Systematic Support for Phonics & Decoding

GRADES K–3

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Direct and Systematic Phonics Instruction in *JillE Literacy*

What Is Reading?

The Simple View of Reading contends that reading is the product of two cognitive elements—**language comprehension** and **decoding**.[1] Reading instruction therefore must focus on both of these essential elements. Successful decoding ensures that words are read accurately. Inaccurate and non-fluent decoding impacts negatively on reading comprehension. You cannot read if you can't decode accurately. However, you cannot learn to read by just learning to decode.

In order to decode print, students need phonemic awareness skills and phonic knowledge.

Kate Nation, professor of experimental psychology at St John's College, Oxford states:

> "The idea that phonics is kids just barking at print is such a limited way of looking at things—good phonic knowledge opens the world.... Phonic knowledge is critical.... It allows children to access all sorts of exciting elements of word play...."[2]

JillE Literacy uniquely combines the processes of decoding and language comprehension.

How Should Decoding Be Taught?

There has been a push in recent years to teach decoding using highly decodable texts. James Cunningham discusses this in his paper, *What Really Matters in Teaching Phonics Today: Laying a Foundation for Reading*. He states:

> "In its period of heaviest use—from 2000–2010—highly decodable text exhibited a trade-off for students. On the one hand, it was easier for students to apply their phonics knowledge to decoding the words because they did not have to simultaneously comprehend or identify the majority of words by recognizing them as literary and informational texts require readers to do. This increased ease, however, was gained at the expense of transfer.... Some struggling readers were locked into reading only decodable text for years because they could not make the leap to reading ordinary text."[3]

JillE Literacy: Skills in Context

JillE Literacy combines the processes of decoding and language comprehension, using highly engaging, authentic texts to teach phonics skills in context.

Explicit support is incorporated into whole-class and small-group reading lessons, which provide a **meaningful context for learning** rather than teaching skills in isolation. This approach provides immediate opportunities for students to apply new skills to their reading, which also makes learning more purposeful and engaging.

JillE Literacy scaffolds these decoding skills throughout the series to ensure students **acquire, reinforce, and practice** them in order to build a solid foundation for proficient reading.

1   Baker, S. K., Fien, H., Nelson, N. J., Petscher, Y., Sayko, S., & Turtura, J. (2017). *Learning to read: "The simple view of reading."* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Center on Improving Literacy.
2   Townshend, K. (2017). Balance phonics and comprehension to boost reading. *Times Educational Supplement*.
3   Cunningham, J. (2017). What really matters in teaching phonics today: Laying a foundation for reading.

Skills Taught

The **systematic instruction** in *JillE Literacy* helps students continually expand their skills as they advance through the stages of literacy development.

The books are not written to be highly decodable, but rather to carefully scaffold the skills students need for reading a variety of text and language structures. Explicit skills instruction, combined with ongoing reinforcement and practice, is integrated throughout all of the materials and instructional approaches.

> 66 *Since using these books, I have noticed a huge jump in the achievement of my kids. They love getting out the books and reading them to each other, and it's great to hear them using the questions that I have used with them on each other. The books have really made reading come alive.* 99
>
> —Ginny Ives, Assistant Principal

This chart shows the **phonics, language structures, and decoding skills taught** at each stage.

BEGINNING STAGE Grades K–1 / Levels A–C	PROGRESSING STAGE Grades 1–2 / Levels D–J	ADVANCING STAGE Grades 2–3 / Levels K–T
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE		
Develop phonological and phonemic awareness skills, including: • rhyming • clapping syllables • isolating initial sounds • matching initial or ending sounds • blending onset-rime • changing initial sounds to make a new word Understand that sounds form words and are represented by letters Recognize and name all letters and identify many of the primary sounds they can represent	Expand phonological and phonemic awareness skills to include: • counting sounds in words • isolating and substituting sounds • blending and segmenting phonemes Build knowledge of additional letter sounds, blends, and digraphs Recognize some types and parts of words, including: • plurals • compound words • contractions • homophones • suffixes and base words • syllables	Recognize an increasing number of sound-spelling patterns, including: • word families • blends and digraphs • syllables • long and short vowel sounds • prefixes and suffixes Expand knowledge of word types, parts, and origins to include: • possessives • abbreviations • parts of speech • syllables • prefixes, suffixes, and root words • synonyms and antonyms • multiple-meaning words
DECODING STRATEGIES		
Begin to apply some decoding strategies during reading: • using the initial letter • looking for visual clues • thinking of a word that would fit that starts with the sound • checking for sense	Apply known decoding strategies and expand them to include: • blending sounds from left to right • looking for known letters, blends, and digraphs • using meaning, syntax, and visual clues • monitoring accuracy	Learn and apply word analysis strategies to decode and understand the meaning of new words: • using familiar spelling patterns • using word parts, such as prefixes, suffixes, and syllables • rereading for meaning clues

The following pages include more detailed information about the **decoding strategies taught in *JillE Literacy***, as well as additional ways to support phonics and decoding skills during whole-class and small-group reading lessons.

Beginning Stage

Reading Levels A–B

At the beginning, students are taught to understand that words are made up of a sequence of sounds. They are drawn to words where the first letter represents a single sound. They are asked to decode the first letter in a word and, as needed, told what the word is that starts with this sound.

Phonological awareness skills focus on identifying initial sounds in words.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT THIS STAGE

Processing Strategies

At this level, focus on recognition of one sound–one letter graphemes at the start of words and help students link them to sounds.

Decoding Strategies

When a child comes to a word they don't know, ask them to decode the first letter. Then either give students the word or model decoding the rest of the sounds in the word.

Examples:

Train: Let's work out the first sound. The first letter is **t**. What does **t** sound like? Yes, it's /t/. What could the word be — /t/ — *train*.

Horn: This word starts with **h**. What could the letter **h** sound like? Yes, it sounds like /h/. What could the word be — /h/ /or/ /n/ — *horn*.

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

Read the book again and find all the words that start with /l/.
(*look, long, legs*)
Read the book again and find all the words that start with /n/.
(*no, nose, neck*)
Read the book again and find all the words that start with /t/.
(*tail, tongue*)

Beginning Stage

Reading Level C

Later in the beginning stage, at around level C, the decoding strategy remains with initial graphemes (individual letters) but now includes blend spelling patterns at the start of words (*fl, bl, pr, st,* etc.). Students are encouraged to work out words made up of three or four sounds where each letter represents a sound (usually CVC and CCVC— consonant/ consonant, vowel, consonant words). Students are assisted to pronounce each letter and blend the sounds together to pronounce the word.

Phonological awareness skills focus on rhyming and clapping syllables in words.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT THIS STAGE

Processing Strategies

At this level, focus on recognition of the first single-letter graphemes in the word and help students link them to their sounds. If the word is a CVC or CCVC word, help the student sound out each letter and pronounce the word.

Decoding Strategies

When a student comes to a word they don't know, ask them to decode the first letter or blend. Then work with students to decode the rest of the word.

Examples:

Cat: Every letter in this word has its own sound. Say the sound for each letter and see what the word could be. That's right — /k/ /a/ /t/ — *cat!*

Sun: Every letter in this word has its own sound. What could the **s** sound like? The **u**? The **n**? (/s/ /u/ /n/) What does this word say? (*sun*) Read the sentence again. Do you think you are right?

Moon: This word starts with **m**. What could the letter **m** sound like? Yes, it is /m/. The **oo** sounds like /oo/. What does the **n** sound like? What are the sounds? (/m/ /oo/ /n/) Read the sentence again. Do you think you are right?

Start: Let's work out the first sounds in this word. What does the **s** sound like? The **t**? The first sounds are /s/ /t/. Let's work out the rest of the word together —/s/ /t/ /ar/ /t/ — *start!*

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

What other word in this book rhymes with *sky*? (*fly*)
Say some other words that rhyme with *sky* and *fly*.
Clap the beats in these words: *sleep/ing, fly/ing, hunt/ing.*

Progressing Stage

Reading Levels D–E

At the progressing stage, the decoding strategy continues with one sound–one letter graphemes, but if the word starts with a consonant digraph (*sh, ch, th, wh*), students are told what the grapheme sounds like and helped to work out the pronunciation of the word. They are expected to work out CVC and CCVC words.

Phonological awareness skills focus on rhyming and clapping syllables in words.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT THIS STAGE

Processing Strategies

At this level, focus on recognition of the first single-letter graphemes in the word and help students link them to their sounds. If the word is a CVC or CCVC word, help the student sound out each letter and pronounce the word. Teach recognition and pronunciation of **h** digraphs.

Decoding Strategies

When a student comes to a CVC or CCVC word they don't know, ask them to decode the word one letter at a time. If the word is not a CVC or CCVC word, ask them to decode the initial consonants and then model decoding the rest of the word.

Examples:

Box: Every letter in this word has its own sound. Say the sound for each letter and see what the word would be. What could the **b** sound like? The **o**? The **x**? /b/ /o/ /k/ /s/ What does this word say? (*box*) Read the sentence again. Do you think you are right?

Table: Let's work out the first sounds. The letter is **t**, the sound is? (/t/) The letter **a** sounds like /ā/ — *ta* — and the last part of the word sounds like *bil*. *Ta/ble* — what is the word? (*table*)

Chop: The **ch** sounds like /ch/. The **o** and **p** have their own sounds. What would the word be? /ch/ /o/ /p/ — *chop!*

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

Clap the beats in these words as you say them: *wa/ter/mel/ons, a/li/ens, shop/keep/er, ball/oons, space/ship*.
What words rhyme with *chop*? *eat*? *bag*? *ran*?

Progressing Stage

Reading Levels F–G

Later in the progressing stage, at around level F, students are expected to routinely sound out three- and four-sound words where every letter represents a sound. They are encouraged to look for **h** digraphs in words and to pronounce these. Vowel digraphs are introduced at this level, and students are taught how to pronounce these two-letter patterns as they decode words.

Phonemic awareness skills now focus on blending and segmenting three- and four-sound words.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT THIS STAGE

Processing Strategies

Continue to practice decoding strategies taught previously — recognizing single-letter graphemes and **h** digraphs, sounding out CVC and CCVC words (*e.g., mom, bed, stop, slip, chop, this*). If students hesitate at words where every letter has its own sound, tell them every letter has its own sound and encourage them to sound it out (*e.g., spots, next*). Introduce the concept of a vowel digraph — two vowel letters that represent one sound (*e.g., cl**ea**n*).

Decoding Strategies

If students hesitate at a word that contains a vowel digraph, use this decoding strategy: work from left to right through the word, ask them to pronounce the graphemes they know, tell them how to pronounce the digraph(s), and ask them to put the sounds together and say the word. If words are read easily, ask students to find all the words on a page that contain vowel digraph patterns.

Example:
Clean: Look at the first two letters — they each have their own sound. What could they sound like? (/k/ /l/) The **ea** sounds like a long /ē/, and the **n** sounds like...? (/n/) The sounds in this word are /k/ /l/ /ē/ /n/ — *clean!*

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

BLENDING	SEGMENTING
Guess what words I'm saying:	Hold up one finger for each
/k/ /l/ /ē/ /n/ — *clean*	sound you hear in these words.
/m/ /e/ /s/ — *mess*	Say each sound.
/r/ /o͞o/ /m/ — *room*	*clean* — /k/ /l/ /ē/ /n/
/g/ /oo/ /d/ — *good*	*sick* — /s/ /i/ /k/
/s/ /i/ /k/ — *sick*	*stay* — /s/ /t/ /ā/
	messy — /m/ /e/ /s/ /ē/

Progressing Stage

Reading Levels H–J

Once students reach level H, they are asked to use the decoding strategies previously taught and to decode vowel-consonant digraphs. Their attention is also drawn to suffixes in words. Decoding strategies for multisyllabic words are taught by showing students one syllable at a time in the word and asking them to use known decoding strategies to work out each syllable before putting the syllables together to pronounce the word.

Phonemic awareness skills continue to focus on blending and segmenting three- and four-sound words.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT THIS STAGE

Processing Strategies

- If each letter in the word represents a sound, tell students this and ask them to sound it out (*nest*).
- Identify words made up of single letters and digraph patterns, help students identify these graphemes and sound out the word (*stood*, *hive*).
- Introduce the strategies that are explained on the back covers for sounding out other words from left to right through the word, either sound by sound or syllable by syllable.

Decoding Strategies

If students hesitate at a word, use this decoding strategy to identify how the alphabetic code works in that word: work from left to right through the word. Tell students if a single letter represents a sound, point out and provide the pronunciation for unknown digraphs and other graphemes, and identify and pronounce suffixes. Ask students to put the sounds together to pronounce the word.

Examples:

Grab: Every letter has its own sound.

Shower: The **sh** sounds like /sh/, the **ow** sounds like /ow/, and the **er** sounds like /er/.

Dares: The **are** in this word sounds like /air/, and the **s** sounds like /z/.

Kicked: The **ck** sounds like /k/, and the **ed** suffix sounds like /t/.

Slowest: The **ow** sounds like /ō/, and the **est** sounds like *ist*.

Progressing Stage

Reading Levels H–J, continued

Famous: Show students one syllable at a time and ask them to read syllable by syllable. Cover up all but **fa** — what would this syllable sound like if you pronounce the **a** as a long /ā/? Show the **mous** — what would this syllable sound like if you pronounce the **ous** as /iss/? Put the syllables together — *fa/mous.*

Astronaut: Show students one syllable at a time and ask them to read syllable by syllable. Cover up all but the **as** — what would this syllable sound like? Show the next syllable — **tro** — what would this syllable sound like? For the last syllable, say: In this syllable the **au** sounds like /aw/. How could you say this syllable? Put the syllables together — *as/tro/naut.*

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

BLENDING	SEGMENTING
Guess what words I'm saying:	Hold up one finger for each sound you hear in these words. Say each sound.
/er/ /th/ — *earth*	
/d/ /u/ /s/ /t/ — *dust*	*mouse* — /m/ /ow/ /s/
/ch/ /ē/ /z/ — *cheese*	*walked* — /w/ /aw/ /k/ /t/
/p/ /l/ /ē/ /z/ — *please*	*space* — /s/ /p/ /ā/ /s/
	city — /s/ /i/ /t/ /ē/

Advancing Stage

Reading Levels K–T

When students reach the advancing stage, they are expected to use the decoding strategies previously taught. They should be working words out by decoding graphemes from left to right through the word and by recognizing and pronouncing suffixes. If the word they say is unknown, they are asked to continue reading to see if they can work out its meaning.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT THIS STAGE

Processing Strategies

If students come to a word they cannot read, have them look at the letters and spelling patterns from left to right through the word, pronounce each sound, and then blend the sounds together to say the word. If students don't know the meaning of the word when they say it, tell them to continue reading to the end of the sentence, thinking about what the word could mean, or if it could be pronounced differently. They might have to read more sentences to help them work out its meaning. If they still don't know the meaning of the word, they can ask someone how to say the word and what it means, or use a dictionary to check.

Decoding Strategies

If students hesitate at a word, use this decoding strategy to identify how the alphabetic code works in that word: work from left to right through the word. Tell students if a single letter represents a sound, point out other graphemes and their pronunciation, and identify and pronounce suffixes. Ask students to put the sounds together to pronounce the word.

Examples:

Panini: Every letter has its own sound, but the **i**'s sound like long /ē/'s.

Laugh: The **l** has its own sound, the **au** sounds like a short /a/, and the **gh** sounds like /f/.

Shirt: The **sh** sounds like /sh/, the **ir** sounds like /er/, and the **t** has its own sound.

Hunk: Every letter has its own sound, but the **n** sounds like /ng/ in this word.

Highest: The **h** has its own sound, the **igh** sounds like /ī/, and the **est** sounds like *ist*. The **est** suffix means *the most*.

Whole-Class Resources

The **Shared Books** and **Poetry Cards** in *JillE Literacy* target **grade-level skills** through whole-class shared reading approaches that make the texts and instruction accessible to all students. Built-in lesson plans and instruction explicitly teach **comprehension**, **vocabulary**, **fluency**, **phonics**, and **writing skills**.

The sun went . . .
down,
down,
down,
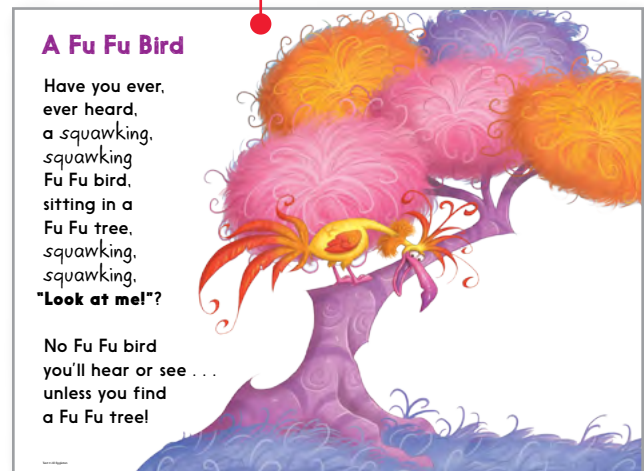and Baboon made a nest in a tree.
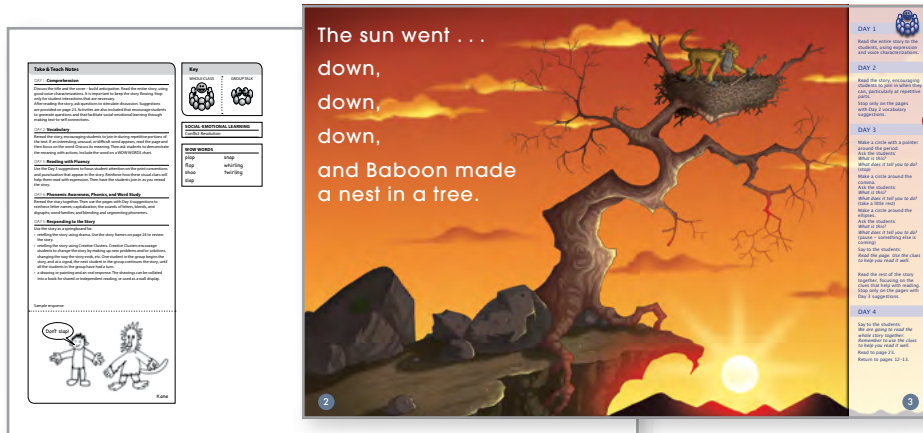
SHARED BOOKS
- 6 big books per kit
- Rhythmical, rhyming texts made for shared reading
- Built-in 5-day lesson plan and teaching panels that support daily instruction
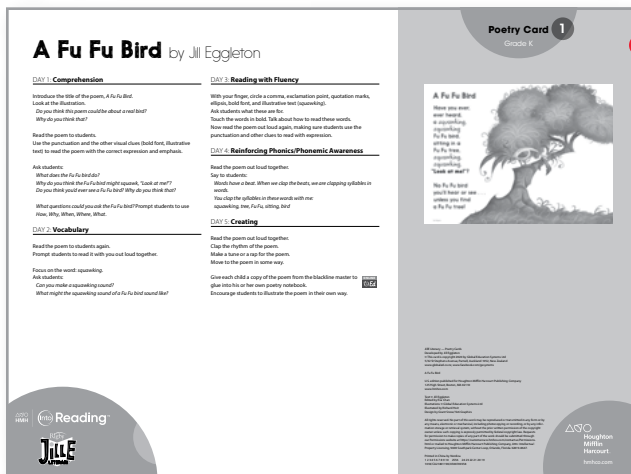
POETRY CARDS
- 20 large-format cards per kit
- Illustrated poem on the front of each card
- 5-day lesson plan and instruction on the back

A Fu Fu Bird by Jill Eggleton

Poetry Card 1
Grade K

A Fu Fu Bird

Have you ever,
ever heard,
a *squawking*,
squawking
Fu Fu bird,
sitting in a
Fu Fu tree,
squawking,
squawking,
"Look at me!"?

No Fu Fu bird
you'll hear or see . . .
unless you find
a Fu Fu tree!

5-DAY LESSON PLAN

DAY 1 Comprehension

DAY 2 Vocabulary

DAY 3 Reading with Fluency

**DAY 4** Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Word Study

DAY 5 Creative Response

> ❝JillE Literacy *makes it easy to fill any gaps in literacy skills in a meaningful way.* ❞
> —LeeAnna Rabine, First Grade Teacher

Small-Group Resources

Leveled Books, **Take & Teach Books**, and **Take & Teach Lessons** use carefully scaffolded texts and differentiated small-group instruction to target the **skills appropriate to each student's reading level and stage**.
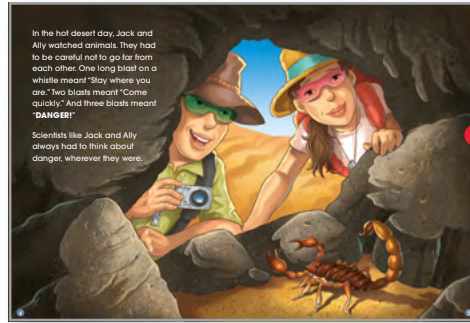
LEVELED BOOKS
- 50 titles per kit in sets of 6 for student use
- A 50–50 mix of fiction and informational text genres and text forms
- Embedded support for level-appropriate skills and strategies
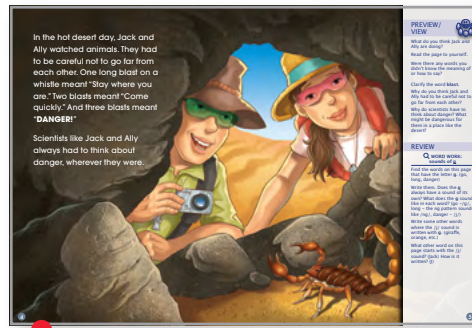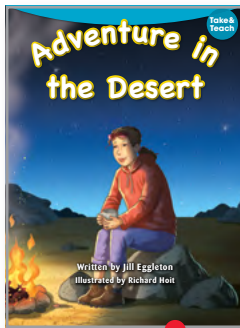
TAKE & TEACH BOOKS
- A teaching version of each Leveled Book (50 books per kit)
- Built-in lesson plans
- Teaching panels with support for decoding, comprehension, and critical thinking skills

TAKE & TEACH LESSONS
- A sturdy lesson card for each Leveled Book (50 cards per kit)
- Support for English learners and social-emotional development
- Writing and extension activities for every book

Each grade-level kit contains a **broad span of reading levels**, which extends below and above grade level to support each student at their unique developmental stage.

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
K	■	■	■	■	■	■													
1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
2				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
3								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

JillE Literacy Reading Levels

To learn more about *Rigby® JillE Literacy,* please visit **JillELit.com**