our actions.

During the shared reading, you can also model skills and concepts such as:

Concepts about Print	Graphophonics	Fluency
Language Structures	Comprehension	Text Structures
Word Solving	Text Features	Visual Literacy

Using the text as your catalyst, you either introduce a skill or concept, or practice it. Generally, you introduce it during an explicit, brief lesson, and then practice it during shared reading time. And generally, you select one skill or concept as your main focus and plan the lesson around it.

Concepts to Model During Shared Reading

Concepts about Print	Print is organized in specific ways. Students learn that we read symbols for message, illustrations correspond to print, text in English goes left to right, we use return to sweep to the next line, and texts are organized with front and back covers.
Graphophonics	This is the symbol system used by readers that includes letter-sound or sound-spelling relationships of language. Student should know that there are twenty-six letters with forty-four sounds in the English language and many ways to spell some of those sounds.
Fluency	The reading rate is an important consideration as students increase reading proficiency. Modeling fluent reading and taking about the strategies to read fluently is a critical consideration. Fluency includes pauses, inflections, intonations, and phrase boundaries.
Language Structures	Languages are structured in specific ways. Hearing a lot of language and internalizing structure helps build grammatical knowledge. (Why are verbs placed in a sentence as they are?; First, then, next, and finally cues readers by using organizational patterns.)
Comprehension	Readers use cognitive strategies to make sense of text. Strategies such as predicting, visualizing, monitoring, inferencing, making connections, and summarizing help students learn to understand and think through the words and their meanings they encounter.
Text Structures	Authors organize texts according to traditions, sometimes loosely. From expository text structures (problem/solution, cause/effect, and description) to narrative structures (story, grammar, plot, setting, characters, actions, conflicts, and resolution), all texts follow a pattern.
Word Solving	Contextual clues often help us understand meanings of words in a text. Sometimes, authors even insert misdirective or nondirective clues. Readers need to learn to recognize and analyze all clues for their usefulness. The use of affixes, suffixes, prefixes, bases, roots, or word families to help solve unknown words and make meaning.
Text Features	Graphs, charts, diagrams, illustrations, captions, bold or italicized words, and headings—all are meant to assist readers to deepen comprehension of the text.
Pragmatics	The ways in which context influences the implied meaning of the text, focusing on what people mean when they use language, and is useful in understanding characters and dialogue.
Visual Literacy	Picture books and graphic novels convey much of their information through nonlinguistic representations of information. How objects are positioned on the page and how they hang in the background or foreground often provide subtle information for the story within the pages.

Release: Encourage students to talk about the text. If they are not comfortable talking in the group, organize partners and have students pair/share first. Provide the text to them so they can read it on their own at a later time.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Students struggle to read the words. During shared reading we want students to feel empowered to read along with us. Go slowly if you notice students are faltering. If the book is too difficult, stop the shared reading experience and read aloud the book or text instead. Remember that if students are not engaged in talking and thinking, and are simply listening to you, they are not acquiring language through experience. Give them a chance to talk, gesture, or point. Encourage students to answer in any way that they can, which could be yes or no, or answering in simple phrases. You can repeat this task multiple times with the same text, providing practice reading and checking understanding after repeated reading. You can also repeat this task with books and text that gradually increase in complexity.

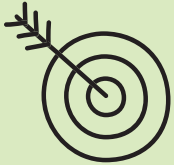
Read Aloud and Partner Talk

Listening, Speaking, & Reading



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

When students are able to comprehend short snippets of information read aloud.



TARGET

Students can discuss information from a short read aloud, in fiction or nonfiction.

When you first start read-alouds with students, choose books that are short and with simple language to give students the greatest possible success in comprehending as you read. It is critical that the book or text have pictures as the pictures will help students with understanding. Be aware that students new to English are not going to understand every word you read but will get the gist of the story. To help students with comprehension of the read-aloud book, they can talk with each other to discuss either the literal comprehension of the text or, if they are ready, the deeper meaning of the text.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Simple books with pictures that heavily support the text. Leveled texts are good for this; choose books at lower levels to ensure the language in the book is not complex. Students new to English are not yet ready for complex texts in English. Of course, as soon as they develop skills in listening comprehension, you can increase the complexity of the books.

Name It: We are going to work with a partner to talk about a story that I read aloud to you. By sharing with each other what we think, you can think together about the story to help you understand it.

What You Might Say Next: “We are going to think about the book that I have here. (Show the book.) As I read, I will stop and I want you to discuss the book with a partner to make sure you are understanding the story.”



Conversation cards can help students talk with one another.

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Model/Do Together: Pair students up to be discussion partners before you read aloud. When you are first reading a story to students, stop in places in the book where you want to check student understanding. This could be after the characters are introduced or when the setting is described. Use the pictures in the book to help students understand what the words mean. Be careful not to do all the talking yourself. Instead, invite partners to converse by asking a sequence of who, what, why, and when questions and see if they can answer the questions.

Throughout posing these questions, provide visual support. For example, write the names of all the characters on chart paper. Draw or sketch a picture showing a moment of action to remind students of the story. Or go back to the book and point to the pictures. Give them time to process and revisit the book if they need.

Release: Give ample time for the partners to talk together to figure out the meaning of the book, or the answer to the who, what, why, and when question you have asked. End the session by facilitating a whole-group discussion about the meaning of the book.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

During the reading, students may feel lost and not understand what the book is about. Provide time for more discussion of elements in the text like the characters or the problem. Encourage students to talk with one another to develop understanding of the text. You can also encourage students to share their thinking by simply pointing to a picture in the book or on the chart you created. Once you have completed several read alouds with students, they might be ready for practice with text elements.

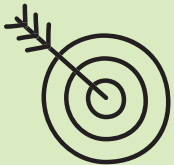
Some Text Elements to Explore in Shared Reading and Discussion

- Story elements (character, setting, plot)
- Character traits (nice, mean, unfriendly, caring, etc.)
- Main ideas in nonfiction text
- Details, events, timelines in nonfiction text



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

When students begin speaking, or writing, in short phrases.



TARGET

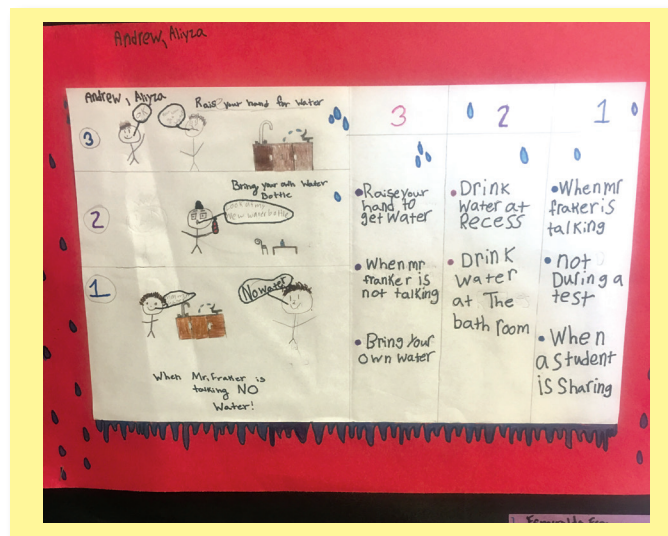
Students can complete procedural writing by writing steps in short phrases.

Students acquiring English benefit from opportunities to write with focused teacher support. That's why guided writing, when you teach students with similar needs, is so valuable. After a brief explicit lesson targeting the skill, each student works independently, applying the technique in their own writing. In this twist on guided writing, each day you gather kids in needs-based groups, give the explicit instruction on a single skill, but then turn it into a *collaborative* writing session. Working together provides students with the extra scaffolding they often need. The most important thing to remember is to keep it simple, focused on one teaching point. For example, subject-verb agreement could be one focus.

Your Instructional Playbook

Name It: We are going to be writing about things we do every day before school, at school, and after school. Some of these things we do are called routines. The reason we are writing these routines about our classroom is so we can post them as helpful reminders for all of us. For example, what are the steps you take to sharpen your pencil? Let's think about that.

What You Might Say Next: Explain what a procedure is. For example, you might say, "When we brush our teeth, we get our toothbrush. Put the toothpaste on the bristles. Wet the toothpaste. Put the toothbrush in our mouth and move it back and forth. Watch me write out these steps." You will then write out the steps on a chart paper or whiteboard, and number the steps 1-4. Add pictures to the chart to help students comprehend the steps. If you have a specific way you want students to sharpen pencils or line up in class, that is another example of a procedure. When you do things the same way all the time, that is a routine. Brainstorm with the class all the different routines they know. Record ideas and information in a notebook.



A class-created chart on how to go to get a drink of water.

Model/Do Together: After students brainstorm, have them select one routine off the wheel map for collaborative writing. Then ask students to say each step in the process. Invite discussion and write key words you hear on chart paper as you listen. (For example, *First . . . Second . . .*) The sentences don't have to be polished sentences just yet! Read the words and phrases aloud to students. You can sketch pictures for each step or add photos later. Write the label *Word Bank* at top of chart paper and tell students that they can refer to this as they write.

Now, introduce a few sentence frames to help students get started with their writing. Show how they will start with a sentence frame and then how they can choose words from the word bank you've created to help them with their writing.

Ideas for sentence frames:

How to _____

To _____, first you _____.

Second you _____. Provide frames for the number of steps needed)

(or) Next you _____.

It is important to remember to _____.

Finally, you will _____.

Release: Invite students to write on their own using the sentence frames and word bank. It's good to provide fifteen minutes for writing. Move around the small group table, providing support as needed. Also use it as a chance to take note of possible teaching points for the next day's work. (You also collect other informal assessments you've given students to know which skills need additional support.)

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

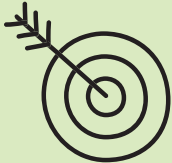
Look for students who need greater challenges. For some learners, the sentence strips will be too restrictive. They can compose their own sentences. To support them, carry a small whiteboard or small sheets of paper, and when a student asks for the spelling of a word or two, write it down for them. Your goal is not to give them correct spellings for everything, but to stoke their momentum as they write their own sentences.

Be ready to do-on-the-spot modeling. For example, you may see a student(s) isn't yet using the correct verb tense. Model it for them, which in directive sentences is an imperative. Remember, though, that students acquire language in the order they are ready for, based on their individual progression. So, in this example, even if they are then able to write the imperative tense in these sentences after your modeling, they haven't necessarily acquired the ability to use the imperative tense in all instances.



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

Once students are starting to read independently during shared reading opportunities and get ahead of the teacher.



TARGET

Students will decode words to read a text independently.

Students new to English will need to be systematically taught the letter names and the corresponding sounds for each letter, and letter combination. Begin by focusing on what the students already know; students bring a wealth of information with them to the classroom, and it is important to first assess what sounds they know and if they can hear the sounds in English. An effective sound-letter assessment is in appendix B on page 197. While this is an ELD task and not a whole- or small-group reading lesson, it is important to weave language development into the sound-symbol work you are doing. For this task, focus on teaching the sound or sound pattern that appears in the decodable text you have chosen, and then support students as they read the text and sound out the words.

Your Instructional Playbook

Name It: We are going to read a book today where you can work on sounding out the words. Then, we will talk about what is happening in the book and the meaning of the book.

What You Might Say Next: “We have worked on the sounds in this book before, but don’t worry if you don’t remember, we will practice first.”

Model/Do Together: To use decodables as a language development experience, try these steps.

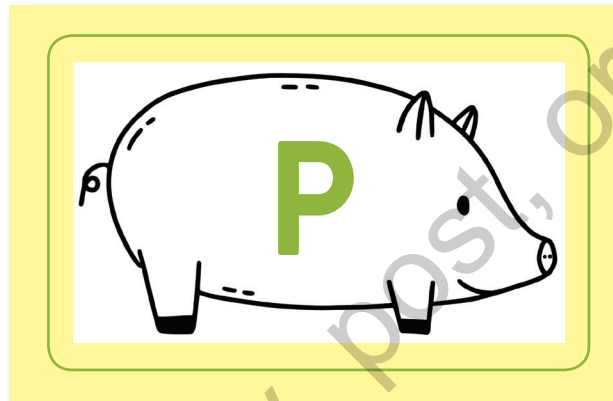
1. Begin by reviewing any sounds or sound patterns that you think students may need to work on before reading the text.
2. Lift out one sentence from the text (a short one) and write it on a whiteboard and practice sounding out the words together.
3. Discuss the meaning of the text. Decodable books tend to not have a lot of context with pictures, so you will need to discuss the books’ meaning and draw or show pictures (use a device) to build understanding.
4. Move to the book and choral-read a page or two together. Stop and discuss what was difficult and what they think the text was about. Provide explanation and context as necessary.

Release: Support students as they read through the remaining sections of the book on their own. Emphasize students’ efforts as they sound out the words. After reading, discuss the book as a group, pointing out the meaning of the text and what the text was about. Invite students to share their thinking. Encourage them to hear the words they are reading and think about what the words mean.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Students are struggling to decode. You may have chosen a book that has letters and sounds that the students do not know. Rather than limping through the book, stop the reading and switch out the book. Celebrate any efforts students make to decode; don't worry if they are not perfect at first.

Students show readiness for additional experiences with decodable books. Find decodable texts that are also available as audiobooks. Students can listen to them during center time.



istock.com/Polina Ekimova

Using picture cards to represent sounds with letters superimposed on top helps students learn words and the sound at the beginning of the word.



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

Students are starting to read independently during shared reading opportunities and get ahead of the teacher.



TARGET

Students can hear sounds in words, change initial sounds, and read words created by adding new initial sounds.

Students acquiring English will need support during phonics activities to understand the meaning of words that they are sounding out. Onset and rhymes provide the opportunity for students to learn word patterns and then generalize decoding or spelling new words once they see and recognize the rhyme. For instance, if you know *map*, you may also know *cap*. This can be very helpful in building students' confidence when they are new to English and ready to start reading or spelling words on their own.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Pre-organize the letter tiles or magnetic letters you are going to use based on the rhyme and sound substitutions you are planning to make. It is helpful for each student to have their own set of tiles and magnetic board.

Name It: Today we are going to work with some letters and sounds to practice decoding words. You are going to see that once you know how to decode and also spell some words, you will be able to sound out or spell other words because you are familiar with the pattern.

What You Might Say Next: "Check out the letters I have on the board." Organize your letters to look the same way (you would lay out letters for only the rhyme that you have chosen to work on).

Model/Do Together: While there is no exact way this works best, when working with students new to English, it is very important to discuss the meaning of each word after the students sound it out. Just because they can say a word, doesn't mean they will know what it means. Have picture cards, a device, or a whiteboard to draw on handy in order to bring meaning to each word.

1. Encourage students to sound out the rhyme, for example *-an*. Have them reread it a couple of items.
2. Add a letter in front of the rhyme, emphasizing the sound the letter makes and encourage students to sound out the word.
3. Discuss what the word means that they just sounded out. Provide context as necessary.
4. Change the initial letter and say, "I am going to change just one sound in the word. What's the new word?" Encourage students to sound out the new word. Reinforce students as they sound out and then blend the sounds into a word. Don't let students guess. If they cannot remember a sound, point to a sound spelling chart you may have available in the room and remind them what sound the letter makes.
5. Always take time to discuss the words' meanings each time you make a new word, providing context as necessary with pictures, photos, or drawings.

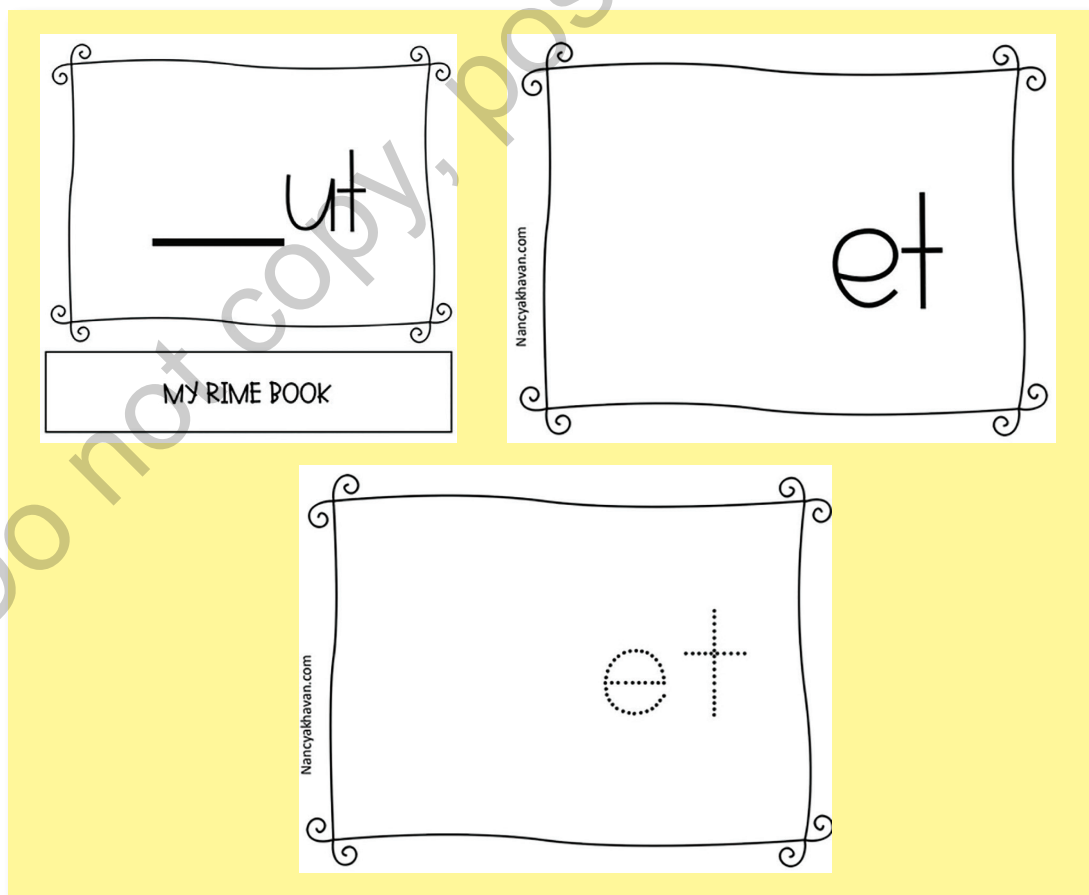
Release: After guiding the routine aloud a few times, begin to hand students letters or tiles and have them sound out the words on their own. Each student will go at their own pace. After they have built and sounded out numerous words, revisit the words they made and discuss the words' meaning.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Students may not yet be ready to sound out words using different onset and rhymes. If the activity seems laborious, you may need to go back to teaching sounds until students know many sounds.

Students who are ready to extend the activity. Have students build the word, sound it out, and then write it down on a whiteboard or on a piece of paper. As they write, encourage them to listen for the sounds in the word they hear. (Adapted from Spear-Swirling, 2011.)

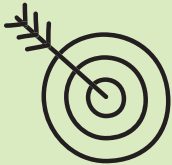
As students acquire language, they will develop the ability to read in English. If students can already read in their heritage language, these reading skills will transfer to reading in English. If students are not already readers, try Task 18 first to help them learn sounds in English so that they can decode words.





WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

When students are able to write short phrases and follow along with directions you give orally using pictures, gestures, or other supports.



TARGET

Students can write short phrases or add short phrases to a sentence frame.

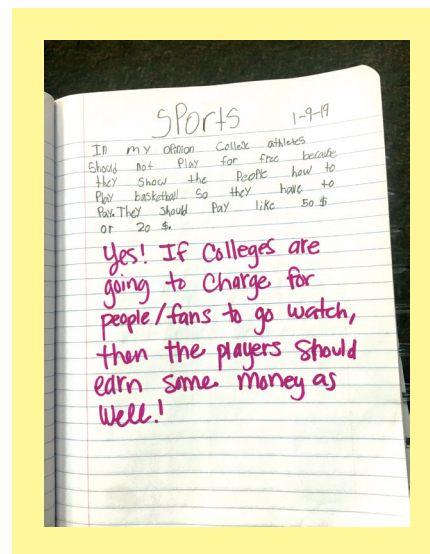
As students are able to write more, dialogue journaling becomes a powerful routine. These brief, student-and-teacher exchanges of news, thinking, and feelings can be done at a pace that works for you and learners. This routine develops the teacher/student relationship and helps you model for learners how to write about an event and reflect on it. To support writers new to the English language we provide sentence frames. Why? Because composing in one's head in a heritage language and then translating to English is a tall order, involving meaning, words, syntax and semantics, and phonics. The sentence frames support students' efforts, building their confidence, too, as they express themselves and share their ideas in English.

Your Instructional Playbook

Materials: Composition notebooks or spiral-bound books for each student. Photocopies of sentence frames.

Name It: We are going to start writing in journals. You are going to write to me, and I am going to write back to you. We will do it once a week. It will be fun for me to learn more about you. We will write about different things throughout the year. (Show a variety of sentence frames and have these available for students to use.)

What You Might Say Next: "I realize writing in English may still be difficult, so we are going to use a variety of sentence frames to help you share your ideas. You can also draw or sketch in your journal and label the drawings if you wish. You might also want to decorate the cover of your journal. You each have your own notebook, so you can give it a personal title too! We can write about fun things we did outside of school, people, and activities we are looking forward to, favorite things. We can write about how we feel too."



In this example of a student journal, notice how the student wrote her opinion and the teacher added his thoughts.

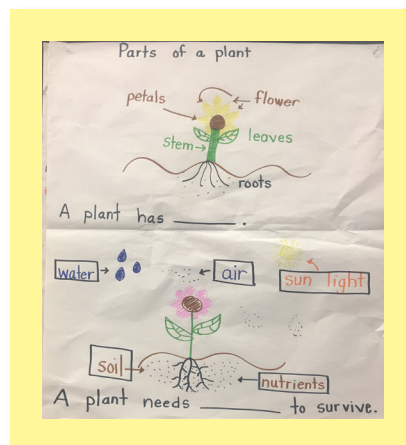
Model/Do Together: Open to a journal page and demonstrate how you want students to set up the page, with date at the top. Write a couple of sentences about something you know your students will enjoy, using sentence frames you have written on a whiteboard or displayed. Think aloud while you write so students can understand your thought process. Also think aloud why you are choosing a particular frame. You might quickly model two topics, so students get a feel for the possibilities, which can range from funny to sad. For example, I might say, “Today, after school, I am taking my dog to the groomer. My dog is a tiny little dog but he thinks he’s the boss. He howls all the way to the groomer. The minute he sees the door, he tries to run away.” Another one might be something like: “Last night I talked on the phone with my friend who lives far away. We shared news and laughed. But it made me feel sad that we can’t see each other often.”

Release: Introduce the frames and encourage students to choose the one that makes sense to them. Provide about ten to fifteen minutes for students to write in the dialogue journal, helping and supporting as needed. You want to ensure that they are selecting their own topic and words, not just copying what they heard you say. Write a sentence or two back to students so that they can read your response. If you are moving about the classroom and helping students, and you can fit it in, you can write a sentence back as a response right then and there. Otherwise, you can collect the journals and write the sentence later.

Watch Fors and Work-Arounds

Students aren’t ready to write out sentences. One way we communicate with writing is by combining one or two words with a picture. Think about all the signs we see every day! Donut shops, exit signs, pizza places. It’s all labels and pictures. Students can draw pictures, diagrams, or graphs, or take photos. Then they will label them so others know what we are trying to communicate about the image. You can comment on the images and ideas they present. You can create models so students know how to communicate through labeling.

A teacher-created chart based on a class’s science topic. Pictures and sentence frames support students’ writing.



(Continued) Writing Dialogue Journals With Sentence Frames

Offer a variety of sentence frames to help students. Students need access to lots of sentence frames of varying levels of complexity, as students are not in the same place with language acquisition. You can generate more as you notice your students' progress.

Look for when to phase out the frames. Like any learning tool, frames can get stale. Look for students who you know are ready to generate sentences on their own and nudge them to do so!

Examples of sentence frames:

Last night, I _____. (past tense writing)

Yesterday _____ . (past tense writing)

In class I am _____. (present tense writing)

Today, after school I will _____. (future tense writing)

More difficult frames

Last night, I _____ and I felt _____.
I felt this way because _____. (past tense writing)

I used to _____ but now I _____.
I changed because _____. (past tense writing)

In class, I am _____ because I enjoy/dislike
_____ and I want to _____.
(present tense writing)

I am going to _____ because _____.
(future progressive tense)



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