

English for the Dyslexic

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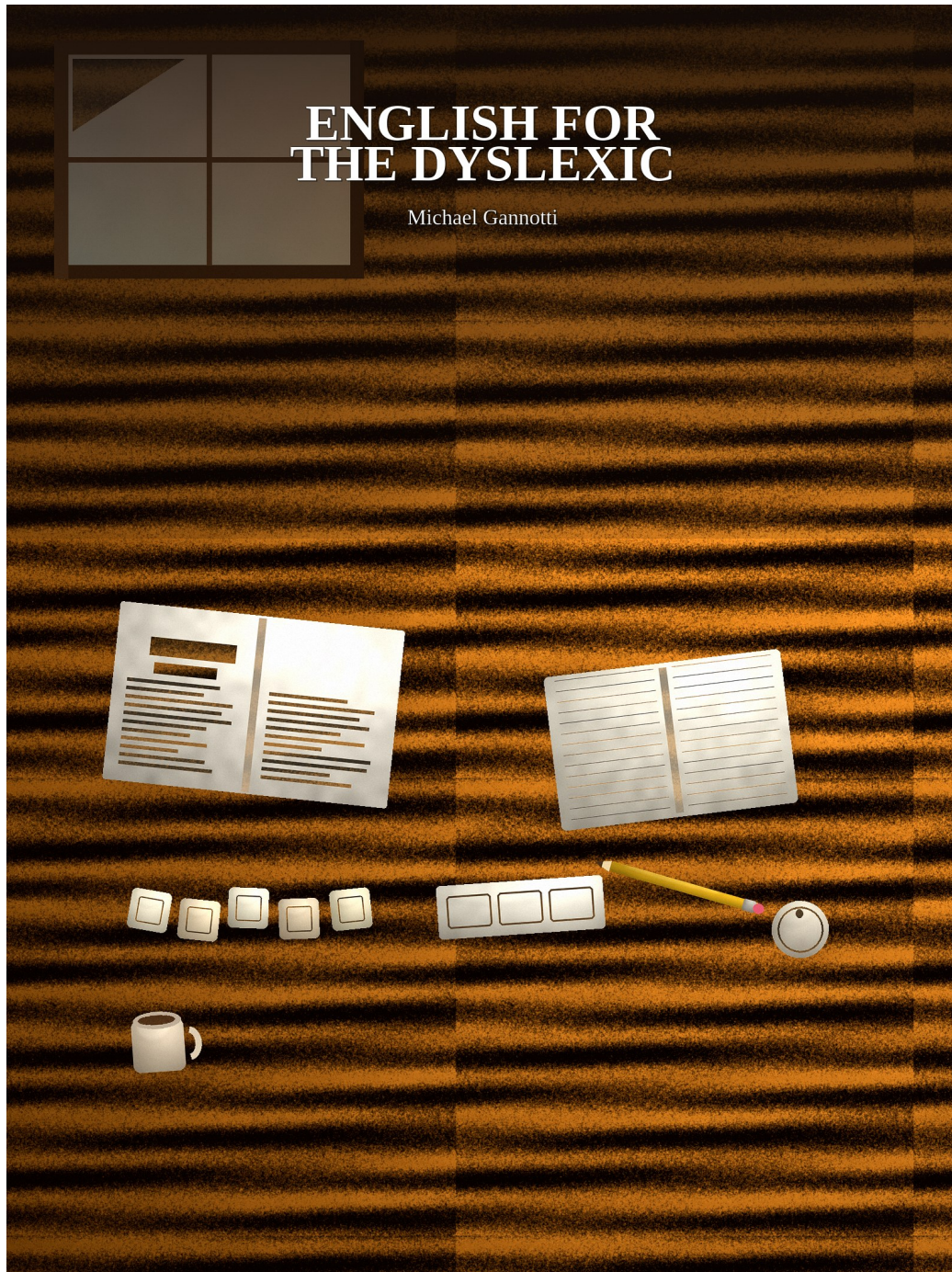


Figure 1: Cover

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This illustrated edition is the teaching-manual of 6 September 2026. Endnotes run in one series. Chapter-opening images are original still-lives, not portraits of persons or children. Documents still constrain the facts.

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Welcome

You are holding a teaching manual for English and language arts with a child who finds word reading and spelling unexpectedly hard — even when teaching that works for peers has already been tried.

That difficulty has a name when it fits the profile: **dyslexia**. This book does not diagnose your child. It does not replace a clinician or an evaluator. It teaches you how to sit beside a learner, grades **1–12**, and run English with **Structured Literacy** intensity: clear teaching, a planned sequence, daily review of what was taught, and tomorrow’s lesson shaped by today’s errors.¹

You do not need to be a reading specialist to begin. You do need a calm frame, a repeatable hour, and the courage to protect short sharp sits instead of rare marathons of shame.

Why this book exists

Many families arrive here exhausted. Someone said *lazy*. Someone said *wait*. Someone sold colored overlays as a cure.² Someone said strengths mean phonics is optional. Someone handed a leveled ladder and called it decoding. Someone

¹International Dyslexia Association, *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*, 2nd ed. (2018), Standard 4 Structured Literacy domains; IDA, “Effective Reading Instruction” / Structured Literacy principles page (fetched 6 September 2026): explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic; mastery to automaticity. Approach $\neq$ franchise. Access date for URLs in these notes: 6 September 2026.

²American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and American Association of Certified Orthoptists, “Learning Disabilities, Dyslexia, and Vision” (joint statement, *Pediatrics* 2009 / AAO circulation): vision problems are not the cause of primary dyslexia; no endorsement of eye exercises, behavioral vision therapy, or tinted filters/lenses as treatment for dyslexia.

offered “just read more” as the only intervention. Someone counted Accelerated Reader points and called that comprehension.³

You needed a definitive how-to across grades **1–12** that is denser than a typical early-literacy manual for young children, and narrower than a franchise sales pitch. That is this book.

It is written for two readers at once: you at the table, and the student in short, respectful sections they can actually use. Feel of it: a wise, calm teacher sitting beside your family. Instruct. Assist. Assume good faith. Never talk down. Never shame slow accurate reading. Never shame you for not already knowing Structured Literacy by name.

Inside the teaching chapters you will place by **skill**, not birthday. Bands run **1–3 / 4–6 / 7–8 / 9–12**. A sixteen-year-old with accurate early patterns but weak vowel teams sits in vowel-team work with mature materials and respectful wording. Age does not retire decoding. A franchise “Level 3” is a publisher’s scope, not a legal grade, and not a transcript line.

What a good Structured Literacy English hour looks like

Most weekdays for younger and middle bands, the hour is code-heavy and short enough to finish with dignity — often about **thirty to forty-five minutes**. You open with a few minutes of **cumulative review** of known sounds, words, or meaningful word parts. If the probe shows need, you run a brief **phonemic awareness** crumb *with letters* — not a year of clap-the-syllables. Then comes the load-bearing sit: **phonics and encoding** on the same map (decode and spell what you teach). Next, **connected accuracy reading** on controlled or practiced text — finger under the word, look through the letters, blend. Only after accuracy do you ask for a fluency reread or a short vocabulary or comprehension crumb. You close with a tiny **exit ticket** and one explained error that seeds tomorrow’s review.

Older bands often **split the day**: a code or morphology repair sit; content read-

³What Works Clearinghouse, *Accelerated Reader* (Adolescent Literacy, August 2010): no discernible effects in the rated adolescent domains (fluency/comprehension as reported). School/vendor labelled. Points are not Structured Literacy and not kitchen proof of understanding.

ing with scaffolds or by ear when print is the bottleneck; writing with adaptations that still teach spelling and sentence craft. Two clocks can run in one week — the intervention clock that repairs the code, and the content clock that keeps knowledge and vocabulary growing. Access by ear while code is repaired is civil and instructional. It is not permission to skip decoding.

Intensity is part of kindness: clearer teaching and more reps, not louder teaching and more shame. Frequent short sharp sprints beat a Sunday marathon. You are the home coach. A specialist evaluation stays on the table when difficulty is unexpected and persistent, or when documentation matters. This book is not medical advice and not legal advice.

The full session shape, talk-box shape, in-home and out-of-home try-it shape, intensity honesty, and the AI rules for grades **1–12** live once in **The English hour**. Later chapters point back in a sentence.

What this book will teach

Eight teaching chapters, then records and resources:

1. What dyslexia is — and is not — for the parent at the table
2. Phonemic awareness with letters
3. Systematic phonics and decoding
4. Encoding and spelling
5. Fluency after accuracy
6. Vocabulary and morphology across the grades
7. Comprehension on accessible text (including by ear while code is repaired)
8. Writing with adaptations (without abandoning spelling and sentence craft)

Then **Records** (titles a stranger can read) and **Resources** (fit, not rank).

Every teaching chapter follows the same eight headings: why it matters; for the

parent; how to teach it this week; practice that actually builds learning; for the student; if it isn't clicking; tools, including AI; what "done enough" looks like. Named try-its live **in the home and outside it**. A talk box lives in every teaching chapter — exact opening question, a few follow-ups, how to wait, what a stuck silence usually means.

Sister English books — one pointer each, then teach here

This book is **not a reprint** of the sister English manuals. Take the grain; leave the dump.

- For typical early literacy ages **5–10** without a dyslexia focus, see *English for Little Thinkers* — then return here for Structured Literacy intensity across **1–12**.
- For middle-grades workshop grain ages **11–14**, see *English for Young Minds* — unfinished code repair by skill still lives here.
- For high-school rhetoric and research edges ages **15–18**, see *English for Emerging Adults* — unfinished decoding still returns to this book's sits.
- For adult learners, see *English for Adults* — dignity for older beginners travels; workplace-only framing does not replace this path.
- For NCAA, AP, CLEP, and broad **1–12** literature and composition handbook grain, see *English for Homeschooling* — then return to dyslexia-appropriate Reading / Language Arts / English records.

One pointer. Then teach dyslexic English here.

What this book will not do

It will not dump one hundred eighty days of worksheets. It will not sell you a franchise and call that the only path. It will not guarantee a score, a percentile, or a birthday when phonics "ends." It will not invent a transcript line called **Dyslexic**

English I. It will not crown one vendor. It will not treat colored lenses or vision therapy as the cure for dyslexia (eye care in parallel if needed; the reading treatment is Structured Literacy).⁴ It will not teach three-cueing — guessing from pictures or first letters — as how we identify the printed word. It will not ask you to wait years for failure to ripen. It will not tell you strengths make instruction optional. It will not mash the national homeschool enrollment share (**about 3.4 percent** of K–12 students in recent NCES figures — a pond of families, not a dyslexia prevalence rate).⁵ Prevalence, when we name it, stays in ranges: stricter estimates often land near **5–10 percent**; broader symptom language near **15–20 percent**.⁶ It will not give medical or legal advice. It will not park a chatbot as the child’s reading or writing teacher.

How to begin this week

Read **How to use this book**, then the one-page **Five things**, then **The English hour** once. Open **Chapter 1** if you still need a calm definition frame. Or open the chapter that matches today’s skill need — phonics, spelling, fluency, morphology, comprehension access, or writing — and run four or five Structured Literacy hours this week with cumulative review protected every day.

Wrong answers are information for tomorrow’s review. Fatigue is real. Rate gaps may linger even when accuracy grows — say so without cruelty. Slow and accurate is the path.

You can do this without shame. The student can try without being called lazy. The letters stay on the table. The hour stays short enough to finish. Tomorrow’s review starts from today’s honest miss.

Welcome to the work.

⁴AAP–AAO joint statement (n. 2): parallel eye care if needed; lenses/filters/vision therapy are not the dyslexia reading treatment. Structured Literacy (IDA) is the instructional path this book teaches.

⁵Ellena Sempeles and Jiashan Cui, *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2023*, NCES 2024-113 (Washington, DC: NCES, 2024): about **3.4 percent** / **~1.765 million** homeschooled K–12; do not use 5.2% as the homeschooled figure. Homeschool pond only — not dyslexia prevalence.

⁶Prevalence ranges only: stricter ~5–10% (e.g., Fletcher et al. stance summarized in Catts et al., “Revisiting the Definition of Dyslexia,” 2024); broader symptom language ~15–20% (IDA, “Dyslexia Basics”; IDA FAQ). Continuum cut-points vary; this book never invents a single proprietary rate.

How to use this book

You do not need to read this book cover to cover before you teach tomorrow. You need a week plan, a place to sit, and one clear focus.

This week's plan

1. **Pick one teaching chapter — or one focus skill inside a chapter.** Examples: silent-*e* decode and spell; vowel teams already taught that keep slipping; stretch-and-spell dictation; accuracy before a fluency reread; a morphology chunk that unlocks a content word; gist-with-evidence on text heard by ear while code repair continues; one writing job with one revision target.
2. **Run four or five Structured Literacy hours.** Protect **cumulative review** at the start of every sit. New work without review is how yesterday's win disappears.
3. **Name one in-home try-it and one out-of-home try-it** from that chapter. Kitchen table and street sign both count. Library, store label, postcard, and recipe step are practice — they do not replace the Structured Literacy sit.
4. **On Friday (or your fifth hour), run one diagnostic wrong and the done-enough checklist.** An error is data. Celebrate the try. Reteach before you pile on the next pattern.
5. **Write one dated line** in the notebook: date, focus pattern or skill, two or three sample words or a one-sentence note, oral-reading check if you ran one. Titles a stranger can read come later in **Records**. For now, honesty beats branding.

Session shape, talk-box shape, try-it shape, intensity, and AI rules live once in **The English hour**. Point back there whenever a chapter says “see the English hour.”

Place by skill, not birthday

Bands inside chapters are **1–3 / 4–6 / 7–8 / 9–12**. They are skill bands, not locks on a cake.

- A seven-year-old with accurate early code and strong listening may still need brief phonemic work with letters and a careful phonics sequence.
- A fourteen-year-old with unfinished vowel teams sits in vowel-team work with mature word lists, respectful wording, and no baby talk.
- A sixteen-year-old may split the day: code or morphology repair; content by print when decoding allows and by ear when print is the bottleneck; writing with adaptations that still teach craft.

“Too old for phonics” is not a rule in this house. Neither is “they’re gifted, so we can skip the code.” Strengths are assets. They do not make Structured Literacy optional.

How to read a teaching chapter

Every teaching chapter (Chapters 1–8) uses the same eight headings, in order:

1. **Why this matters** — what this idea unlocks without shame.
2. **For the parent: understand it yourself** — plain language, wrong answers you should be able to hear, a five-minute warm-up before you teach.
3. **How to teach it this week** — session shape, exact wording you can say, skill-band moves, how to fade help.
4. **Practice that actually builds learning** — named try-its in and out of the home, plus the talk box.
5. **For the student** — short, direct, respectful pages they can use.
6. **If it isn’t clicking** — three diagnostics and the next move; when to slow, reteach, or seek a human specialist or evaluation.

7. **Tools, including AI** — short; points back to the English-hour AI box.
8. **What “done enough” looks like** — checklist before you move on; placement by skill.

Chapter 1 may feel parent-heavy. It still includes a short student-facing talk box. Life-of-the-habit tips live in the English hour, in Chapter 8’s done-enough, and in **Records** — not in a ninth teaching chapter.

Talk once, wait, then teach

Each chapter locks an opening question. You ask it. You wait. You do not fill the silence with the right word. You do not turn the table into a fight. Follow-ups ask for meaning, a show-me move (tiles, finger under the word, stretch of sounds, strip an affix, a sketch, a sentence), a check against the letters or the text, and a chance to revise.

A stuck silence usually means the question was vague, wait-time was zero, they are hunting a picture cue or a first-letter grab, the word sits outside today’s code, shame from old speed contests flooded the room, or a blank page arrived with no plan. Pose. Wait. Point back at the print. Correct without crushing. “Never correct the child” is not this book’s rule. “Yell try harder” is not either.

Access and intervention are two lanes

Headphones beside a print book can open science, history, and literature while you repair the code on another page. Text-to-speech, audio books, and dictation are civil helpers. They are **not** a substitute for today’s decoding or encoding lesson when that lesson *is* the code. Keep the lanes labelled. Mash them and the house loses both knowledge growth and code growth.

AI — once, then point back

If you use a language model at all, read the AI box in **The English hour** before you open a window. Short version for this page: **you** hold the account; under **13**,

COPPA's bright line applies and the child does not sit alone with open chat as the only partner; the child attempts decoding and encoding **unaided first** when those are the lesson; a SCRIPT is something *you* say after the try; photo-to-key and write-the-essay are bans; TTS is not a licence to skip Structured Literacy.⁷ Later chapters will not rewrite that policy paper.

Records and resources — when you need them

Records shows titles a stranger can read — **Reading / Language Arts / English**, and high-school English I–IV / Literature / Composition when the year's work matches. Never a brand. Never **Dyslexic English I**.⁸ Dated notebook, oral reading check, spelling dictation, short writing sample. Evaluation, IEP, and 504 notes stay in a private family file. High-level maps carry **not legal advice** once, then teach.

Resources names common programs by **fit** — who teaches, dose, skill band, parent load — without ranking or selling. Library access, Bookshare for qualifying print disability, and ordinary device text-to-speech come first for the content lane.⁹ Kitchen options and intensive certified options sit on fit cards. When What Works Clearinghouse ratings exist, this book copies them honestly and labels school or vendor origin.¹⁰ It does not crown one kit.

⁷Children's Online Privacy Protection Act / FTC COPPA Rule (including 2025 amendments materials opened for this stream): under-13 bright line — parent-held accounts; no child-facing open chat as the instructional partner. Access date 6 September 2026.

⁸Transcript titles in this book are Reading, Language Arts, or English (and high-school English I–IV / Literature / Composition when year's work matches) — never a curriculum brand, never "Dyslexic English I." Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113: no national homeschool diploma.

⁹Bookshare, "Who qualifies for Bookshare?" (opened 6 September 2026): print disability including dyslexia; free for qualifying U.S. students; IEP/504 not required; Chafee Amendment path. OS TTS is an access tool, not a phonics curriculum (see Wood et al. 2018 in later notes).

¹⁰WWC honesty rule for this book: copy domain ratings from named reports; label school/vendor; "no studies meet" ≠ banned — it bans crowning as WWC-proven for that protocol. See Chapter 10 notes for Wilson / Barton / OG July 2010 and Wilson Beginning Reading 2007.

Teach now; evaluate when it matters

Suspicion of unexpected, persistent word-level difficulty is enough to begin Structured Literacy tomorrow.¹¹ Formal evaluation informs differential diagnosis, documentation, and school or dual-enrollment paperwork. Screening is not diagnosis. Waiting years for failure to ripen is not kindness. Teach now. Document as needed. Seek a human specialist when probes stall, when comorbidity questions need answers, or when a plan outside the kitchen requires evidence.

What “lesson plans” and “assessment” mean here

Lesson plan means this week’s Structured Literacy session shape — not a one-hundred-eighty-day dump. **Assessment** means exit ticket, diagnostic wrong, done-enough checklist, optional vendor placement, and formal evaluation when sought — not a percentile as the only story, not NAEP as a homeschool census, not AR points as comprehension.

Open **Five things** if you want the whole book on one page. Open **The English hour** before your first sit. Then teach.

¹¹IDA, “Testing and Evaluation” fact sheet; IDA 2025 Definition Explanation: anti-wait-to-fail; teach on risk; screening $\neq$ diagnosis. Formal evaluation when documentation or differential diagnosis matters — not a licence to freeze teaching.

If you only remember five things

1. Dyslexia is unexpected word-level difficulty — not laziness, not a vision cure

Dyslexia names persistent difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading and/or spelling despite instruction that works for peers. The International Dyslexia Association’s October 2025 definition governs this book; the 2002 Lyon–Shaywitz wording remains the historical companion.¹² It is a continuum, not a single score. Phonological and morphological processing difficulties are common; they are not universal in every learner who needs this path.

It is not a character flaw. It is not “they just need to try harder.” It is not “reading backwards.” It is not cured by colored lenses or vision therapy as the reading treatment — eye care in parallel if needed; the English work is Structured Literacy.¹³ Strengths in oral language, reasoning, interests, and multimodal demonstration are real instructional assets. They do not erase the word-level bottleneck, and they do not make this book optional.

¹²International Dyslexia Association, Definition of Dyslexia (adopted by IDA Board 22 October 2025). Historical companion: G. Reid Lyon, Sally E. Shaywitz, and Bennett A. Shaywitz, “A Definition of Dyslexia,” *Annals of Dyslexia* 53 (2003) (2002 IDA consensus formal publication).

¹³AAP–AAO joint statement (Welcome n. 13): refuse lenses/vision therapy as cure for primary dyslexia. Structured Literacy: IDA KPS 2018 / Effective Reading Instruction.

2. Teach Structured Literacy — not three-cueing as word reading

Explicit. Systematic. Cumulative. Diagnostic. You model the sound or pattern, practice it on purpose, review what was taught yesterday, and let today's errors build tomorrow's list. Mastery means correct *and* easy enough that the mind is free for meaning.

Meaning and language matter for comprehension. Guessing the printed word from a picture or a first letter is not how we identify print.¹⁴ Intensity — clearer teaching and more reps — is kindness. Louder teaching and more shame is not. Structured Literacy is an approach, not a franchise crown. Fit matters more than a logo on the box.

3. Fluency comes after accuracy

Slow and accurate is the path. A stopwatch on cold frustration text is not the first move. Guided oral reading with feedback on text the learner can already decode builds rate and ease. Some older learners keep a rate gap even when accuracy grows — say so without cruelty. Speed contests that skip hard words teach guessing, not reading. Reread known text after the letters are true; do not race past them.

4. Access by ear while code is repaired is not skipping decoding

Text-to-speech, audio books, shared read-aloud, and dictation open content doors so knowledge and vocabulary do not freeze while the code is under repair. Label the lane. Keep a separate page for today's decoding and encoding lesson. Headphones beside a print book can be both civil and instructional. They are not a

¹⁴Refuse three-cueing as word reading: Foorman et al., *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*, NCEE 2016-4008 (IES/WWC, 2016; rev. 2019), Recommendation 3 guidance discouraging guessing from beginning letters or pictures; Marilyn J. Adams and Mark Seidenberg critiques of instructional misuse of three-cueing (series lock).

substitute for teaching the code when the code *is* the lesson. Two clocks in one week — intervention and content — beat one clock that only shames.

5. Follow a path — not gift-only skip, wait-to-fail, or AR points

“They’re so creative we can skip phonics” refuses the work this book exists to do. “We’ll wait until third grade / until it gets worse” wastes years that could have held short sharp sits. Accelerated Reader points are not comprehension instruction.¹⁵ “Just read more” alone is not enough for a code-limited reader.

Place by skill, not birthday. Keep records under **Reading / Language Arts / English** — never a brand, never **Dyslexic English I**. Prevalence, when named, stays in ranges (stricter about **5–10 percent**; broader symptom language about **15–20 percent**).¹⁶ The national homeschool enrollment share (**about 3.4 percent** in recent NCES figures) is a different pond — do not mash it as dyslexia prevalence.¹⁷ Teach now. Document as needed. Seek evaluation when documentation or differential diagnosis matters. This book is not medical advice and not legal advice.

Hold these five. Then open the English hour and teach.

¹⁵WWC, *Accelerated Reader* (Adolescent Literacy, August 2010): no discernible effects in rated domains — school/vendor labelled. Points $\neq$ comprehension instruction.

¹⁶IDA Basics/FAQ ~15–20% symptom language; stricter ~5–10% named in definition-revisiting literature (Catts et al. 2024 summarizing Fletcher et al.). Ranges only.

¹⁷Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113: 3.4% / ~1.765M homeschooled — pond only, not prevalence.

The English hour (Structured Literacy)



Figure 2: Letter tiles, sound boxes, and a controlled page ready on a wooden table — still-life, no people, no logos.

This chapter is load-bearing once. Later teaching chapters point back here in a sentence. Read it before your first sit. Return when the week frays.

The English hour is the Structured Literacy hour: explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic.¹⁸ It is not a cozy read-aloud alone. It is not a worksheet dump. It is not a stopwatch race. It is not a chatbot doing the child's words. Shared reading, kitchen talk, audio access, and making still motivate — they do not replace the code sit, the spelling sit, or written composition with craft.

Session shape — bands 1–3 and early 4–6 (code-heavy)

Most weekdays, aim for about **thirty to forty-five minutes** you can actually finish. Frequent short sharp beats a rare marathon.

1. **Cumulative review (3–5 minutes).** Known sounds, known words, known meaningful parts. Three clean wins before anything new. Say: “Before new, three knowns. Ready?”
2. **Phonemic awareness crumb if needed (3–6 minutes).** With letters. One or two manipulations — not a year of clap-the-syllables. Bridge mouth to tile to print.
3. **Phonics + encoding sit (12–18 minutes).** Same map both ways: decode and spell what you teach. New pattern, guided practice, mixed practice, short dictation. Heart words or irregulars mapped honestly — not fifty mystery words on Friday with no study.
4. **Connected accuracy reading (6–10 minutes).** Controlled, decodable, or practiced text. Finger under the word. Look through the letters. Blend. Meaning talk after the word is true — not instead of the word.
5. **Fluency reread or vocab/comp crumb (5–8 minutes).** Only after accuracy. A second pass for ease, or one morphology or gist move on text already reachable.
6. **Exit ticket (2–4 minutes).** Two to five items. One explained error. That miss seeds tomorrow's review.

Stop when melted, not when merely hard. Fatigue is real. Shame is refused.

¹⁸IDA, Structured Literacy / Effective Reading Instruction principles (fetched 6 September 2026); IDA KPS 2018 Standard 4 domains: PA, phonics/word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, listening/reading comprehension, written expression.

Session shape — bands 7–8 and 9–12 (split day optional)

Older learners often need three clocks in a week, sometimes split across a day:

1. **Code / morphology repair sit (15–25 minutes).** Multisyllabic decoding, affixes, roots, spelling generalizations still needed. Mature materials. Respectful wording. No baby talk through early patterns if skill shows need — and no pretending birthday retired the code.
2. **Content reading with scaffolds / by ear when needed (20–30 minutes).** Science, history, literature, or a craft article the learner can access. Print when decoding allows. Audio or shared reading when print is the bottleneck — labelled access, not a secret skip of intervention.
3. **Writing workshop grain with adaptations (15–25 minutes).** Job of the piece, plan, draft with scribe / speech-to-text / keyboard when transcription blocks thinking, one revision target, spelling sit kept on the map somewhere in the week.
4. **Exit / done-enough (3–5 minutes).** What worked. What to reteach. One dated line in the notebook.

Intervention clock and content clock both belong to English in a broad sense. Only the first remediates the core word-level bottleneck. Do not mash them into one confused hour where TTS finishes the decode page that was today's lesson.¹⁹

Intensity honesty

Learners who need this path often need teaching that is **more explicit, more intensive, and more supportive** than typical classroom fare. That is the Foorman and Torgesen honesty in ordinary language.²⁰ School design cues sometimes land near twenty to forty-five minutes, four or five days a week — useful as a picture

¹⁹Wood et al. 2018 (n. 24): TTS = access compensation. IDA assistive-technology advocacy materials: tools are bridges; access $\neq$ substitute for decoding/encoding when those are the lesson.

²⁰Barbara R. Foorman and Joseph Torgesen, "Critical Elements of Classroom and Small-Group Instruction Promote Reading Success in All Children," *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice* 16, no. 4 (2001): at-risk instruction more explicit, intensive, and supportive than typical classroom fare.

of dose, not a parent statute you must copy minute-for-minute.²¹

You are the home coach. A certified specialist, clinic, or school service stays on the table when probes stall, when the profile is severe, or when documentation matters. Hiring help is not failure. Quitting cumulative review is failure of the plan, not of the child.

Intensity means clearer models and more successful reps. It does not mean longer shame. If the sit regularly ends in tears, shorten it, narrow the new bit, and protect review. If the sit regularly ends because you talked the whole time, talk less and let the student blend, encode, and explain.

Talk-box shape (once for the whole book)

Every teaching chapter carries a talk box. The shape is the same; the opening question is locked per chapter.

Exact opening. Authentic. About what is hard and what is working; first sound and letter; look-through-the-word blending; stretch-and-spell; known words and where to slow down; word parts and what each does; gist with evidence from text or heard text; job of the piece and the plan. Not “did you have fun.” Not “what is the vocabulary quiz word.”

Locked openings you will meet again:

- Chapter 1: “What’s hard about reading or spelling today — and what’s already working?”
- Chapter 2: “What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”
- Chapter 3: “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”
- Chapter 4: “Say the word. Stretch it. What do you hear first?”
- Chapter 5: “Which words do you already know for sure — and where should we slow down?”
- Chapter 6: “What parts do you see — and what does each part do in this sentence?”
- Chapter 7: “What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?”

²¹Joseph K. Torgesen, “Avoiding the Devastating Downward Spiral,” *American Educator* 28, no. 3 (2004); related Torgesen early-intervention pieces: successful small-group figures often ~20–45 min/day, 4–5 days/week — design cue, not a parent statute.

- Chapter 8: “What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, persuade, or analyze — and what’s the plan?”

Three to five follow-ups. One for meaning. One for representation (“show me with tiles / finger under the word / stretch the sounds / strip the affix / a sketch / a written sentence”). One for type or evidence. One for check (“does that match the letters / the story / what you meant / what you heard?”). One that lets them revise (“you may change your mind” / “try it another way”).

How to wait. After you ask, a slow three is a useful classroom convention for think-time — Stahl’s work is classroom-origin; it is not a literacy randomized trial, and neither is Rowe’s science-class wait research.²² Do not mash them as proof of a phonics effect size. For dyslexic learners, wait is often longer than a parent’s anxiety wants. Protect the try. After they stop, wait again. If they are mid-blend or mid-retell, do not cut them off. Look at the letters, the page, or the tiles — not at the child’s face — if the silence is hard.

Stuck silence usually means: the question was vague; wait-time was zero; they are hunting a picture cue; they offered a first-letter grab; they think reading means look-and-guess; the word sits outside today’s code; they think writing means a blank page with no plan; shame from old speed contests flooded the room; they need a scribe option so thinking can start. Your job is to pose, wait, and point back at the print — not to fill the silence with the right word, and not to turn the table into a fight. Correct without crushing.

In-home try-it shape

Every teaching chapter names at least one try-it inside the home with **time, materials, safety, the fun, the skill**.

Common kitchen types you will see again:

- **Tile build** — sound boxes or letter tiles for today’s pattern; build, blend, change one sound.

²²Robert J. Stahl, “Using ‘Think-Time’ and ‘Wait-Time’ Skillfully in the Classroom,” ERIC Digest ED370885 (1994): ~3-second convention; eight categories of silence — classroom-origin. Mary Budd Rowe, “Wait-Time and Rewards as Instructional Variables” (NARST / ERIC ED061103, 1972): elementary science class. Do not mash as a literacy RCT.

- **Dictation** — short list of taught patterns; stretch and spell; race yesterday's self, not a sibling's speed.
- **Error hospital** — two or three misses from this week; reteach; re-try; date the win.
- **Morphology Lego** — strip and stack meaningful parts; say what each part does in the sentence.
- **Accuracy-then-reread** — first pass for true words; second pass for ease on the same text.
- **Scribe-and-spell** — you scribe the idea once so thinking starts; student encodes a taught word or sentence on purpose.

Safety at home is ordinary: tiles stay off the floor if toddlers crawl; scissors and glue only with supervision; no tasting unknown craft materials; no shaming the student in front of siblings. The fun is the click when letters match the mouth. The skill is the pattern you named at the top of the hour.

Out-of-home try-it shape

Every teaching chapter also names at least one try-it outside the home — unless the chapter is purely definitional, and even then you get a walk-sized instance.

Common outdoor and community types:

- **Street-sign decode** — taught patterns on real print; soft voice; no public quiz of a stranger's child.
- **Recipe or label hunt** — find today's pattern on a package or step; aisle courtesy; no tasting unknown things; no shoplifting a "test."
- **Museum placard through the word** — finger under a tough word; blend what you can; ask for help on the rest without shame.
- **Library craft question** — open a book you can decode or hear; ask the chapter's talk opening about meaning or word parts.

- **Store morphology** — find a prefix or suffix on a generic tag; say what it does.
- **Postcard or email with taught patterns** — write three sentences that use this week's code; send to a willing relative.

Ordinary safety: roads, parking lots, aisle courtesy, no photographing strangers, no lecture to a cashier, no shaming the student in public. A street sign is print. It is not a sermon about a city. A recipe is a step to read. It is not a nutrition sermon. Library, walk, store, and kitchen *are* the practice — they do not replace the Structured Literacy sit.²³

Life of the habit (session rhythm — not a ninth teaching chapter)

Revisit yesterday's pattern at the open. Mix last week's words into Friday's dictation. Stop when melted. Date the notebook. Reteach from today's errors before you add endings, new vowel teams, or a longer essay. The habit is cumulative review plus diagnostic reteach plus dignity. Records will carry the file you keep. Chapter 8's done-enough will carry writing-habit tips. Do not invent a ninth teaching chapter titled "life of the habit."

AI at the English hour (grades 1–12) — say once

The child reads the letters and writes the words when those are the lesson. The tool does not. When the hour is **content access**, text-to-speech or audio may open the door — labelled, parent in the room — while decoding is still taught on another page.

You hold the account. Whenever the child is under **13**, COPPA's under-13 bright line applies: parent-held account; no child-facing open chat as the partner; no child account as a secret friend.²⁴ Ages **13–18** still use parent-hosted discipline

²³Session intensity and cumulative review: Foorman and Torgesen 2001; Torgesen 2004; IDA KPS — out-of-home print encounters motivate and practice; they do not replace the explicit sit.

²⁴COPPA / FTC Rule (under-13): parent-held accounts; no unsupervised child open-chat partner for instructional work. Access date 6 September 2026.

and co-hold; still no unsupervised only-partner during the attempt when you are co-teacher; still unaided first on instructional targets.

Grades 1–5 / under-13: decoding and encoding dominate. No live open chat as the child’s partner. You may generate a **SCRIPT** for after the attempt, and you may ask a tool to explain a named pattern *to you*. Parent-voiced feedback. Carefully labelled TTS for content — never to finish today’s decode page.

Grades 6–8: still parent in the room. Attempt first. Parent holds the answer key. Separate the intervention hour from the content-access hour. A student who can type is more able to paste a prompt — protect the unaided try.

Grades 9–12: co-hold plus integrity for timed assessments and applications. Still ban write-the-essay. Still unaided first on any decoding or encoding that remains the lesson. Essay feedback after a draft means revision questions, not a rewrite. Tools for learning are not tools for a live closed exam.

You may (on your account, after the child has tried — or before, to prepare yourself)

1. Ask the tool to **explain today’s Structured Literacy idea to you** — a phonics pattern, a morphology chunk, a spelling generalization, a sentence job — not to the child as a live partner.
2. Ask for **extra isomorphic practice** with answers only on a **PARENT KEY** page the child never sees (new words, new sentences, a short dictation list, morphology sets). Do not generate “practice” by photographing tonight’s assigned worksheet.
3. Ask for a short **SCRIPT** you will say *after* they try — including a parent oral-reading feedback script you will voice yourself.
4. Ask for a **hint** that is a question or a named idea — not the finished word, story, or essay.
5. After they finish, show the tool **work they already produced** (crop the photo to the paper; do not upload the child’s face) and ask what mix-up is likely — then *you* talk to the child.

6. Ask for a **parent-side schedule** that keeps today's decoding/encoding lesson on one page and today's content-access (TTS/audio) text on another — so the house does not mash the lanes.

You must not

1. Paste tonight's worksheet and take the answers.
2. Ask the tool to **write the child's story or essay** or "fix this to an A," or let the child ask that of a window during the attempt.
3. Photograph a comprehension packet for a filled-in key (**photo-to-key** / photo-to-answer). That loop is a solver.
4. Leave a chatbot running as the child's only partner during the attempt — not in grade 1, not in grade 12 — when you are co-teacher. No "reading friend" account.
5. Use TTS, rewrite-on-demand, or a voice-clone toy to **finish the decoding page that is today's lesson**.
6. Use dictation to **produce the writing that was today's encoding, handwriting, or essay target** and call it the child's work without instruction.
7. Invent research or trust a fluent citation without opening the named paper, practice guide, or fact sheet.²⁵
8. Detector-grade the child's writing and call the score honesty — dyslexic and second-language writing is high-risk for false positives.²⁶
9. Hand the child an agent as a reading or writing partner, or a voice-clone toy as the "reading teacher."

²⁵William H. Walters and Esther Isabelle Wilder, "Fabrication and Errors in the Bibliographic Citations Generated by ChatGPT," *Scientific Reports* 13 (2023): 14045 — **55%** of GPT-3.5 citations and **18%** of GPT-4 citations fabricated. Parent-side: open the named source.

²⁶Weixin Liang et al., "GPT Detectors Are Biased Against Non-Native English Writers," *Patterns* 4, no. 7 (2023) / arXiv 2304.02819: average false-positive rate on human TOEFL essays **61.22%**. Do not detector-grade a child's writing.

One crutch sentence, labelled OFF-AGE for literacy, then teach: in a **high-school math** trial, an unguarded chatbot made practice look better and left students worse on the test with the window closed (Bastani and colleagues, 2025).²⁷ **That is not a grades 1–12 literacy trial and not a dyslexia trial.** The kitchen-table rule it supports: the model may prepare the adult and the next page; it may not do the child’s decoding, encoding, or essay when those are the lesson.

One accommodation sentence: text-to-speech and dictation can open content access for a student with a reading disability.²⁸ That is not a licence to skip Structured Literacy.

One spine sentence: federal practice guides, the National Reading Panel summary, and IDA Structured Literacy name phonemic awareness, phonics, encoding, connected text, oral reading with feedback, morphology, daily writing, handwriting, and spelling.²⁹ They do not name a chatbot as the reading teacher.

Keep accounts, logs, and keys where you can open them. A literacy tool is not a secret friend. Names stay separate: different products are not interchangeable tutors; there is no Grok Bot education SKU in this manual’s promises. Agents are not chatbots. Later chapters will not rewrite this box — they will point back in one sentence.

What “done enough” for the hour looks like

- Cumulative review happened.

²⁷Hamsa Bastani et al., “Generative AI without Guardrails Can Harm Learning: Evidence from High School Mathematics,” *PNAS* 122, no. 26 (2025): e2422633122 — Turkish HS math, grades 9–11. **OFF-AGE for literacy; not a dyslexia RCT.** One cautionary mechanism: unguarded help can inflate practice and hurt closed-window learning.

²⁸Sarah G. Wood, Jerad H. Moxley, Elizabeth L. Tighe, and Richard K. Wagner, “Does Use of Text-to-Speech and Related Read-Aloud Tools Improve Reading Comprehension for Students with Reading Disabilities? A Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 51, no. 1 (2018): meta-analytic average often summarized near $\bar{d} \approx 0.35$ — compensation/access, not phonics instruction.

²⁹NICHD, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* — Summary (NIH Pub. No. 00-4769, 2000); Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008; Michael L. Kamil et al., *Improving Adolescent Literacy*, NCEE 2008-4027; Steve Graham et al., elementary writers NCEE 2012-4058 and secondary writers 2016 guide; IDA Structured Literacy. They do not name a chatbot as the reading teacher.

- The new bit was small enough to finish.
- The student attempted first — blended, encoded, or explained.
- You asked one good question and waited.
- At least one error became tomorrow's review item.
- Access tools, if used, stayed in the content lane — not as a substitute for today's code lesson.
- The sit ended with dignity.

This is a useful frame, not a promise that every home will see the same result on the same calendar. Then teach.

Open Chapter 1 if you need the calm definition frame. Or open the chapter that matches this week's skill, run four or five hours, and protect the review.

Chapter 1 — What dyslexia is (and isn't)



Figure 3: A hard/working card and letter tiles beside an open notebook — still-life, no people, no logos.

Why this matters

You are about to teach English — reading, spelling, language, and writing — to a child whose word-level work stays hard after teaching that works for many peers. Before you open letter tiles or a controlled page, you need a calm frame for what you are looking at.

Dyslexia is not laziness. It is not a vision problem that colored lenses will cure.³⁰ It is not proof that someone is “not smart.” It is not a gift that lets you skip phonics. It is not something you wait three more years to name while the clock runs. It is not “reading backwards” as a party trick definition. It is not the NCES homeschool enrollment number wearing a lab coat.

In plain language: dyslexia is unexpected, persistent difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading and/or spelling, even when instruction that helps peers is in place. The International Dyslexia Association’s October 2025 definition is the governing frame for this book.³¹ The older 2002 Lyon–Shaywitz consensus definition still shows up in many handbooks and statutes; you will meet it as a historical companion, not as a competing brand.³²

That frame matters because it changes Tuesday morning. If you think the problem is effort, you raise your voice. If you think the problem is eyes, you shop for overlays. If you think the problem is “they’ll catch up,” you wait. If you think strengths mean instruction is optional, you skip the code sit. If you think picture guessing is reading, you praise a strategy that hides the letters. None of those moves builds reading.

What does build reading is Structured Literacy: explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic teaching of the code and of language, with enough intensity that the student gets many successful, corrected tries. Foorman and Torgesen put it bluntly for at-risk and dyslexic readers: instruction needs to be more explicit, more intensive, and more supportive than typical classroom fare.³³ You do not need a clinic title

³⁰AAP–AAO joint statement: refuse colored lenses / vision therapy as treatment for primary dyslexia.

³¹IDA, Definition of Dyslexia (adopted 22 October 2025); IDA, “2025 Dyslexia Definition Explanation” (sentence-by-sentence rationale; anti-wait-to-fail; IQ gatekeeping dropped; comorbidity noted as distinct). Access date 6 September 2026.

³²Lyon, Shaywitz, and Shaywitz, “A Definition of Dyslexia,” *Annals of Dyslexia* 53 (2003) — 2002 IDA consensus formal publication; historical companion to 2025.

³³Foorman and Torgesen, *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice* 16, no. 4 (2001).

to start. You do need to hear a wrong story when it walks into the kitchen — and to ask a better question.

This chapter is parent-heavy on purpose. Your student still gets a short, respectful section and a talk box. The job today is not to diagnose your child from a paragraph. Composite examples in this book are illustrations, not reported families, and not diagnoses of fictional children. The job is to understand the idea well enough to teach with dignity, and to refuse myths that waste months.

Why struggle through a definition chapter at all? Because every later chapter — phonemic awareness with letters, systematic phonics, encoding, fluency after accuracy, morphology, comprehension on accessible text, writing with adaptations — assumes you will not abandon the code for a softer story. Shared reading aloud, kitchen talk, audio access, and making motivate. They do not replace Structured Literacy. Access tools open content doors. They do not finish today's decoding lesson when that lesson is the code.

You are capable. Busy. Willing. Many parents feel rusty on how they were taught to read, or never saw Structured Literacy named, or were told to wait, or were sold colored lenses, or were told their child is lazy, or were told strengths mean phonics is optional. That is normal exhaustion, not a character flaw. This week you learn a frame. Next week you move tiles.

For the parent: understand it yourself

One everyday picture

Imagine two children hearing the same clear phonics lesson. One maps sounds to letters, blends, and begins to read controlled words with growing ease. The other works hard, remembers the story from the picture, grabs the first letter, and still cannot hold the middle vowel steady when the picture is covered. Listening comprehension may sound fine — sometimes better than fine. Spelling looks scrambled. Reading aloud is exhausting. Homework that looks like “just read the chapter” becomes a nightly cliff.

That second profile — word reading and spelling that stay unexpectedly hard — is the territory this book serves. The child is not failing as a person. The teaching plan needs to match the bottleneck: the printed word.

One precise picture

The IDA October 2025 definition centers **word-level** reading and spelling. Accuracy, speed, or both may be affected. English's deep orthography makes both accuracy and fluency demands heavy; difficulty profiles vary by writing system. Dyslexia sits on a **continuum**; cut-points are practice and policy decisions, not natural cliffs. Difficulty **persists** despite instruction that works for peers. Causes are multifactorial. Phonological and morphological processing problems are common, not universal. Early oral-language weakness can foreshadow later word-reading trouble. Secondary consequences — less reading practice, thinner vocabulary growth from print, academic and psychosocial strain — are real. Early support is especially effective; identification and instruction still matter at any age.

The 2002 Lyon–Shaywitz companion definition added language many IEP teams still quote: often described as neurobiological in origin; unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities; frequently accompanied by secondary comprehension and experience consequences. Use 2025 for how this book speaks. Keep 2002 visible so a handbook quote does not confuse you into thinking two books are fighting. Unexpectedness in 2025 emphasizes unexpected given **effective instruction and peer progress** — not an IQ theater entrance exam. Word-level difficulties occur across cognitive profiles; IQ poorly predicts who will respond to intervention. Most people with dyslexia have average measured IQ, just as most people do; extraordinary intelligence can co-occur but is not required for belonging in this book.

NICHHD's public reading-disorder symptom materials map onto the same language-based picture: trouble sounding out words; difficulty linking sounds and letters; poor spelling; slow reading; trouble reading aloud with expression; trouble understanding what was just read when word reading is the bottleneck. Those are symptom clusters, not a kitchen diagnosis checklist.

Prevalence — ranges only, said carefully

Depending on definition and cut-point, named sources place stricter dyslexia / severe reading disability roughly in the mid–single digits to low teens percent (often summarized ~**5–10%**). Broader symptom estimates run as high as ~**15–20%** (IDA Basics/FAQ).³⁴ Continuum arguments in the Shaywitz lineage have been as high as

³⁴Stricter ~5–10%: Catts et al. 2024 summarizing Fletcher et al. 2019 stance; broader ~15–20%: IDA “Dyslexia Basics” / FAQ. Ranges only — never invent a single rate.

about one in five. The AAO joint statement's background cites learning-disability ranges that also vary by definition. This book never invents a single proprietary rate, and it never pretends one cut-point is the only honest number.

Do not mash the NCES homeschool enrollment figure (**about 3.4% / ~1.765 million**) as if it were dyslexia prevalence.³⁵ That number counts a different pond. Do not use a casual "5.2% are homeschooled" mash either. Keep ponds separate.

What typical peers are doing — and what dyslexia often looks like by band

Bands 1–3. Typical peers are mastering grapheme–phoneme mapping, decoding regular and increasingly irregular words, building an orthographic lexicon through mapping, and reading early text with growing fluency. Dyslexia often looks like slow inaccurate decoding; weak phonemic awareness; fragile letter–sound knowledge; spelling that does not capture sounds or patterns taught; avoidance of reading aloud; fatigue; guessing from pictures or first letters if three-cueing habits were taught; listening comprehension that still looks age-typical — which creates masking risk if adults only watch "understanding the story." Family history and early language delay are risk flags, not fate.

Bands 4–6. Typical peers shift toward learning *from* text; fluency is often assumed; morphology and academic vocabulary become major engines. Dyslexia often looks like accuracy that improved with intervention while rate and spelling still lag; multisyllabic academic words that expose decoding gaps; reduced reading volume that thins vocabulary and knowledge (Matthew effects); writing and spelling crises that intensify; some students first noticed only now because texts got dense.

Bands 7–8. Typical peers' oral and reading comprehension become more comparable for many; texts demand inference and discipline-specific vocabulary; extended writing loads grow. Dyslexia often looks like silent reading that hides inaccurate decoding; teachers who see "doesn't do the reading"; note-taking and novel study that overload working memory and spelling; anxiety and lowered academic self-concept as secondary effects; comorbid ADHD that makes homework initiation fragile; co-occurring DLD that keeps comprehension weak even when decoding is partially remediated.

³⁵Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113: 3.4% / ~1.765 million homeschooled — different pond.

Bands 9–12. Typical peers analyze, synthesize, and evaluate complex texts; write arguments and research; assume reading volume. Dyslexia often looks like persistent slow reading; spelling that still undermines perceived competence; avoidance of heavy reading loads without access tools; strong oral discussion beside weak timed reading tests; college and employment consequences becoming concrete. Intensive intervention still works and is still warranted. Age does not retire decoding.

Same definition. Different surface. Place by **skill**, not birthday. A sixteen-year-old with accurate CVC but weak vowel teams sits in vowel-team work with mature materials and respectful wording.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. **“They’re just lazy / they just need to try harder.”**

Effort matters. Effort is not the diagnosis. Persistent word-level failure after clear teaching is information about skill, not character. Shame does not teach graphemes. “Yell try harder” is not this book’s rule. “Never correct the child” is not this book’s rule either. Correct the reason without crushing the attempt.

2. **“Colored overlays / tinted lenses / vision therapy will fix the dyslexia.”**

Treatable eye conditions deserve eye care. The joint statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and American Association of Certified Orthoptists is clear: lenses, filters, and vision therapy are not the treatment for dyslexia. Parallel health care is fine. Lenses-as-cure is refused. No chapter in this book will sell you a tint as a reading program.

3. **“We’ll wait until third grade / until they fail enough / until the school notices.”**

Persistence language in the definition is not a licence to wait years. Teach now. Document as needed. Wait-to-fail wastes the years when code teaching is most efficient. Early support is especially effective; that is not a reason to refuse older learners — it is a reason not to delay.

4. **“They’re so creative / so verbal / so good at STEM — we can skip phonics.”**

Strengths are instructional assets. They do not make Structured Literacy

optional. Gift-only skip is refused. A strong oral vocabulary is a reason to keep building language *and* to teach the code, not a reason to trade one for the other.

5. **“Good grades mean it can’t be dyslexia” / “They need a low IQ (or a high IQ) for this to count.”**

Listening and reasoning can mask word-reading weakness, especially early. Good grades do not erase a word-level disability. IQ discrepancy as the only gate is refused. The 2025 frame does not require cognitive theater at the door.

6. **“They read backwards — that’s the sign.”**

Reversals are not the definition. Spelling can look jumbled because sound-symbol memory and orthographic mapping are weak — not because the child is “seeing reverse.” Myth-chasing wastes the lesson.

7. **“3.4% of kids are dyslexic” / “Everyone is a little dyslexic so it doesn’t matter.”**

Wrong pond, or continuum talk turned into permission to do nothing. Use named prevalence **ranges**. Continuum means intensity and cut-points are real decisions — not that instruction is optional.

8. **“Just read more / silent reading time will fix it.”**

Volume matters after the code is working. Independent silent reading alone has not been shown as causal fluency instruction for readers who still lack alphabetic skill. Motivation and books matter. They are not the word-reading program.

Comorbidity care (without collapsing conditions)

ADHD and dyslexia co-occur often — bidirectional estimates commonly cited around **25–40%**.³⁶ Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) overlaps as well (population-based figures near ~30% in some summaries; clinical samples higher, toward ~50%).³⁷ Co-occur does **not** mean identical. ADHD supports (initia-

³⁶Comorbidity ranges as cited via Catts et al., “Revisiting the Definition of Dyslexia” (2024), referencing McGrath & Stoodley and related ADHD–RD literature: bidirectional ~25–40%. Co-occur ≠ identical. Not medical advice.

³⁷Catts et al. 2005 / Catts et al. 2024 summaries: population-based ~30% DLD among dyslexia; clinical samples nearer ~50% (McArthur et al. 2000 line). Distinct disorders; comorbidity additive for comprehension risk (Snowling et al.).

tion, attention, break structure) and oral-language intensification when language is weak sit beside code teaching — they do not replace it. IDA's 2025 Explanation intentionally keeps comorbidities outside the dyslexia definition while recognizing them clinically. This book does not diagnose ADHD or DLD from a kitchen checklist. If attention or language concerns persist, seek appropriate evaluation. Not medical advice. Not a supplement protocol. Not a medication lecture.

Strengths without drift

Many learners with dyslexia have strong oral comprehension, reasoning, curiosity, spatial or mechanical interests, humor, persistence when the task is fair, multimodal ways of showing what they know. Name those strengths. Use them to choose texts worth hearing, projects worth building, and explanations worth giving. Do not let them become an excuse to skip the code hour.

Access tools (text-to-speech, audio books, dictation) open content doors so secondary consequences do not hollow out knowledge while the code is under repair. That is civil and instructional. It is not “giving up on reading.” It is also not a licence to skip Structured Literacy.

Structured Literacy in one kitchen paragraph

Explicit means you name the sound or pattern; you do not hope the child will deduce English. Systematic means a planned sequence, easiest elements toward harder, one new bit at a time. Cumulative means yesterday's pattern returns tomorrow on purpose. Diagnostic means today's errors drive tomorrow's review; mastery means correct *and* easy enough that attention frees for meaning. Multisensory techniques (say it, see it, write it, build it) support engagement and memory; they are not a magic sand tray that replaces the code. Structured Literacy is an approach, not a franchise crown. Programs may deliver it. This book teaches the approach. Fit cards for named programs live in resources later — fit, not rank.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Before you teach this week, say out loud — to yourself — one clean sentence:

“Dyslexia is unexpected difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading and/or spelling that persists despite instruction that works for

peers. We teach the code with intensity and dignity. We do not wait, guess from pictures, or shop for a lens cure.”

Then list one hard thing and one working thing you already see in your learner. Keep both. Neither cancels the other. Put a tiny code goal under them. That card is your bridge into Chapter 2.

How to teach it this week

This chapter’s “teach” is mostly a framing week: shared language, a hard/working card, and a first honest look at print without public shaming. You are not delivering a medical label across the dinner table as entertainment. You are building a partnership and a refusal list you can use when a relative, a product ad, or your own fatigue offers a softer myth.

This week’s honest “lesson plan”

- **Focus:** Shared definition language + hard/working card + access-vs-intervention honesty.
- **Dose:** Two or three sittings of 20–30 minutes (not a marathon lecture).
- **In-home try-it:** Hard/working card; strengths inventory that still lists the code.
- **Out-of-home try-it:** Library decode-vs-hear shelf walk; street-sign notice.
- **Friday check:** Student retells the plan; parent dates one observation; done-enough checklist below.

Session shape (20–30 minutes)

1. **Cumulative calm (2 min).** Sit. No lecture about brokenness. “We’re building a plan for reading and spelling.”
2. **Hard / working card (8–10 min).** Two columns. Student names one hard thing and one working thing. You write if writing blocks talking. Today’s tiny code goal still appears at the bottom (even one letter–sound or one mapped word).
3. **Myth spot (4 min).** Parent names one refused story in plain language (laziness, lenses, wait-to-fail, gift-only skip, picture guessing as word reading).

Student does not need a research seminar — just clarity.

4. **Print is everywhere notice (5 min).** One street-sign style word on a card, or one word from a package you already own — cover any picture cue. “The word lives in the letters.”
5. **Plan sentence (3 min).** “This week we practice ____ . Access tools help with long books. They don’t replace the letters sit.”
6. **Exit ticket (2 min).** Student retells the plan in one sentence. Parent notes one observation dated.

Exact wording you can say

- “Hard and working can both be true.”
- “We’re not waiting for a birthday to start.”
- “Pictures help meaning after the word is read. Pictures are not how we identify the word.”
- “Colored lenses are not our reading program.”
- “You are not lazy. This is skill work with a plan.”
- “Headphones can open a long book. Letter tiles still happen.”
- “I’m going to wait while you think. I won’t jump in at one second.”

Skill-band moves inside the framing week

Bands 1–3. Keep the talk concrete and short. Use toys or tiles as dignity objects, not as babyish shame. Listening may mask need — say so gently: “Understanding the story by ear is wonderful. We still teach the letters.” Priorities to plant: explicit PA with letters, systematic phonics/encoding, daily connected text at instructional level with decoding prompts, high-frequency words taught with attention to regularity versus true irregularity. Refuse wait-to-fail and cueing-from-picture as primary word strategy.

Bands 4–6. Name the reading-to-learn collision without panic. Let the student help choose which books are decode practice and which are hear-for-knowledge. Plant: sustained advanced phonics + early morphology; fluency on known text later; vocabulary that binds morphology and spelling; assistive access as access to grade-level content — not replacement for word-reading intervention; writing scaffolds that separate idea generation from transcription load while still teaching spelling patterns.

Bands 7–8. Protect identity. Do not hold a definition talk as a public family roast.

Use mature wording: “Word reading can stay hard even when thinking is strong. That’s a teaching problem with a plan.” Plant: keep word study alive (syllable types, schwa in multisyllabic words, Greek/Latin beginnings); annotation routines that reduce load; legitimate accommodations with separate mechanics instruction; screen for language needs, not only “effort.”

Bands 9–12. Treat the student as a near-adult partner in the plan. Discuss stamina, timed tests, and advocacy without catastrophizing. Plant: intensive intervention still warranted; content mastery via multimodal access plus continued Structured Literacy as needed; self-advocacy scripts; writing with sentence-level security; spell-check literacy (human + tool, not tool-only). Do not confuse assistive technology with giving up.

Fade help and when to stop talking

You model the hard/working language once. Then the student owns the card. If they freeze on “hard,” offer categories (sounds, speed, spelling, long words, reading aloud, writing) — not a speech about their deficit. Stop talking when they are mid-thought. Wait. Look at the card, not at their face, if silence is hard. Correct a myth a relative told them without mocking the relative in front of the child.

First try-it for the student

Complete the hard/working card. Read back the today’s-code line. Change nothing about their worth.

Practice that actually builds learning

Library shelves and kitchen tables motivate. They do not replace a Structured Literacy sit in later chapters. This week’s practice is naming reality without shame, and noticing print without turning the world into a pop quiz.

Try-it — in home: Hard / Working card

- **Time:** 10–15 minutes.

- **Materials:** Index card or notebook page; pencil; optional letter tiles for the “today’s code” line.
- **Safety:** Emotional safety — no sarcasm, no comparison to a sibling’s speed, no “you’re broken” jokes, no recording them for social media.
- **The fun:** The student gets to name what already works. That is rare and powerful.
- **The skill:** Metacognitive honesty + dignity + a concrete next code goal.

How: Draw two columns. Left: *Hard today*. Right: *Already working*. Bottom: *Today’s tiny code goal* (example: “short /a/ in three CVC words” or “look through the whole word on five cards”). Student speaks; you scribe if needed. Read the whole card aloud together. Date it. Keep it in the Reading / Language Arts / English notebook — stranger-readable title, never a brand level as the credit line.

Try-it — in home: Strengths inventory that still lists the code

- **Time:** 10 minutes.
- **Materials:** Paper.
- **Safety:** Strengths stay specific (“explains science videos clearly”), not vague flattery that skips work.
- **The fun:** Collecting evidence of competence.
- **The skill:** Using strengths as fuel for the plan, not as a gift-only exit ramp.

List three strengths. Under them write one sentence: “Because these are strong, we can ___ while we still practice the code ___ minutes most days.” Optional family-history conversation stays **parent-side** and careful: family patterns can be risk information; they are not a kitchen diagnosis of cousins.

Try-it — in home: Definition card beside tiles (dignity still-life)

- **Time:** 8 minutes.
- **Materials:** One sentence definition card; a few letter tiles.
- **Safety:** No forced “say you have dyslexia” ritual if the family is not using that word yet. You can teach the plan without a label ceremony.
- **The fun:** Making the abstract concrete — tiles are something you can touch.
- **The skill:** Linking the word *dyslexia* (or “word-reading plan”) to letters, not to shame.

Read the one-sentence lock. Build one easy known word with tiles. Say: “This is

the work. Not a lens. Not a lecture about laziness.”

Try-it — out of home: Library shelf walk (decode vs hear)

- **Time:** 15–20 minutes at the library.
- **Materials:** Library card; optional headphones if your library lends audio-book access.
- **Safety:** No public quiz. No announcing private educational information to a stranger. Aisle courtesy. No shaming the student into whispering “I can’t read.”
- **The fun:** Choosing two stacks honestly.
- **The skill:** Separating **access** books (hear / shared read / audio) from **decode practice** books (controlled or skill-matched print).

Whisper plan beforehand: “We’ll pick some books you can work through with letters, and some books you can enjoy by ear or with a grown-up voice. Both stacks are smart.” If Bookshare or similar accessible formats become relevant later, they are access supports for qualifying students — not a replacement for the code sit. Details live in resources.

Try-it — out of home: Street-sign notice (print everywhere)

- **Time:** 5 minutes on a walk or drive (passenger reads when safe).
- **Materials:** None.
- **Safety:** Roads first. No shouting corrections in a store. No photographing strangers. No quizzing a cashier. No lecture to another family’s child.
- **The fun:** Spotting print as a puzzle the letters can solve.
- **The skill:** “Through the word” posture without a public performance.

Pick one familiar sign. Cover any logo picture with a hand if needed. “What do the letters say?” If it is outside today’s code, you decode it together as a model — then stop. This is a notice, not a pop quiz series. A street sign is print. It is not a sermon about a city.

Try-it — out of home: Postcard of the plan (optional weekend)

- **Time:** 15 minutes.
- **Materials:** Postcard or email draft; two short sentences.

- **Safety:** Student consents to what is shared and with whom.
- **The fun:** Sending a real message.
- **The skill:** Writing a plan sentence with support — preview of later encoding and writing chapters.

Sentence stems: “What’s hard for me with reading sometimes is .” “*What’s already working is .*” “This week’s tiny goal is ____.”

Talk box

Opening (locked):

“What’s hard about reading or spelling today — and what’s already working?”

Follow-ups: 1. What would “working” look like in ten minutes? 2. Show me one word you can already read for sure. 3. What do you want me to remember about how this feels — without making it the whole story? 4. You may change what you named as hard after we try. 5. Check: are we talking about the letters, the meaning, or the time it takes?

How to wait: After you ask, give a slow three (Stahl’s think-time convention from classroom teaching — a useful pause, not a literacy RCT; Rowe’s classic wait-time work was science class, not a dyslexia trial).³⁸ After they stop, wait again. If they are mid-sentence, do not cut them off. Look at the card or the letters if the silence is hard. For dyslexic learners, wait is often longer than a parent’s anxiety wants — protect the try.

Stuck silence usually means: the question felt like a trap; wait-time was zero; they are hunting what you want to hear; shame from past speed contests flooded the room; they think admitting “hard” equals failing; they offered a first-letter grab habit as identity (“I just guess”); they need categories. Pose again with a menu. Point at the columns. Do not fill in their identity for them. Do not turn the table into a fight.

Blocked practice vs mixed practice this week

Blocked: One conversation that only builds the hard/working card until it is clean.

Mixed: Later in the week, add the library walk and one street-sign notice so the

³⁸Stahl, ERIC ED370885 (1994); Rowe (1972) science-class wait-time — classroom-origin; not a literacy RCT.

frame meets real print.

One incorrect example to diagnose: Student says “What’s hard is I’m dumb.” Parent move: “That’s a worth sentence. We’re collecting skill sentences. What’s hard about the *letters* or the *time* — and what’s already working?”

A week of parent practice sentences (say these until they are easy)

Use these as cumulative review for *you*, the adult — not as a quiz for the child.

1. “Unexpected means surprising given teaching that works for peers — not surprising given a low IQ score.”
2. “Persistent means it doesn’t vanish because we waited — so we teach now.”
3. “Accuracy, speed, or both can be the hard part in English.”
4. “Continuum means severity varies; it does not mean ‘everyone, so no plan.’ ”
5. “Secondary consequences are real: less print practice can thin knowledge — which is why access and code repair travel together.”
6. “Phonological and morphological processing problems are common, not required on every battery every day.”
7. “Co-occurring ADHD or language difficulty changes supports; it does not rewrite the definition into ‘just attention.’ ”
8. “Structured Literacy is explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic — an approach, not a shopping logo.”

Hypothetical kitchen snapshots (illustrations, not diagnoses)

Snapshot A (bands 1–3). A child retells a picture book with rich vocabulary after hearing it, then stalls on *slip* when the picture is covered, saying “swim?” because the story was about a pool. Parent move: cover picture, tap sounds, blend. Listening strength stays; guessing habit does not.

Snapshot B (bands 4–6). A student discusses a science topic aloud with curiosity, then cannot decode *photosynthesis* parts and stops reading the chapter. Parent move: audio or shared read for content tonight; separate syllable/morphology sit for the word parts tomorrow. Access and intervention both happen.

Snapshot C (bands 7–8). A student says “I just hate English” after silent reading time. Oral reading of a short controlled paragraph shows skipped endings and

vowel-team errors. Parent move: replace character talk with skill talk; restore cumulative review; protect identity.

Snapshot D (bands 9–12). A teen aces discussion and bombs a timed reading section. Parent move: advocacy for appropriate timing/access where relevant; continued advanced word study; no “you’re too old for phonics” speech. Not legal advice — planning honesty.

What you are protecting when you refuse myths

When you refuse laziness narratives, you protect effort for the real task. When you refuse lenses-as-cure, you protect money, time, and hope for instruction that maps to the code. When you refuse wait-to-fail, you protect the years when reps are cheapest. When you refuse three-cueing as word reading, you protect left-to-right looking through graphemes. When you refuse gift-only skip, you protect the student’s right to be taught. When you refuse IQ theater, you protect belonging across cognitive profiles. When you refuse “just read more” alone, you protect the student from practicing struggle without a model. None of these refusals require contempt for people who believed the myths. Many of us heard them. Teach anyway.

Intensity without cruelty

Foorman and Torgesen’s line — more explicit, more intensive, more supportive — is easy to mishear as “longer and louder.” At home, intensity usually means: higher rate of correct responding; shorter loops of model–try–feedback; daily or near-daily sits; cumulative review protected; errors used as tomorrow’s plan. Torgesen’s school figures for successful small-group work often landed around 20–45 minutes, four or five days a week.³⁹ That is a design cue from school studies, not a legal minimum for parents and not a promise that every home will match clinic minutes. A parent who cannot match clinic minutes still owns the *shape* and the *explicitness*. Rare marathons that end in tears are not intensity. Frequent short sharp sits are.

³⁹Torgesen, *American Educator* (2004) and related early-intervention pieces: dose design cues from school studies — not a legal minimum for parents.

How this chapter feeds the English hour

Later you will run a Structured Literacy hour: cumulative review; phonemic crumb if needed; phonics and encoding; connected accuracy; fluency after accuracy or vocabulary/comprehension; exit ticket. This chapter does not invent a ninth “life of the habit” teaching chapter. Habit lives in the hour’s rhythm, in done-enough checklists, and in records. This chapter’s job was to make sure the hour is aimed at the right object — word reading and spelling taught with dignity — instead of aimed at character repair, lens shopping, or waiting.

For the student

Reading and spelling use a code: sounds link to letters, and letters link back to sounds. For some people, that code stays harder than it is for classmates, even when everyone gets similar teaching. That pattern is often called dyslexia. It is about word reading and spelling — getting words right, getting them smooth, or both. It is not a story that you are lazy. It is not a story that special colored glasses will finish the job. It is not a story that you should wait until you feel worse before anyone teaches you clearly.

You can be good at thinking, talking, building, joking, science videos, sports, music, friendship, design — and still need clear teaching of the code. Both can be true. Strengths are real. Strengths do not cancel practice.

Tiny worked example.

Hard: “Long words in science slow me down.”

Working: “I understand when someone reads the chapter aloud.”

Today’s code goal: “I will look through five whole words and say every sound before I blend.”

Try 1. Write or say one hard thing and one working thing. Keep them short. You may change your mind after you try.

Try 2. Point to one word in the room (a label, a title) and decide: Is this a *decode practice* word for me today, or an *access* word someone can help me with while I still learn the code?

Explain it back. In your own words: What is dyslexia about — and what is it *not* about?

Challenge. Teach a stuffed animal, a sibling, or your parent the sentence: “Hard and working can both be true — and we still practice the letters.”

Band notes for you (place by skill)

If you are in earlier skill work, your job today might be one sound and one letter. That is enough.

If you are in middle skill work, your job might be naming where long words break down — and still keeping a decode stack separate from a listen stack.

If you are older and still repairing the code, this is skill work, not little-kid work. Mature books by ear are allowed. Letter work is still allowed. You are not “too old” for clear teaching.

You are allowed to be slow and accurate. You are allowed to use headphones for long books while you still do letter work. You are not a percentile. You are not a problem to be managed. You are a person with a plan.

A note if someone used the word “dyslexia” before you were ready

Sometimes a teacher, relative, or evaluator used the word first. Sometimes your family prefers “word-reading plan” for a while. Either way, the teaching moves stay the same: sounds to letters, letters through the word, spelling that matches the map, fluency after accuracy, language on text you can access, writing with supports that do not abandon craft. The label can help you find resources. The label is not homework. The plan is homework.

If reading aloud has been a battlefield

You do not have to perform for relatives. At the table with your co-teacher, reading aloud is practice with feedback — decode, don’t guess; slow and accurate allowed. If past speed contests made your stomach drop, say so in the hard column. That feeling is information. It is not proof you should avoid letters forever.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Everything feels like character failure

What you hear: "I'm stupid." "They won't try." "We're doomed."

Likely meaning: Shame flooded the definition talk.

Next move: Return to the hard/working card. Separate *skill* from *worth* in one sentence. Restart with a tiny success (one known word read through the letters). Do not argue about character for twenty minutes. Change the task size. Intensity means clearer teaching and more reps — not louder shame.

Diagnostic 2 — Family wants to wait or buy a lens kit

What you hear: "Third grade will sort it." "This overlay fixed a cousin." "The internet says vision therapy."

Likely meaning: Wait-to-fail or lenses-as-cure story.

Next move: Keep eye care if eyes need care. Keep teaching the code now. One plain sentence: lenses are not the reading program; waiting is not the plan. Open Chapter 2 and start a five-minute phonemic crumb with letters. Do not debate influencer cures as if they were the lesson.

Diagnostic 3 — Strengths talk erased the code goal

What you hear: "They're so bright — phonics is insulting." "Dyslexia is a gift, so we focus on creativity only."

Likely meaning: Gift-only skip.

Next move: Affirm the strength. Put the code goal back on the card. Use mature materials for older bands. Say: "Gifts don't retire the alphabet."

Diagnostic 4 — Picture guessing praised as reading

What you hear: "They used the picture and got it — good reading!"

Likely meaning: Three-cueing habit treated as word reading.

Next move: Cover the picture. "Say the sounds, then blend." Meaning strategies matter for comprehension after words are identified. Guessing from pictures or first letters is not how we identify the printed word.

Diagnostic 5 — Good grades used as a stop sign

What you hear: “Report card is fine, so we’re imagining this.”

Likely meaning: Masking via listening, help, or short assignments.

Next move: Look at oral reading of unfamiliar controlled text and at spelling of taught patterns. Grades can hide word-level weakness. Teach what you see in the letters.

When to slow down, go ahead, reteach, or seek a human specialist

Slow down if shame is high — shorten the talk, keep the card. Go ahead into Chapter 2 once the refusal list and the hard/working card exist. Reteach the frame if a relative reintroduces laziness or lens myths next week. Seek evaluation when difficulty is unexpected, persistent after systematic teaching, and interfering with schoolwork or wellbeing. Screening is not diagnosis. Teaching now does not require waiting for paperwork. Records and rights maps appear later at a high level — **not legal advice**. This chapter does not diagnose your child.

Tools, including AI

Keep this short. The full AI box lives in **The English hour**.

You may, on a **parent** account, ask a tool to explain the IDA October 2025 definition *to you* in plain language, or to help you draft a SCRIPT for how you will open the hard/working talk. You may ask for isomorphic practice ideas for *next* week’s letter work with the answer key held by you. The student attempts the talk with you — not with an unsupervised chatbot as the only partner.

You may not ask a tool to diagnose your child, invent a prevalence rate, write a medical letter, declare a “dyslexia cure,” paste a worksheet for completion, or write the student’s self-description paragraph as if it were their work. You may not park a chatbot as a secret reading friend. COPPA’s under-13 line applies when the child is under 13: parent holds the account; no child-facing open chat as partner.⁴⁰ Older teens: still parent-hosted discipline; still unaided first on instructional targets.

⁴⁰COPPA under-13 bright line — parent-held account.

Text-to-speech and audiobooks are **access** tools for content (helpful compensation for comprehension access in research on TTS for reading disabilities — not a phonics replacement).⁴¹ Point back to the English-hour rules: unaided first on decoding/encoding that *is* the lesson; SCRIPT after the try; no photo-to-key; no write-the-essay.

Paper tools that beat myth tools

Keep a dated notebook titled Reading, Language Arts, or English. Keep the hard/working card. Keep a short list of refused myths on the inside cover if that helps you. You do not need a colored overlay kit to start Chapter 2. You need tiles or paper, a pencil, a mouth willing to model sounds, and a plan to wait through a try.

One cautionary mechanism from a high-school math trial with unguarded chatbots (Bastani et al., 2025): practice can look better while learning with the window closed looks worse — **OFF-AGE for literacy; not a dyslexia RCT**.⁴² The kitchen rule it supports: the model may prepare the adult; it may not do the child's reading or writing when those are the lesson.

What “done enough” looks like

Before you leave this chapter's framing week, check:

- ☐ You can say one clean sentence about what dyslexia is (word reading/spelling; unexpected; persistent despite peer-effective instruction) without IQ theater.
- ☐ You can name what it is **not**: laziness, lens cure, wait-to-fail, three-cueing as word reading, gift-only skip, “just read more” alone, backwards-as-definition.
- ☐ You use prevalence **ranges** (~5–10% stricter; ~15–20% broader symptom estimates), and you do not mash NCES 3.4% as dyslexia prevalence.
- ☐ Hard/working card exists, dated, with a tiny code goal still listed.

⁴¹Wood et al., *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 51, no. 1 (2018): TTS/read-aloud meta-analysis — compensation for comprehension access ($\bar{d} \approx 0.35$ often cited), not phonics instruction.

⁴²Bastani et al., *PNAS* 2025 — OFF-AGE for literacy; not a dyslexia RCT.

- ☐ Strengths are named without erasing the code goal.
- ☐ Student completed the talk-box opening once without shame.
- ☐ You know which band surface you are seeing (1–3 mask risk; 4–6 reading-to-learn collision; 7–8 identity/load; 9–12 stamina/access/advocacy) while the definition stays the same.
- ☐ Access tools and code teaching are both named — not traded for each other.
- ☐ ADHD/DLD co-occurrence is understood as co-occur $\neq$ identical — without kitchen diagnosis theater.
- ☐ You are ready to open Chapter 2 and run a brief phonemic-awareness crumb **with letters**.

Placement is by **skill**, not birthday. A publisher's "Level 3" or a franchise label is not a transcript line. Your records, when you keep them, will say Reading / Language Arts / English — never "Dyslexic English I," never Barton / Wilson / Take Flight / All About Reading as the credit title.⁴³

Life-of-the-habit this week is small: keep the dated card; reuse the opening question next Tuesday; mix last week's honesty with this week's first sound work. Done enough here is a shared language and a refusal list you can actually use. The teaching of the code begins in earnest next.

Connecting definition to tomorrow's tiles

When Chapter 2 asks "What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?", you will already know why that question is kind. Phonemic awareness with letters is not a cute game bolted onto childhood. It is training for the bottleneck the definition names. When Chapter 3 says "Look through the whole word," you will already know why covering the picture is not mean. When Chapter 4 says "Say the word. Stretch it," you will already know why spelling is not optional busywork — the IDA definition includes spelling, and spelling is often among the hardest and most persistent parts of the profile.

You do not need to memorize committee dates to teach. You do need the stance: unexpected word-level difficulty; teach the code; refuse the myths; hold strengths without skipping instruction; separate access from intervention; place by skill; never shame.

⁴³Transcript lock: Reading / Language Arts / English — never brand, never Dyslexic English I (family memo / ARCHITECTURE).

One more rehearsal before you leave the chapter

Sit with the tiles in view. Ask yourself the student opening question once, answering as the adult who will teach: What is hard about reading or spelling *for this learner* today — and what is already working? Write both. Under them, write the smallest code move you will actually run tomorrow. If that move is “first sound + letter for three words,” that is enough. Courage here is specificity, not a perfect theory of mind.

Parent “done enough” self-check in plain talk

If a neighbor offered you lenses, wait-to-fail advice, a laziness story, a gift-only skip, or a picture-guess celebration as word reading — could you answer in two calm sentences and then go teach? If yes, this chapter did its job. If not, reread the wrong-answers list and practice the warm-up sentence aloud once more. You are not behind as a person. You are rehearsing a teaching stance.

What success looks like by Friday of the framing week

By Friday you should feel less yanked around by slogans. You can hear laziness talk and answer with skill talk. You can hear a lens advertisement and keep your wallet closed for that purpose. You can hear “wait until they fail” and open a five-minute lesson instead. You can hear “they’re gifted, skip phonics” and keep the code goal on the card. You can hear “good grades settle it” and still look at oral reading and spelling of taught patterns. You can walk a library aisle and build two honest stacks. Your student should feel less like a problem and more like a partner: hard named, working named, tiny goal named, dignity intact.

That is enough framing. The alphabet is waiting. Take one breath. Tomorrow you will ask what sound comes first — and which letter makes it — because that is how kindness sounds in a Structured Literacy home.

Extended band guidance — living with the definition while teaching

Bands 1–3 in practice. At this band, the adult’s voice carries more modeling, but the student’s mouth still does the work. Sessions stay short enough to protect joy and long enough to gather correct trials. Materials look like tiles, sound boxes,

and controlled pages — not worksheets as the only diet. Out-of-home try-its stay gentle: one sign, one label, whisper voices. Listening comprehension may impress relatives; do not let that mask cancel the code sit. If a child retells beautifully after hearing a story and then guesses at print, name both truths on the hard/working card and return to letters. Cumulative review is sacred: three known graphemes before any new toy of a pattern. When fatigue hits, stop at success, not at tears. Tomorrow exists.

Bands 4–6 in practice. Texts suddenly demand more. Multisyllabic words expose gaps that early CVC success hid. Spelling may look worse than reading for a stretch — that is common and is why encoding sits beside decoding. Keep access tools for science and history chapters so knowledge does not starve, and keep a separate decode list so intervention does not starve either. Morphology starts to pull weight: plural, past tense, *un-*, *-ful*, simple Latinate pieces. Still refuse first-syllable guessing. Street-sign and package hunts can include longer words if you pre-choose one target grapheme. Identity talk matters: “You’re in harder print now — that is why we still practice the map.”

Bands 7–8 in practice. Silent reading can hide inaccurate decoding. Ask for oral reading of short skill-matched passages weekly even if the student prefers silence. Academic vocabulary loads working memory; teach a marking habit (vowel teams underlined, suffix boxed) without turning every page into graffiti. If ADHD co-occurs, plan initiation: materials out, first word already chosen, timer for the sit not for shame speed. If language difficulty co-occurs, simplify oral directions and keep examples concrete. Respect is non-negotiable: mature word lists, adult tone, no primary classroom clip art if it undermines dignity.

Bands 9–12 in practice. Age does not retire phonics. A senior who still misreads vowel teams deserves explicit teaching with academic payoffs — scholarship essays and lab words included — while TTS opens volume reading in another lane. Self-advocacy scripts belong here: what to ask for on timed tasks, how to use spell-check without surrendering spelling study, how to schedule a twenty-minute code sit beside a heavy reading load. Never title the transcript “Dyslexic English I.” Keep Reading / English. Never confuse assistive technology with giving up. Intensive intervention remains warranted when skill shows need. Place by skill: if the probe says silent-e is shaky, teach silent-e with mature sentences, not a lecture about birthday.

More named try-its for Chapter 1

Dinner table micro-try (in home, 3 minutes). Before plates clear, one word on a sticky note. Run the chapter's locked opening question once. Everyone hears wait-time. No grading. Laughing is allowed; mocking is not.

Notebook carbon copy (in home, 5 minutes). Student rewrites yesterday's three focus words from memory, then checks against the model. Mismatches go to error hospital. This is retrieval practice, not punishment.

Partner echo (in home, 4 minutes). Adult reads a controlled sentence accurately. Student echoes, then points under any word that would have been hard and decodes it explicitly. Builds accuracy before fluency games.

Walk-and-return (out of home, 8 minutes). On a neighborhood walk, choose one printable word (sign, flyer you already own, park rule board). Decode or stretch per chapter focus. Return home and write the word. Roads and consent first.

Library two-stack reminder (out of home, 10 minutes). Revisit Chapter 1's decode stack vs hear stack. Pull one controlled/skill-matched text for practice and one interest text for access. Both stacks remain smart.

Postcard / email with taught patterns (out of home-facing, 15 minutes). Student sends a two-sentence message that must include two words using this week's pattern. Adult may scribe the rest of the message if spelling load blocks communication — then student encodes the two target words personally.

Museum or hardware-store placard (out of home, 5 minutes). One word. Through the word or stretch-and-spell depending on chapter. No lectures to strangers. No blocking aisles.

Error hospital plus reteach slip (in home, Friday, 8 minutes). Three misses. For each: position of error, likely cause, Monday move. Student helps choose the Monday move. Ownership without shame.

Dialogue bank — definition week

- “Hard and working can both be true — tell me one of each.”
- “We’re not waiting for a birthday to start the letters.”
- “Colored lenses are eye-shop questions, not our reading program.”

- “Pictures help meaning after the word is read.”
- “Good grades don’t cancel a word-level struggle we can see in oral reading.”
- “Strengths mean fuel — not a free pass to skip the code.”
- “3.4% is the wrong pond; we use prevalence ranges.”
- “You are not lazy. This is a plan.”

Additional diagnostic snapshots

Snapshot — the hovering pencil. Adult’s pencil lands on the answer before wait-time. Fix: sticky note on the table that says “slow three.” Adult pencil stays down until the student stops trying.

Snapshot — the weekend wipeout. Friday looked clean; Monday looks new. Fix: cumulative review is not optional; mix Thursday’s words into Monday’s first four items.

Snapshot — the praise leak. Adult says “Good job using the picture!” Fix: replace with “Good job looking through the letters — let’s check meaning after.”

Snapshot — the marathon. One two-hour “catch up” session creates tears and refusal. Fix: return to 25–40 minute shaped sits; intensity is reps, not duration theater.

Snapshot — the comparison. Sibling or classmate speed becomes the metric. Fix: compare the student to yesterday’s self on the same pattern list.

Snapshot — the tool swap. TTS or dictation quietly replaces the instructional target. Fix: label lanes on the weekly plan — intervention hour vs content-access hour.

Tools, including AI — expanded pointer

The full policy lives in **The English hour**. This chapter only needs the local application.

Allow: parent-facing explanations of today’s pattern; isomorphic practice lists with answer key held by parent; feedback SCRIPTs after the student tries; diagnosis of work already on paper (crop to paper, no face upload); parent-side schedule separating decode/encode targets from audio content.

Deny: paste-the-worksheet completion; write-the-essay; photo-to-key; unsupervised chatbot partner during the attempt; rewrite-on-demand of the decode/encode page that is today's lesson; detector grading of student writing; invented cure claims; voice-clone "reading teacher."

Ages: Under 13 — parent account, no child open-chat partner. Middle grades — parent in the room. High school — co-hold and integrity for assessments; still unaided first on code targets that remain the lesson.

Access tools: TTS, audio, and dictation can be civil supports for content and for composition load. They are not substitutes for the instructional target named in this chapter's sit. Wood and colleagues' TTS work is about compensation for access, not about replacing phonics.

Bastani caution: unguarded chatbot practice in a high-school math trial inflated practice performance and hurt closed-window learning — OFF-AGE for literacy, not a dyslexia RCT — still a useful mechanism warning for kitchen rules.

Done-enough narrative

You are done enough with this chapter's focus when the Friday checklist is honest, the talk-box opening has been used without shame, at least one in-home and one out-of-home try-it happened, band placement is by skill, and tomorrow's plan is driven by today's errors rather than by a logo's calendar. Life-of-the-habit tips: keep cumulative review; mix last week's pattern into Thursday; stop while success is still true. Next: Chapter 2 — phonemic awareness with letters.

Place by skill, not birthday. Records titles a stranger can read: Reading / Language Arts / English. Never a brand. Never Dyslexic English I.

Extended "why refuse wait-to-fail" essay

Waiting feels gentle when a child is young and charming and still learning so many other things. Waiting becomes expensive when peers map print and your learner's world shrinks to fewer books they can actually read alone. The IDA definition's persistence language describes what happens without adequate intensive teaching — it is not an instruction to manufacture persistence by delay. Early support is especially effective; older support still matters. Homeschool schedules can start tomorrow morning with five minutes of letters. You do not need a perfect evaluation first to begin Structured Literacy moves. Evaluation can matter for documen-

tation, services, and clarity — teach now anyway. That both/and is the opposite of wait-to-fail.

Extended “strengths without drift” essay

Creativity, mechanical skill, oral storytelling, humor, empathy, athletic grit, musical ear — list what is true. Use strengths to choose texts worth hearing, projects worth building, and explanations worth giving. Then put the code goal back on the card. Gift-only culture can flatter a family into skipping the only instruction that opens independent print. This book will not participate in that skip. It will also not erase strengths to make room for deficit talk. Both columns stay.

Parent rehearsal — answering myth sentences

Relative: “Just try harder.” You: “Effort is in the plan. The plan is sounds-to-letters with daily practice.”

Relative: “My friend fixed it with overlays.” You: “We’ll keep eye care if eyes need care. Reading instruction is still the program.”

Relative: “Wait until third grade.” You: “We’re teaching this year in short daily sprints.”

Relative: “But they’re so smart.” You: “Yes — so we teach the code clearly instead of hoping.”

This is a useful study of definitions and myths, not a promise that every home will see the same path or the same timeline. Then teach.

Chapter 2 — Phonemic awareness with letters



Figure 4: Sound boxes with letter tiles lined for a brief phoneme crumb — still-life, no people, no logos.

Why this matters

Reading English requires hearing the speech sounds inside words and linking those sounds to letters. A phoneme is a speech sound that can change meaning (*map* / *mop*). A grapheme is a letter or letter team that spells a sound (*m*, *sh*, *igh*). Phonemic awareness is the ear side of that partnership — noticing, blending, and segmenting phonemes — and for many dyslexic learners it needs explicit teaching long after adults expected it to be “done.”

This chapter’s lock is simple and non-negotiable: phonemic awareness belongs **with letters**, stays **brief**, and targets **one or two manipulation types** at a time. The National Reading Panel found phonemic awareness instruction effective especially when letters are included and when the diet of tasks stays focused rather than scattered across endless game formats.⁴⁴ The IES foundational-skills practice guide (Foorman and colleagues, 2016) gives Recommendation 2 a **strong** evidence rating: develop awareness of segments of sounds in speech **and how they link to letters**.⁴⁵ IDA’s Knowledge and Practice Standards treat phonemic awareness as brief, practical, multisensory in sensible ways, and connected to reading and spelling — not a year of clap-the-syllables entertainment glued onto childhood.⁴⁶

Why does this matter for a dyslexic learner? Weak phonemic skills often sit near the core of word-reading difficulty. Foorman’s guide notes that persistent phonological problems may need intensified one-on-one or small-group support, and that early intervention can address a phonological core deficit that otherwise leads to single-word decoding deficiency — language the guide ties to a hallmark of reading disabilities or dyslexia. You do not need to recite that paragraph to a seven-year-old or a seventeen-year-old. You do need to run a three-to-eight-minute crumb that makes mouth, ear, and letter move together before you ask the student to decode and spell today’s words.

Chapter 1 gave you the frame: unexpected word-level difficulty; teach the code; refuse shame, lenses-as-cure, wait-to-fail, three-cueing, and gift-only skip. Chapter 2 is the first concrete code crumb. It is small on the clock and large in leverage. When the ear cannot hold /a/ steady between /m/ and /p/, the printed word *map* will

⁴⁴NICHD, National Reading Panel summary (2000): phonemic awareness instruction effective, especially with letters and focused manipulations.

⁴⁵Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008 (2016; rev. 2019), Recommendation 2 **strong**: sounds in speech linked to letters.

⁴⁶IDA KPS 2018: phonemic awareness as brief, connected to reading/spelling.

not stick. When the ear treats /sh/ as /s/ plus a mystery, *ship* will wobble. When blending three sounds overloads working memory, the student may grab the first letter and guess from a picture — and if adults praise that guess as “good reading,” the habit hardens.

Older students who still cannot segment or blend need the same object at skill level — not a primary cute game pasted onto grade 9. Mature words. Respectful wording. “We’re training your ear for the code. This is skill work, not little-kid work.” Place by skill, not birthday. A path through English with Structured Literacy intensity is the promise. A percentile is not. A franchise level is not.

Shared reading, songs, and rhymes can warm language and joy. They do not replace phoneme–grapheme work when that work is the bottleneck. Picture cues are not how we identify phonemes. Waiting until a child “is ready” while peers map sounds to letters is wait-to-fail in soft clothing. Teach now. Keep it short. Link to letters. Then move into the words you will read and spell today. Access tools can open long books by ear in another part of the day. They do not finish this crumb when this crumb *is* the lesson.

For the parent: understand it yourself

One everyday picture

You say *ship* slowly. Your child hears “something with water” and looks at a picture of a boat. You cover the picture and ask for the first sound. They say the letter name “S,” or guess “boat,” or freeze. The ear did not yet separate /sh/ as one sound, and the mouth–letter link did not fire. That is phonemic awareness work waiting to happen — with the digraph card *sh* on the table, one sound box for /sh/, and a calm second try.

Another everyday picture: you say /k/ /a/ /t/ and wait. The student echoes the chopped sounds but cannot glue them into *cat*. They look at your face for rescue. If you jump in at half a second every time, they learn that blending is your job. If you wait, offer continuous blending (*sssaaat* is the wrong word — use *caaat* carefully with continuous sounds), push tiles together, and hand back a twin word, they learn that blending is a skill with a method.

One precise picture

Phonemic awareness tasks include:

- **Identity** — first, last, and middle sounds.
- **Blending** — you say the sounds; they make the word.
- **Segmenting** — they pull the word into sounds (often with fingers or boxes).
- **Deletion / substitution** (later as needed) — *say smile without /s/; change /m/ to /s/ in map.*

NRP guidance favors teaching with letters and limiting to one or two manipulation types rather than a circus of ten game formats. The bridge that matters for reading: the same sounds you just segmented are the sounds you build with tiles and blend into a printed word. That is Recommendation 2’s “and how they link to letters” in kitchen form.

Syllable clapping is coarser than phoneme work. Rhyming is related but not the same as segmenting *crisp* into /k/ /r/ /i/ /s/ /p/. Onset-rime work (*st-* / *-op*) can be a bridge for some learners; it still needs to refine toward full phonemes for encoding. Useful language play can live in life. The Structured Literacy crumb still needs phonemes and letters.

Phoneme versus letter-name confusion is common. The letter name “em” is not the phoneme /m/. The letter name “aitch” is not /h/. When a student answers with names, that is diagnostic information, not defiance.

How PA sits inside Structured Literacy

IDA principles still govern: explicit (you model the sound and the link), systematic (you choose a focus), cumulative (knowns return), diagnostic (misses drive tomorrow). Automaticity matters even in a five-minute crumb: correct *and* easy enough that the student is not spending the whole phonics sit reinventing segmentation. Multisensory here means say it, see the letter, move the tile, write the grapheme — response forms for the code — not a requirement to buy sand.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. **“We’ll do PA games all year with no letters — letters come later.”**
Letters belong early. Mouth → letter → blend is the bridge. Ear-only forever is not Foorman Rec 2.

2. **“They’re too old for sounds.”**

If probes show they cannot segment CCVC or blend four phonemes, they need the skill. Age does not retire the ear. Materials mature; the object stays.

3. **“Just use the picture to hear the sound.”**

Pictures cue meaning. They are not phoneme instruction. Ears and letters. Three-cueing as word reading is refused in this book; picture-as-phoneme is the same family of leak.

4. **“If they know letter names, PA is done.”**

Letter names are not phonemes. Re-teach name versus sound when confused.

5. **“More syllable clapping will fix decoding.”**

Syllables help later for multisyllabic division. They do not replace phoneme segmentation for early decoding and encoding.

6. **“PA without reading/spelling connection is fine forever.”**

Brief crumb; then bridge to today’s words. Endless isolated ear training with no print is not the plan.

7. **“If it’s hard, skip to comprehension talk.”**

Comprehension matters (later chapters). Skipping the phonological core because talk is easier recreates the secondary consequences Chapter 1 named.

8. **“An app that flashes pictures will train phonemes.”**

Evaluate tools by whether the student says sounds and links letters — not by animation quality. Parent holds judgment. Child does not sit alone with an unsupervised chat partner during the attempt.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Practice aloud on three words you will use with your child (*map*, *ship*, *plant*, or mature *crisp*, *script*, *plant*):

1. Say the word.
2. Stretch the sounds while you raise a finger per sound.
3. Lay one tile (or written grapheme) per sound — digraphs get one tile team or one box.

4. Blend.

5. Change one sound and rebuild.

Check yourself: Did you say sounds or letter names? Did /sh/ stay one sound? Did you rush the blend for them in your head before they tried? You are rehearsing the crumb. You are not performing a clinic exam.

Phonemes you will teach most often early (kitchen inventory)

You do not need an IPA tattoo. You do need clean mouth models for the sounds in your sequence. Early consonants with relatively clear edges: /m/, /n/, /s/, /f/, /t/, /p/, /d/, /k/ (as in *cat*), /b/. Short vowels: /a/ as in *apple* (careful not to say “uh-pule”), /i/ as in *itch*, /o/ as in *octopus* (dialects vary — be consistent in *your* teaching voice), /e/ as in *edge*, /u/ as in *up*. Digraphs as one sound: /sh/, /ch/, /th/ (voiced/unvoiced as your program distinguishes), /wh/ if you teach it. When your own accent differs from a published program’s audio, pick one consistent model and stick to it at the table. Consistency beats accent shaming.

Nasals and liquids (/m/, /n/, /l/, /r/) stretch well for continuous blending. Stops (/p/, /t/, /k/) are quick — do not add a vowel “uh” after them if you can help it (*t* not *tuh*). That little “uh” creates a fourth ghost phoneme and breaks encoding later.

Why “with letters” is kindness

Some parents were told to train the ear in the dark for months. For a dyslexic learner, delayed print links waste the mapping mechanism reading actually uses. Ehri’s orthographic mapping account (you will meet it more in Chapter 3) needs phonemes connecting to graphemes so words can be stored for instant recognition.⁴⁷ PA with letters is not “rushing.” It is aiming the ear at the same object the eyes will use.

⁴⁷Linnea C. Ehri, orthographic mapping / phase theory of word reading (Scientific Studies of Reading line): sight words via phoneme–grapheme connections — series lock; page-exact quotes not re-fetched for every sentence.

A note on working memory and wait

Segmenting four or five phonemes loads memory. That is why tiles and boxes exist — they hold the sounds outside the head. When a student loses the middle sound, do not conclude laziness. Conclude overload. Reduce phoneme count, use boxes, slow the stretch, then rebuild. Wait-time protects the try; it does not mean silent abandonment for thirty seconds while shame grows. Pose, wait a slow three, wait after they stop, then scaffold one piece.

What “strong evidence” means for your kitchen

Foorman Rec 2 is rated **strong** in an IES practice guide written for schools.⁴⁸ That is a useful guide for which moves matter. It is not a promise that every home will see the same result, and it is not a stopwatch law for parents. Take the move: sounds linked to letters, brief and targeted, intensified when problems persist. Leave the bureaucracy.

How to teach it this week

Session crumb (3–8 minutes inside the English hour)

1. **Warm knowns (1 min).** Three or four oral items the student already owns (first sound; blend two continuous sounds). High success, crisp pace.
2. **Focus manipulation (2–5 min). One type only today:** blend **or** segment **or** (later) delete/substitute. Letters present for the words you will read and spell.
3. **Bridge to print (1–2 min).** Same words built with tiles or written. Mouth → letters → blend.

Then continue into phonics and encoding (Chapters 3–4). PA is a crumb, not the whole loaf. If you spend twenty minutes on cute ear games and never reach print, you have not followed this chapter.

⁴⁸Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Rec 2 strong — useful guide for moves; not a promise every home matches clinic results. Limit line applies.

This week's honest plan

- **Focus:** First sound + matching letter; **or** stretch-and-segment with tiles for today's words (pick one focus for the week's spine).
- **Dose:** PA crumb 3–8 minutes most days you run the English hour; four or five literacy sits this week.
- **In-home try-its:** Sound-box build; mouth→tiles→blend; change-one-sound chains.
- **Out-of-home try-it:** First-sound hunt on safe environmental print (no public quiz); optional library craft question with picture covered.
- **Friday:** Three clean blends or segments on exit ticket; note errors for Monday cumulative review.

Exact wording you can say

- “We’re going to make the sounds you hear match the letters you see. Watch my mouth first.”
- “No guessing from the picture. Ears and letters.”
- “That was close — you got two of three sounds. Let’s hold each one.”
- “You don’t have to like this drill. You do have to finish three clean ones.”
- “We’re training your ear for the code. This is skill work, not little-kid work.” (older bands)
- “Show me with tiles what your mouth just did.”
- “Sound, not name.”
- “Two letters, one sound — watch /sh/.”
- “I’m going to wait while you stretch. I won’t jump in at one second.”

Skill-band moves

Bands 1–3. Phoneme identity (first/last, then middle), blend, and segment with letters. Digraphs as one sound (/sh/, /ch/, /th/). Continuous blending for sticky starts. Keep tone warm and accuracy high. Choose three to five words that will appear in today’s reading and spelling so the crumb is not orphaned. Short vowels need clear mouth models; do not mumble schwa when you mean /a/.

Bands 4–6. Repair gaps without embarrassment. Advanced blends (*plant*, *crisp*, *splash* broken carefully). Phoneme delete/substitute as needed for flexibility — still one type per day when introducing. Tie immediately to syllable work: if they

mis-segment, multisyllabic decoding will wobble. Still brief. If basic identity is clean, do not stall for a year in kindergarten games; advance the phoneme complexity.

Bands 7–8. Only if diagnostic probes show need. Use academic-feeling or mature short words (*script, plant, twist, strength* with care for cluster difficulty). Say the respect line every time identity feels threatened. Bridge within minutes to decoding a multisyllabic word that needs clean phonemes inside a syllable. Keep the crumb short so the rest of the hour can hold morphology and content access.

Bands 9–12. Same rule: skill first. A teen who confuses blends in spelling still needs segment-with-letters — on words from content when phoneme clarity allows, or on controlled mature lists. Never baby-talk. Never skip because of birthday. Never make the crumb a public performance for relatives. Intensity means clearer reps, not humiliation.

Sample Monday–Friday spine (illustration, not a statute)

- **Mon:** Warm knowns; segment three CVC with boxes; bridge to print.
- **Tue:** Cumulative two knowns; segment with a digraph word; bridge.
- **Wed:** Switch focus to blending (you say sounds); tiles already set.
- **Thu:** Change-one-sound chain (substitution) if Wed was clean; else reteach segment.
- **Fri:** Mixed exit ticket — two segments, one blend; student explains one miss.

Model scripts you can read almost verbatim

Identity script:

“My turn. The word is *map*. First sound /m/. Letter *m*. Your turn — *sun*. What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”

Segment script:

“Watch. *Ship*. /sh/ /i/ /p/. Three sounds. /sh/ is two letters, one sound. Boxes: one, two, three. Now you — *chip*.”

Blend script:

“I’ll say the sounds. You blend them into a word. /f/ /i/ /sh/. Finger under each tile as I go. Blend.”

Repair script:

“You said /s/ for the first sound of *ship*. That was the first letter’s usual sound. This word uses *s-h* together — /sh/. Watch my mouth. Try *ship* again.”

Older-learner script:

“This is two minutes of ear training for the code — same kind of drill athletes use for footwork. Word: *script*. Stretch it. How many sounds? Build it. We’ll use this skill on science words after.”

Cumulative review belongs even in a crumb

Before new work, flash three known sound–letter pairs. Student says the sound. Keep it crisp. If a “known” fails twice, it returns to teaching status tomorrow. That is diagnostic teaching in under a minute. Skipping review to “save time” creates fake progress.

How PA errors should change tomorrow’s phonics sit

If Friday’s exit ticket shows digraph identity failures, Monday’s phonics sit begins with /sh/ cards before new vowel work. If blending fails, Tuesday’s decode list uses continuous blending prompts and fewer words. PA is not a separate religion. It is the warm-up that makes Chapter 3 possible.

Materials that are enough

Letter tiles (or paper squares), a pencil, sound boxes drawn on scrap paper, a small whiteboard if you have one. You do not need a specialty sand tray to obey “multisensory.” You need mouth, ears, eyes, and hands on the graphemes. If tiles will be lost, write graphemes on sticky notes. Start anyway.

Fade help

Model with your mouth visible. Echo. Then student leads. If they stall, give the first phoneme, hand back the rest. If they name letter names instead of sounds, stop

and re-teach the object. When three clean items land, stop the crumb — protect success. Do not “just do five more” into fatigue shame. Correct without crushing: “Two of three sounds were right — let’s hold the middle.”

First try-it for the student

Three words. For each: first sound → point to the letter(s) → build → blend.

Detailed band weekly portraits (PA crumb only)

Bands 1–3 week portrait. Monday through Thursday you run five minutes: two known first-sounds, three new segment-with-boxes on short-vowel words from the phonics sit, one blend reverse. Friday exit: parent says three words; student segments with tiles; one word is a digraph check. Outside: one pantry first-sound spy on Wednesday. Parent notes in the Reading notebook: “2/3 clean; middle vowel lost on *map* → reteach Tuesday.”

Bands 4–6 week portrait. Crumb stays five to seven minutes. Focus may be blend clusters or delete/substitute if identity is solid. Words look less “baby”: *plant*, *trust*, *crisp*. Bridge immediately to a two-syllable decode where each syllable must be clean. If the student rolls eyes, use the respect line once, then the puzzle. Out-of-home: library spine first-sound with picture covered — teen section spines if that protects dignity.

Bands 7–8 week portrait. Probe first. If segmenting of CCVC is clean across two probes, do not force a daily PA game; instead, on hard spelling days only, run a two-minute stretch on the exact multisyllabic word that broke. If probes fail, reinstate daily brief crumb with mature words for two weeks, then re-probe. Identity safety is part of intensity.

Bands 9–12 week portrait. Same probe logic. Pair PA repair with morphology later in the hour so the student feels the academic payoff. Example: stretch *construct* by syllables after phonemes in *struct* are clean; then label *con-* and *struct*. Never announce “you’re doing first-grade work.” Announce “you’re hardening the sound map so academic words stop slipping.”

Parent self-check after three days

Can you run the crumb without a script in hand? Can you hear name-vs-sound errors? Can you stop at three clean items? Can you connect the crumb words to the phonics list? If yes, you are teaching. If you are still inventing five new games a day, simplify.

Connecting to Chapter 1's refusals during PA

If a relative says “just let them guess — reading should be fun,” answer: “Fun is allowed. Guessing from pictures is not how we identify sounds or words.” If someone says “wait — they’ll hear it when they’re ready,” answer: “We’re teaching it in five minutes a day with letters.” If someone offers a tinted overlay for “hearing sounds,” keep eye care parallel if needed; keep this crumb as the reading move.

Micro-assessment without percentiles

Exit ticket ideas (pick one per Friday): 1. Three oral segmentations with tiles photographed or copied into notebook. 2. One delete task if that was the week’s focus (*smile* without /s/). 3. Student teaches the parent one digraph as one sound.

Done means accurate enough to use tomorrow — not a national percentile, not AR points, not a franchise badge.

Practice that actually builds learning

Library aisles and kitchen labels motivate noticing. They do not replace the Structured Literacy crumb. Name try-its with time, materials, safety, fun, and skill — then run them.

Try-it — in home: Sound-box build of today’s words

- **Time:** 8–10 minutes.
- **Materials:** Paper with 3–5 sound boxes; letter tiles or pencil; 4 words from today’s lesson.
- **Safety:** No speed contests. No sibling comparison. Stretch, don’t shout. Stop at frustration cliff — shorten the set.

- **The fun:** Moving a tile into a box feels like solving a puzzle.
- **The skill:** Segment phonemes and link each to a grapheme.

How: Say the word. Student repeats. Stretch. Push one tile per sound into boxes. Digraphs share one box when they are one sound. Blends get one box per phoneme (*s-t-e-p*). Read the word by blending. Clear boxes; next word. Error hospital note: which position broke — beginning, vowel, ending, or digraph identity?

Try-it — in home: Mouth → tiles → blend

- **Time:** 5 minutes.
- **Materials:** Tiles for 3 words.
- **Safety:** Watch mouth models without mockery of anyone's speech differences; seek speech support separately if articulation is the barrier — parallel care awareness, not medical advice.
- **The fun:** Copycat mouth shapes, then “magic blend.”
- **The skill:** Blending with print present.

You say /s/ /a/ /t/. Student echoes each sound while pointing to tiles, then blends *sat*. If chopped sounds will not glue, slide tiles from spaced to touching while continuous-blending with them once; then a twin word (*mat*).

Try-it — in home: Change-one-sound chains

- **Time:** 6–8 minutes.
- **Materials:** Tiles; chain list (*map* → *mop* → *top* → *tip* → *sip* or mature *slip* → *slim* → *slim* → *slit* planned carefully).
- **Safety:** Keep chains short (5 steps). Accuracy over racing.
- **The fun:** Word chain feels like a game board.
- **The skill:** Phoneme substitution + encoding preview for Chapter 4.

Only one sound changes each step. Student finds which tile to swap. Read new word each time. If they swap the wrong position, ask: “Which sound changed in my mouth?”

Try-it — in home: Error hospital for sounds

- **Time:** 5 minutes on Friday.
- **Materials:** Notebook; three misses from the week.

- **Safety:** Misses are information, not identity.
- **The fun:** Being the detective.
- **The skill:** Diagnostic teaching — today's errors drive Monday.

For each miss: Was it identity, blend, segment, digraph, or name/sound mix? Write one reteach move.

Try-it — out of home: First-sound hunt on environmental print

- **Time:** 5–10 minutes; kitchen pantry counts; grocery only if calm.
- **Materials:** None required.
- **Safety:** No public quiz of strangers; no photographing people; no tasting unknown products; aisle courtesy; student consents to playing quietly; no shoplifting a “test.”
- **The fun:** Spy sounds in the wild.
- **The skill:** Phoneme identity linked to a visible letter on a label.

Whisper: “Find a word that starts with /b/ — point to the letter that makes it.” One or two finds. Stop. A package is print. It is not a nutrition sermon.

Try-it — out of home: Library craft question (sound, then letter)

- **Time:** 5 minutes during library visit.
- **Materials:** One cover or spine — cover the picture with a hand when asking for sounds.
- **Safety:** Soft voices; no shaming in the children's or teen area.
- **The fun:** Secret code mission.
- **The skill:** Resist picture cue; hear first sound; match letter.

Try-it — out of home: Street-sign first grapheme (passenger only when safe)

- **Time:** 2 minutes.
- **Materials:** None.
- **Safety:** Roads first; no driver reading drills.
- **The fun:** World as code.
- **The skill:** Quick identity with real print.

“What’s the first sound you hear in that word — and which letter makes it?” If outside code, you model and stop.

Word lists for a week (pick by skill; keep them connected to your phonics)

Early short-a set: map, mat, sad, sap, pan, pat (identity/segment/blend).

Digraph set: ship, shop, fish, chop, thin (one-sound digraph discipline).

Blend set: slip, spit, crab, plan, twin (one box per phoneme).

Mature short set for older repair: crisp, craft, split, strand (teach carefully), script.

Do not dump fifty words. Five deep words with clean sounds beat a packet. Moats’s spelling wisdom for later chapters applies here too: depth over scatter.

What “the fun” is allowed to be

Fun means puzzle energy, not chaos. A chain can be fun. A timer that shames cannot. A sibling contest that crowns the fastest cannot. A public grocery quiz cannot. Quiet spy energy can. If your learner lights up when tiles click, use tiles. If tiles feel babyish to a teen, use a blank sticky grid that looks like a lab notes tool. Same skill. Different clothing.

Mixing in-home and out-of-home without losing the sit

Out-of-home try-its are spices. The crumb at the table is the meal. If you only hunt first sounds on street signs and never do boxes, you will not get Foorman Rec 2 done. If you only do boxes and never let print in the world feel relevant, motivation may thin. Both/and. Safety always: roads, consent, no stranger quizzes, no shame performances.

Talk box

Opening (locked):

“What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”

Follow-ups: 1. Last sound? Middle? 2. How many sounds? 3. Show me with tiles what your mouth just did. 4. I’ll say the sounds; you blend. / If I change one

sound, what's the new word? 5. Check: does the letter match the sound you said?

How to wait: Ask. Slow three (classroom think-time convention — useful pause; not a literacy RCT; Rowe's classic wait-time work was science class). Wait again after they stop. If mid-stretch, do not cut off. Look at tiles, not at their eyes, if silence is hard. Protect the try.

Stuck silence usually means: question vague; wait-time zero; hunting a picture cue; guessing what you want; word outside today's sounds; offering letter name instead of sound; shame flood from past drills; overload from too many manipulation types; thinking reading means look-at-picture-and-guess. Narrow to one task. Point to mouth, then letter. Model one. Hand back a twin. Do not fill the silence with the whole answer every time.

Blocked vs mixed

Blocked: Same manipulation (only segmenting) for several days until clean.

Mixed: After clean segments, mix one blend item in the crumb.

Incorrect example to diagnose: Student says *ship* starts with /s/ and points to s only, ignoring *h*. Move: "Two letters, one sound — /sh/. One box. Watch."

For the student

Words are made of sounds you can hear, and those sounds have letter partners. Your job in this short practice is not to guess from a picture. Your job is to notice the first sound — then the others — and match each sound to a letter or letter team.

This is not a test of whether you are smart. It is practice for the code. Slow and accurate is allowed. Three clean tries beat a long messy pile.

Tiny worked example.

Word: *ship*.

First sound: /sh/.

Letters: *s* and *h* together — one sound.

Build: [sh] [i] [p].

Blend: *ship*.

Try 1. Parent says a word you know. Tell the first sound. Point to the letter(s).

Try 2. Build the word in sound boxes. Slide your finger and blend.

Explain it back. Why do we put letters with the sounds instead of only clapping or only looking at pictures?

Challenge. Make a two-step chain: change one sound and read the new word. You may change your mind when the tiles disagree with your first guess.

Band notes for you

If early skill work is where you are: first sound + letter is enough glory for today. Celebrate clean, not fast.

If middle skill work: stretch longer words; watch digraphs (/sh/) and blends (/s/ /t/). Ask for the middle vowel on purpose.

If older skill repair: same work on mature words — no baby voice required. You are training an athlete's ear for print, not going back to preschool as a person. Headphones can still open long books later. This crumb still happens.

More tries you can ask for

Try 3. Parent says /sh/ /o/ /p/. You blend. Then you segment *shop* back into sounds and build it.

Try 4. Change *shop* to *ship*. What tile moved? Say both words.

Explain-it-back upgrade. Tell your parent one time you used to guess from a picture — and what you will do instead today.

If you feel angry that this is hard, that feeling can go in Chapter 1's "hard" column. The tiles still get three clean tries. Kindness is the plan plus the practice — not the absence of work.

You can show what you know with tiles, with a finger under letters, with a stretch of sounds, and with a short explain-it-back sentence. You are allowed to wait. You are allowed to be wrong on the way to right. Wrong answers help tomorrow's plan.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Letter names instead of sounds

What you hear: “Em” for /m/; “aitch” for /h/.

Likely meaning: Object confusion.

Next move: Re-teach name vs sound with three cards. “Name is what we call it. Sound is what it says in words.” Practice only sounds for two days. Keep letters visible so the link still builds.

Diagnostic 2 — Cannot blend three sounds

What you hear: /c/ /a/ /t/ stays chopped; or becomes a wrong word; or student waits for rescue.

Likely meaning: Blending difficulty and/or working-memory load.

Next move: Continuous blending with continuous sounds; fewer phonemes; tiles moving from spaced to touching; you blend with them once; twin item; protect wait-time so they own the glue.

Diagnostic 3 — Picture or meaning hijack

What you hear: Guess from illustration or story context.

Likely meaning: Three-cueing habit leaking into PA.

Next move: Cover picture. “Ears and letters.” Return to first sound only. Praise looking through letters, not lucky guesses.

Diagnostic 4 — Older student refusal

What you hear: “This is for little kids.”

Likely meaning: Identity threat.

Next move: Respect line + mature words + brief crumb + immediate bridge to a real decoding or spelling payoff. Do not mock. Do not abandon the skill.

Diagnostic 5 — Digraph split errors

What you hear: /s/ /h/ /i/ /p/ for *ship*.

Likely meaning: Digraph not taught as one sound.

Next move: One card, one mouth shape, one box. Minimal pairs (*sip* / *ship*).

Diagnostic 6 — Endless games, no transfer

What you hear: Student loves PA apps/games but still cannot segment the words in today's phonics list.

Likely meaning: Practice disconnected from letters and from today's words.

Next move: Cut game variety. Use only today's phonics words with boxes for one week. Measure transfer on Friday's decode/encode.

Diagnostic 7 — Parent jumps in too fast

What you hear: Adult blends for the child at 0.5 seconds every time.

Likely meaning: Anxiety rescue.

Next move: Adult practices silent slow-three on a sticky note reminder. Scaffold one phoneme max, then hand back.

A plain limit line

School studies and panel guides shaped these moves. This is a useful study, not a promise that every home will see the same result. Your job is faithful reps with letters, brief and diagnostic — not perfect clinic fidelity cosplay.

When to slow down, go ahead, reteach, or seek help

Slow down if accuracy is fake-fast — remove timing entirely. Go ahead into heavier phonics when three clean PA items are stable on known patterns. Reteach from the error hospital every Monday. Seek speech-language input if articulation makes phonemes hard to judge — parallel care, not a lens myth, not a reason to stop teaching links you can teach. If PA stays severely weak after weeks of brief daily crumbs with letters, intensify (more reps, smaller set, specialist consult per your family's resources) while continuing phonics links. Kamil's adolescent guide rates intensive specialist intervention **strong** in schools — content of word-level repair still travels home; parent $\neq$ specialist title.⁴⁹ Not medical advice. Teaching continues.

⁴⁹Kamil et al., NCEE 2008-4027, Recommendation 5 **strong**: intensive individualized interventions for struggling readers by trained specialists — content travels; parent $\neq$ title.

Tools, including AI

Keep this short. Point back to **The English hour**.

You may (parent account, after you know the focus): ask a tool to explain PA-with-letters *to you*; generate isomorphic word lists for blending or segmenting with the **PARENT KEY** held by you; draft a **SCRIPT** for your mouth model; schedule the crumb as 5 minutes so it does not eat the phonics sit.

You may not: park an unsupervised chatbot as the child’s partner during the crumb; photo a worksheet for answers; ask the tool to “just do the sounds” for the child; use TTS or a voice toy to finish the ear-letter work when that work is the lesson; invent cure claims; detector-grade anything.

COPPA under-13: parent holds account; no child-facing open chat as partner. Grades 6–12: still attempt first; still parent in the room for intervention hour. Bastani et al. 2025 remains **OFF-AGE for literacy** — one caution that unguarded help can inflate practice and deflate real learning.⁵⁰ Kitchen rule: model prepares the adult; child does the stretch.

TTS and audiobooks remain excellent **access** tools for content in another lane. They are not this crumb.

What “done enough” looks like

- ☐ PA crumb runs 3–8 minutes with letters present most literacy days.
- ☐ One manipulation type per day when teaching something new (not ten games).
- ☐ Student produces three clean blends or segments on Friday exit ticket.
- ☐ Digraphs treated as one sound when relevant.
- ☐ Name-vs-sound confusions corrected without shame.
- ☐ Older learners get mature words and respectful wording if skill shows need.
- ☐ Picture guessing refused during the crumb.
- ☐ Errors logged for cumulative review.
- ☐ Bridge to print happened (tiles or writing), not ear-only forever.
- ☐ Crumb stays a crumb — phonics/encoding still get their minutes.

⁵⁰Bastani et al., *PNAS* 2025 — OFF-AGE for literacy.

- Ready to fold this into Chapter 3's phonics sit ("Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend").

Place by skill, not birthday. Life-of-the-habit: keep the crumb inside the English hour while code is unfinished; reteach from today's misses tomorrow; stop when three clean ones land. Done enough is brief, linked to letters, and diagnostic — not a year of clapping.

Extended band guidance — phonemic awareness with letters

Bands 1–3 in practice. At this band, the adult's voice carries more modeling, but the student's mouth still does the work. Sessions stay short enough to protect joy and long enough to gather correct trials. Materials look like tiles, sound boxes, and controlled pages — not worksheets as the only diet. Out-of-home try-its stay gentle: one sign, one label, whisper voices. Listening comprehension may impress relatives; do not let that mask cancel the code sit. If a child retells beautifully after hearing a story and then guesses at print, name both truths on the hard/working card and return to letters. Cumulative review is sacred: three known graphemes before any new toy of a pattern. When fatigue hits, stop at success, not at tears. Tomorrow exists.

Bands 4–6 in practice. Texts suddenly demand more. Multisyllabic words expose gaps that early CVC success hid. Spelling may look worse than reading for a stretch — that is common and is why encoding sits beside decoding. Keep access tools for science and history chapters so knowledge does not starve, and keep a separate decode list so intervention does not starve either. Morphology starts to pull weight: plural, past tense, *un-*, *-ful*, simple Latinate pieces. Still refuse first-syllable guessing. Street-sign and package hunts can include longer words if you pre-choose one target grapheme. Identity talk matters: "You're in harder print now — that is why we still practice the map."

Bands 7–8 in practice. Silent reading can hide inaccurate decoding. Ask for oral reading of short skill-matched passages weekly even if the student prefers silence. Academic vocabulary loads working memory; teach a marking habit (vowel teams underlined, suffix boxed) without turning every page into graffiti. If ADHD co-occurs, plan initiation: materials out, first word already chosen, timer for the sit not for shame speed. If language difficulty co-occurs, simplify oral directions and keep examples concrete. Respect is non-negotiable: mature word lists, adult tone, no primary classroom clip art if it undermines dignity.

Bands 9–12 in practice. Age does not retire phonics. A senior who still misreads vowel teams deserves explicit teaching with academic payoffs — scholarship essays and lab words included — while TTS opens volume reading in another lane. Self-advocacy scripts belong here: what to ask for on timed tasks, how to use spell-check without surrendering spelling study, how to schedule a twenty-minute code sit beside a heavy reading load. Never title the transcript “Dyslexic English I.” Keep Reading / English. Never confuse assistive technology with giving up. Intensive intervention remains warranted when skill shows need. Place by skill: if the probe says silent-e is shaky, teach silent-e with mature sentences, not a lecture about birthday.

More named try-its for Chapter 2

Dinner table micro-try (in home, 3 minutes). Before plates clear, one word on a sticky note. Run the chapter’s locked opening question once. Everyone hears wait-time. No grading. Laughing is allowed; mocking is not.

Notebook carbon copy (in home, 5 minutes). Student rewrites yesterday’s three focus words from memory, then checks against the model. Mismatches go to error hospital. This is retrieval practice, not punishment.

Partner echo (in home, 4 minutes). Adult reads a controlled sentence accurately. Student echoes, then points under any word that would have been hard and decodes it explicitly. Builds accuracy before fluency games.

Walk-and-return (out of home, 8 minutes). On a neighborhood walk, choose one printable word (sign, flyer you already own, park rule board). Decode or stretch per chapter focus. Return home and write the word. Roads and consent first.

Library two-stack reminder (out of home, 10 minutes). Revisit Chapter 1’s decode stack vs hear stack. Pull one controlled/skill-matched text for practice and one interest text for access. Both stacks remain smart.

Postcard / email with taught patterns (out of home-facing, 15 minutes). Student sends a two-sentence message that must include two words using this week’s pattern. Adult may scribe the rest of the message if spelling load blocks communication — then student encodes the two target words personally.

Museum or hardware-store placard (out of home, 5 minutes). One word. Through the word or stretch-and-spell depending on chapter. No lectures to

strangers. No blocking aisles.

Error hospital plus reteach slip (in home, Friday, 8 minutes). Three misses. For each: position of error, likely cause, Monday move. Student helps choose the Monday move. Ownership without shame.

Dialogue bank — PA crumb

- “What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”
- “Watch my mouth. Your turn.”
- “Sound, not name.”
- “Two letters, one sound — /sh/.”
- “I’ll say the sounds; you blend.”
- “Show me with tiles what your mouth just did.”
- “That was two of three — let’s hold the middle.”
- “We’re training your ear for the code — skill work, not little-kid work.”

Additional diagnostic snapshots

Snapshot — the hovering pencil. Adult’s pencil lands on the answer before wait-time. Fix: sticky note on the table that says “slow three.” Adult pencil stays down until the student stops trying.

Snapshot — the weekend wipeout. Friday looked clean; Monday looks new. Fix: cumulative review is not optional; mix Thursday’s words into Monday’s first four items.

Snapshot — the praise leak. Adult says “Good job using the picture!” Fix: replace with “Good job looking through the letters — let’s check meaning after.”

Snapshot — the marathon. One two-hour “catch up” session creates tears and refusal. Fix: return to 25–40 minute shaped sits; intensity is reps, not duration theater.

Snapshot — the comparison. Sibling or classmate speed becomes the metric. Fix: compare the student to yesterday’s self on the same pattern list.

Snapshot — the tool swap. TTS or dictation quietly replaces the instructional target. Fix: label lanes on the weekly plan — intervention hour vs content-access hour.

Tools, including AI — expanded pointer

The full policy lives in **The English hour**. This chapter only needs the local application.

Allow: parent-facing explanations of today’s pattern; isomorphic practice lists with answer key held by parent; feedback SCRIPTs after the student tries; diagnosis of work already on paper (crop to paper, no face upload); parent-side schedule separating decode/encode targets from audio content.

Deny: paste-the-worksheet completion; write-the-essay; photo-to-key; unsupervised chatbot partner during the attempt; rewrite-on-demand of the decode/encode page that is today’s lesson; detector grading of student writing; invented cure claims; voice-clone “reading teacher.”

Ages: Under 13 — parent account, no child open-chat partner. Middle grades — parent in the room. High school — co-hold and integrity for assessments; still unaided first on code targets that remain the lesson.

Access tools: TTS, audio, and dictation can be civil supports for content and for composition load. They are not substitutes for the instructional target named in this chapter’s sit. Wood and colleagues’ TTS work is about compensation for access, not about replacing phonics.⁵¹

Bastani caution: unguarded chatbot practice in a high-school math trial inflated practice performance and hurt closed-window learning — OFF-AGE for literacy, not a dyslexia RCT — still a useful mechanism warning for kitchen rules.

Done-enough narrative

You are done enough with this chapter’s focus when the Friday checklist is honest, the talk-box opening has been used without shame, at least one in-home and one out-of-home try-it happened, band placement is by skill, and tomorrow’s plan is driven by today’s errors rather than by a logo’s calendar. Life-of-the-habit tips: keep cumulative review; mix last week’s pattern into Thursday; stop while success is still true. Next: Chapter 3 — systematic phonics and decoding.

Place by skill, not birthday. Records titles a stranger can read: Reading / Language Arts / English. Never a brand. Never Dyslexic English I.

⁵¹Wood et al. 2018 TTS meta-analysis — compensation, not phonics.

Extended continuous-blending tutorial for parents

Stops are short; continuants stretch. To help a student glue *sam*, you can linger /ss-saaammm/ and then clip to *sam*. For *pat*, continuous blending is harder because /p/ and /t/ do not stretch — keep vowels continuous and minimize the “uh” after stops. Practice yourself before teaching. Record your mouth on your phone privately if that helps you clean the model — do not share the child’s struggles online.

Why one manipulation type beats a carnival

Variety feels like good teaching. For phonemic awareness, variety often steals mastery. NRP’s practical implication for kitchens: pick blend *or* segment as the day’s spine. When clean, add a second type. Carnival rotations of ten games create busywork without stable skill. Your Friday exit ticket will tell you if the week chose wisely.

Linking PA to encoding early

Every segmented word should be a candidate for writing. When the student pushes tiles into boxes, occasionally say, “Now write those letters.” That single move previews Chapter 4 and glues Ehri-style mapping. Do not wait for a separate “spelling day” to discover that the ear work never reached the hand.

This is a useful study, not a promise that every home will see the same result. Then teach.

Chapter 3 — Systematic phonics and decoding



Figure 5: A finger-under-print controlled page with tiles nearby — still-life, no people, no logos.

Why this matters

Decoding is the moment the code becomes reading: looking through the whole printed word, saying the sounds for the graphemes, and blending them into a word you can recognize and understand. For a dyslexic learner, this is often the bottleneck Chapter 1 named — accurate and/or fluent word reading that stays unexpectedly hard. Systematic phonics is how we teach that bottleneck on purpose.

Systematic means a planned sequence. Explicit means you model the new link; you do not hope the child will invent English. Cumulative means yesterday's patterns return tomorrow. Diagnostic means today's misses drive reteaching — mastery to automaticity, not fake page-turning. Connected text matters too: students decode in isolation and then read the same patterns in sentences and short controlled passages. The IES foundational-skills guide rates Recommendation 3 **strong** (decode words, analyze word parts, write and recognize words) and Recommendation 4 **moderate** (connected text daily for accuracy, fluency, and comprehension).⁵² The National Reading Panel found systematic phonics instruction effective overall ($d \approx 0.41$), with larger effects when begun early (≈ 0.55).⁵³ Those numbers are useful study results, not a promise that every home will see the same result.

What this chapter refuses is as important as what it teaches. Picture guessing is not word reading. First-letter grabs are not decoding. Three-cueing — using meaning and pictures as the primary way to identify the printed word — is refused. A leveled book ladder is not proof that phonics was taught. “WWC proved our Orton–Gillingham kit” is not a sentence this book will say: the July 2010 WWC report on unbranded Orton–Gillingham for students with learning disabilities found no studies that met evidence standards, so WWC could not draw conclusions.⁵⁴ Structured Literacy principles still stand. Vendor crowns do not.

Ehri's orthographic mapping account helps parents hear what “sight words” should

⁵²Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008: Rec 3 **strong**; Rec 4 **moderate**; Rec 1 academic language **minimal**.

⁵³NRP phonics meta-analysis as reported in Linnea C. Ehri et al., “Systematic Phonics Instruction Helps Students Learn to Read,” *Review of Educational Research* 71, no. 3 (2001): overall $d \approx 0.41$; early ≈ 0.55 ; later grades ≈ 0.27 . Useful study results — not a promise every home sees the same result.

⁵⁴WWC, *Orton–Gillingham–based Strategies (Unbranded)*, Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): no studies meet evidence standards → unable to draw conclusions. Principles still stand; vendor crowns do not.

mean: words mapped through phonemes and graphemes into memory for instant recognition — not shapes memorized as logos.⁵⁵ Heart parts (truly irregular bits) get mapped honestly. They are not an excuse to abandon sounding through the rest of the word.

Older learners are not “too old for phonics” if skill shows need. Bands 7–12 who still misread vowel teams or multisyllabic words need planned decoding with mature materials and respectful wording — often aided by morphology (Chapter 6), never replaced by guessing. Fluency work comes after accuracy (Chapter 5). Encoding the same map comes in Chapter 4 and should already appear inside this week’s phonics sit.

Look through the whole word. Say the sounds. Then blend. That is kindness with a method.

For the parent: understand it yourself

One everyday picture

A page shows a goat in a coat beside the word *boat*. The student glances at the picture and says “ship.” An adult says “close enough — you used the picture.” That adult just trained three-cueing. Cover the picture. Finger under *b-oa-t*. Say the sounds. Blend *boat*. Meaning talk can happen after the word is identified. The picture may confirm sense — it does not replace letters.

One precise picture

A grapheme is a letter or team that spells a phoneme. In *boat*, *oa* is a team for /ō/. Left-to-right decoding means the eyes move through graphemes in order, not hopping to the end for a guess. Blending glues the sounds into a word. Syllable types (closed, open, silent-e, vowel team, r-controlled, consonant-le — taught in a planned order your sequence chooses) help older decoding. Multisyllabic procedures (where to divide, which syllable type) matter from bands 4–6 onward.

⁵⁵Ehri orthographic mapping / phase account — sight words via GPC connections; irregulars partly mappable.

Morphology joins as words get academic — still not a licence to guess from the first syllable only.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. **“Use the picture / first letter / context to figure out the word.”** — Refused as word ID. Cover picture; say the sounds.
2. **“They got the meaning — decoding doesn’t matter.”** — Listening comprehension can mask. Word reading still needs teaching.
3. **“Leveled books raised their level, so phonics is done.”** — Levels can hide guessing. Probe controlled text without picture crutches.
4. **“Our franchise pacing says move on even if accuracy is shaky.”** — Diagnostic teaching refuses fake mastery. Reteach.
5. **“WWC proved OG / our kit is #1.”** — Unbranded OG 2010: no studies met standards → no conclusion. Teach principles; fit not rank.
6. **“Sight words are memorized as shapes.”** — Map through sounds and letters; mark heart parts honestly.
7. **“Too old for phonics.”** — Skill first. Mature text. Same left-to-right discipline.
8. **“Fast and wrong is fine — fluency first.”** — Fluency after accuracy. Stop timing frustration text.

Parent warm-up (5 minutes)

Take five words with today’s pattern. For each, cover any picture, point under graphemes, whisper sounds, blend. Practice waiting three beats before you would rescue. Practice one repair sentence: “Wrong sound on the vowel — mark it — try again.”

The phonics sit — understand the shape before you run it

Most days while code is unfinished, budget about 10–20 minutes for the phonics/decoding core (often fused with encoding):

1. **Cumulative review (2–4 min).** Known grapheme–phoneme cards or rapid correct reading of known patterns. High success, crisp pace.
2. **New or focus pattern (3–5 min).** One new correspondence or syllable type.

Explicit model → echo → write. “Two letters, one sound: /th/.” Or “Silent-e makes the vowel say its name in *cake*.”

3. **Decode isolation (3–6 min).** 6–10 words using today’s pattern + knowns. Left-to-right blending. Finger or pencil under graphemes. Adult does not hover-solve; wait; then model one; hand back a twin.
4. **Encode the same pattern (3–5 min).** Dictation of 3–5 words or one phrase (Chapter 4 deepens this). Say it, tap it, write it, read what you wrote.
5. **Connected crumb (2–4 min).** Sentences or a short controlled passage using today’s pattern. Accuracy first. Cover pictures if they invite guessing.

This is the heart of Structured Literacy for word reading. Worksheets alone without mouth, tiles, and connected text miss the cycle. Mouth → tiles/print → blend → write → read in a sentence.

Debug table you should memorize

Symptom	Likely cause	Move
Guesses from picture/context	Three-cueing habit	Cover picture; “Say the sounds.”
Says letter names not sounds	Confused objects	Re-teach name vs sound
Cannot blend 3–4 sounds	PA / working memory	Continuous blending; tiles; fewer phonemes; return to Ch 2 crumb
Accurate but glacial	Fluency not yet; or overload	Untimed accuracy; later reread known text (Ch 5)
Fast and wrong	Speed pressure too early	Stop timing; rebuild accuracy
Skips cumulative review	Session too “new-new-new”	Protect review minutes
Only worksheets	Missing mouth/tiles/connected text	Say–build–read–write cycle
First-letter + guess	Incomplete looking	Finger under whole word; “Through the word.”

Symptom	Likely cause	Move
Skips endings	Habit / attention / rush	Pencil under final grapheme; encode endings

NRP and Foorman in one kitchen paragraph

Systematic phonics helps many students learn to decode, with stronger average effects when started early. Foorman Rec 3’s strong rating backs teaching decoding, word-part analysis, and writing/recognizing words. Rec 4’s moderate rating backs daily connected text. The panel discourages guessing from beginning letters or pictures to identify unfamiliar words.⁵⁶ Take the moves. Leave any culture-war badge about “Science of Reading” as a faction name out of your examples — teach the child in front of you.

How to teach it this week

This week’s honest plan

- **Focus:** One pattern (example spines below by band) — decode + encode + connected crumb.
- **Dose:** Four or five English hours; phonics sit 10–20 minutes inside each.
- **In-home:** 8-word tile build; twin-item after model; controlled sentence read.
- **Out-of-home:** Street-sign through-the-word; package grapheme hunt.
- **Friday:** Oral reading of 8–10 words + one controlled sentence; accuracy logged; misses → Monday review.

Exact wording

- “Look through the whole word. Don’t stop at the first letter.”
- “I’m going to wait while you try. I won’t jump in at one second.”

⁵⁶Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Rec 3 guidance: discourage guessing from beginning letters or pictures.

- “Wrong sound on the vowel — let’s mark it and try again.”
- “We practice the pattern in words, then we read it in a sentence. Both.”
- “Cover the picture. The word lives in the letters.”
- “You may change your mind when the letters disagree with your first guess.”
- “Say the sounds, then blend.”
- “Finger under each grapheme.”

Skill-band moves

Bands 1–3. Consonants, short vowels, CVC, digraphs, blends, silent-e, common vowel teams as your sequence allows; high-frequency irregulars mapped (heart parts) not guessed. Keep connected text controlled. Daily cumulative review of grapheme cards. Intensity: high response rate, short loops, corrective feedback without shame.

Bands 4–6. Syllable types; r-controlled vowels; vowel teams; multisyllabic decoding procedures (VC/CV, etc., per your sequence). Academic words begin to appear — teach a procedure, not a guess from the first chunk. Continue encoding the same patterns. Morphology begins to help (Chapter 6) but does not replace left-to-right decoding.

Bands 7–8. Persistent gaps get explicit reteaching with mature word lists. Morphology-aided decoding of academic vocabulary: strip affix, decode base, reassemble. Schwa in unstressed syllables named honestly. Content reading may use access tools in another lane while this sit repairs code.

Bands 9–12. Same as 7–8 with mature text. Never “too old for phonics” if skill shows need. Self-advocacy: “I decode better when I mark vowel teams.” Timed tests do not redefine the teaching order — accuracy still before speed games.

Sample focus spines (illustrations)

- Week of closed syllables / short vowels refinement.
- Week of consonant digraphs.
- Week of silent-e contrasted with closed.
- Week of one vowel team (*oa* / *ai*).
- Week of r-controlled (*ar*).
- Week of two-syllable division with known syllable types.

- Week of -tion / -sion as decoding units for older bands (morphology-friendly).

Pick one. Depth beats a parade.

Fade help and stop talking

Model one word fully. Guided: student sounds, you wait, you touch only the missed grapheme. Independent: pencil under word, you silent. When they are mid-blend, do not narrate over them. If stuck after wait, model one twin, hand back a new twin. Stop the isolation list while success is still high — then connected crumb.

First student try-it

Six words on cards, picture-free. “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”

Monday–Friday illustration (silent-e week, bands 1–3 or repair)

Mon: Review short vowels; teach silent-e with *kit/kite*; decode 8; encode 4; two sentences.

Tue: Cumulative *a_e*, *i_e*; decode mix closed vs silent-e minimal pairs; encode; connected.

Wed: Add *o_e*; error hospital on Tuesday misses; connected paragraph controlled.

Thu: Mixed decode 10; sentence dictation with two silent-e words; student finds silent-e in a pantry word if safe.

Fri: Exit ticket 8 words + one sentence; note accuracy; plan Monday reteach.

Older multisyllabic illustration (bands 7–12 repair)

Mon: Review closed/open; teach procedure on *napkin*, *magnet*; student explains where divided and why.

Tue: Add vowel-team syllable in second syllable words you control.

Wed: Morphology assist: *redo*, *unkind* — decode after strip.

Thu: Academic list from science (*carbon*, *magnet*) skill-matched; access separate chapter text by ear if needed.

Fri: Student teaches the division procedure back; three clean multisyllabic reads.

Intensity without cruelty

Foorman and Torgesen: more explicit, intensive, supportive. At home that means more correct trials per minute, not longer fights. Twenty focused minutes beat fifty minutes of hovering and sighing. If ADHD co-occurs, shorter loops with movement breaks still hold the same explicit prompts.

Practice that actually builds learning

Try-it — in home: Eight-word tile build

- **Time:** 10 minutes.
- **Materials:** Letter tiles; 8 words for today's pattern.
- **Safety:** No speed shame; stop at frustration cliff.
- **Fun:** Building then “smashing” into a blend.
- **Skill:** Grapheme–phoneme decode left to right.

Build, sound, blend, read. Clear. Next.

Try-it — in home: Twin-item after model

- **Time:** 5 minutes.
- **Materials:** Word cards in pairs (same pattern).
- **Safety:** Model is help, not mockery.
- **Fun:** “Your twin.”
- **Skill:** Transfer after one model.

You fully decode word A. Student gets word B (twin structure).

Try-it — in home: Controlled sentence read

- **Time:** 5–8 minutes.
- **Materials:** 3–5 sentences using today's pattern + knowns; pictures covered/removed.
- **Safety:** Accuracy first; no public performance.
- **Fun:** Reading a real sentence that works.
- **Skill:** Connected accuracy (Foorman Rec 4 spirit).

Finger under graphemes on hard words. One meaning question after — so decoding serves sense.

Try-it — in home: Error hospital

- **Time:** 5 minutes Friday.
- **Materials:** Notebook; 3 misreads.
- **Skill:** Diagnostic reteach plan.
- For each: Which grapheme? First-letter grab? Vowel? Ending? Picture peek?

Try-it — out of home: Street-sign through-the-word

- **Time:** 3–5 minutes; passenger when mobile.
- **Safety:** Roads first; no driver drills; no shouting in public; no stranger quizzes.
- **Fun:** World print as puzzle.
- **Skill:** Whole-word left-to-right decode.

“Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.” If outside code, adult models once and stops.

Try-it — out of home: Package grapheme hunt

- **Time:** 5 minutes at home pantry or calm store moment.
- **Safety:** Aisle courtesy; consent; no tasting unknown items; no brand-shaming lectures.
- **Fun:** Spy the team (*ee*, *oa*, *sh*).
- **Skill:** Grapheme identity in wild print.

“Show me the letters that make /ē/ on this label.” One or two finds.

Try-it — out of home: Museum placard through the word

- **Time:** 5 minutes.
- **Safety:** Gallery voice; no blocking others; choose one short word from a placard.
- **Fun:** Being a decoder in a grown-up place.

- **Skill:** Apply sit skills to authentic print.

If the placard is far above skill, adult reads content for access; student decodes one pre-selected word you photographed or copied earlier for practice at the bench — lanes labelled.

Talk box

Opening (locked):

“Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”

Follow-ups: 1. Finger under each grapheme. 2. Is this a closed syllable or a silent-e syllable — how do you know? 3. Show me the grapheme that makes the vowel sound. 4. Cover the picture. You may change your mind when the letters disagree with your first guess. 5. Check: did your blend match all the letters?

How to wait: Ask. Slow three. Wait after they stop. Mid-blend — do not cut off. Eyes on the word, not a glare at the child. Protect the try.

Stuck silence usually means: vague prompt; wait-time zero; picture cue hunt; first-letter grab habit; word outside today’s code; shame from past speed contests; thinking reading means guess. Point to the first grapheme. Prompt “sound.” Model one. Twin item.

Blocked vs mixed practice

Blocked: Ten words all with *oa* after teaching *oa*.

Mixed: After two clean days, mix *oa* with known *ai* and closed syllables so the student must choose the right vowel move.

Incorrect example: Student sees *boat*, says “ship” from picture. Move: cover picture; “Through the word.” Do not praise the guess as reading.

For the student

Printed words are codes. Your job is to look through all the letters — not only the first one — say the sounds, and blend them into a word. Pictures can help

you think about meaning *after* you read the word. Pictures are not a shortcut that replaces letters.

Tiny worked example.

Word: *boat* (picture covered).

Graphemes: *b* /b/, *oa* /ō/, *t* /t/.

Blend: *boat*.

Check: Did every letter get a sound job?

Try 1. Six picture-free cards. Through the word each time.

Try 2. Read two sentences that use today's pattern. Fix any miss by sounding, not by peeking at a picture.

Explain it back. What do you do first when you see a new word — and what do you refuse to do?

Challenge. Teach your parent a twin word after they model one. Then decode a street sign or label grapheme at home.

Band notes

Early: CVC and digraphs with pride in accuracy.

Middle: syllable types — explain *why* the vowel sounds as it does.

Older: multisyllabic procedures + word parts; mature lists; no baby talk. Slow and accurate is allowed. Fast and wrong is not the goal.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Picture / context guessing

Cover picture; retrain “sounds then blend”; shorter controlled text.

Diagnostic 2 — Cannot blend

Return to Chapter 2 continuous blending; tiles; fewer phonemes; then twin decode.

Diagnostic 3 — Fast and wrong

Remove all timing; rebuild accuracy; praise through-the-word checks.

Diagnostic 4 — Franchise pacing anxiety

Pause new; cumulative review + reteach misses until automatic; principles over logo schedule.

Diagnostic 5 — Older refusal / “too old”

Respect line; mature words; show payoff on a content word; keep sit short and daily.

When to seek specialist support

If word reading stays unexpectedly hard after systematic teaching with intensity, seek evaluation/specialist input. Kamil Rec 5 is strong for intensive specialist intervention in schools — parent $\neq$ that title; content still travels.⁵⁷ Not legal/medical advice. Keep teaching.

Tools, including AI

Point back to **The English hour**. Parent may generate isomorphic word lists with PARENT KEY; ask for an explanation of a syllable type *to the parent*; draft a SCRIPT for corrective feedback after the try. Student decodes unaided first. No photo-to-key. No chatbot as reading partner. No TTS finishing today’s decode page when decoding is the lesson. TTS may open a different content text in an access lane. Bastani OFF-AGE caution still holds.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Kamil et al., NCEE 2008-4027, Rec 5 strong.

⁵⁸Bastani et al. 2025 — OFF-AGE for literacy.

What “done enough” looks like

- ☐ Phonics sit includes review, explicit new/focus, isolation decode, encode link, connected crumb.
- ☐ Pictures covered when they invite guessing.
- ☐ Left-to-right through the whole word is the default prompt.
- ☐ Friday accuracy on pattern words logged; misses scheduled.
- ☐ Band-appropriate focus (CVC→teams→syllables→academic multisyllabic) by skill.
- ☐ No three-cueing praise; no fluency-before-accuracy timing of frustration text.
- ☐ WWC/OG honesty held if programs discussed: principles yes; crown no.
- ☐ Ready to deepen encoding in Chapter 4 with the same map.

Life-of-the-habit: cumulative review daily; twin after model; street-sign notice weekly; stop while success is high. Place by skill. Transcript titles stay Reading / Language Arts / English — never a brand level.

Extended band guidance — systematic phonics and decoding

Bands 1–3 in practice. At this band, the adult’s voice carries more modeling, but the student’s mouth still does the work. Sessions stay short enough to protect joy and long enough to gather correct trials. Materials look like tiles, sound boxes, and controlled pages — not worksheets as the only diet. Out-of-home try-its stay gentle: one sign, one label, whisper voices. Listening comprehension may impress relatives; do not let that mask cancel the code sit. If a child retells beautifully after hearing a story and then guesses at print, name both truths on the hard/working card and return to letters. Cumulative review is sacred: three known graphemes before any new toy of a pattern. When fatigue hits, stop at success, not at tears. Tomorrow exists.

Bands 4–6 in practice. Texts suddenly demand more. Multisyllabic words expose gaps that early CVC success hid. Spelling may look worse than reading for a stretch — that is common and is why encoding sits beside decoding. Keep access tools for science and history chapters so knowledge does not starve, and keep a separate decode list so intervention does not starve either. Morphology starts to pull weight: plural, past tense, *un-*, *-ful*, simple Latinate pieces. Still refuse first-syllable guessing. Street-sign and package hunts can include longer words if you pre-choose one target grapheme. Identity talk matters: “You’re in harder print now

— that is why we still practice the map.”

Bands 7–8 in practice. Silent reading can hide inaccurate decoding. Ask for oral reading of short skill-matched passages weekly even if the student prefers silence. Academic vocabulary loads working memory; teach a marking habit (vowel teams underlined, suffix boxed) without turning every page into graffiti. If ADHD co-occurs, plan initiation: materials out, first word already chosen, timer for the sit not for shame speed. If language difficulty co-occurs, simplify oral directions and keep examples concrete. Respect is non-negotiable: mature word lists, adult tone, no primary classroom clip art if it undermines dignity.

Bands 9–12 in practice. Age does not retire phonics. A senior who still misreads vowel teams deserves explicit teaching with academic payoffs — scholarship essays and lab words included — while TTS opens volume reading in another lane. Self-advocacy scripts belong here: what to ask for on timed tasks, how to use spell-check without surrendering spelling study, how to schedule a twenty-minute code sit beside a heavy reading load. Never title the transcript “Dyslexic English I.” Keep Reading / English. Never confuse assistive technology with giving up. Intensive intervention remains warranted when skill shows need. Place by skill: if the probe says silent-e is shaky, teach silent-e with mature sentences, not a lecture about birthday.

More named try-its for Chapter 3

Dinner table micro-try (in home, 3 minutes). Before plates clear, one word on a sticky note. Run the chapter’s locked opening question once. Everyone hears wait-time. No grading. Laughing is allowed; mocking is not.

Notebook carbon copy (in home, 5 minutes). Student rewrites yesterday’s three focus words from memory, then checks against the model. Mismatches go to error hospital. This is retrieval practice, not punishment.

Partner echo (in home, 4 minutes). Adult reads a controlled sentence accurately. Student echoes, then points under any word that would have been hard and decodes it explicitly. Builds accuracy before fluency games.

Walk-and-return (out of home, 8 minutes). On a neighborhood walk, choose one printable word (sign, flyer you already own, park rule board). Decode or stretch per chapter focus. Return home and write the word. Roads and consent first.

Library two-stack reminder (out of home, 10 minutes). Revisit Chapter 1's decode stack vs hear stack. Pull one controlled/skill-matched text for practice and one interest text for access. Both stacks remain smart.

Postcard / email with taught patterns (out of home-facing, 15 minutes). Student sends a two-sentence message that must include two words using this week's pattern. Adult may scribe the rest of the message if spelling load blocks communication — then student encodes the two target words personally.

Museum or hardware-store placard (out of home, 5 minutes). One word. Through the word or stretch-and-spell depending on chapter. No lectures to strangers. No blocking aisles.

Error hospital plus reteach slip (in home, Friday, 8 minutes). Three misses. For each: position of error, likely cause, Monday move. Student helps choose the Monday move. Ownership without shame.

Dialogue bank — decoding sit

- “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”
- “Finger under each grapheme.”
- “Cover the picture.”
- “Wrong vowel sound — mark it — try again.”
- “Is this closed or silent-e — how do you know?”
- “You may change your mind when the letters disagree.”
- “We read it in a word list, then in a sentence. Both.”
- “I’m waiting. I won’t jump in at one second.”

Additional diagnostic snapshots

Snapshot — the hovering pencil. Adult’s pencil lands on the answer before wait-time. Fix: sticky note on the table that says “slow three.” Adult pencil stays down until the student stops trying.

Snapshot — the weekend wipeout. Friday looked clean; Monday looks new. Fix: cumulative review is not optional; mix Thursday’s words into Monday’s first four items.

Snapshot — the praise leak. Adult says “Good job using the picture!” Fix: replace with “Good job looking through the letters — let’s check meaning after.”

Snapshot — the marathon. One two-hour “catch up” session creates tears and refusal. Fix: return to 25–40 minute shaped sits; intensity is reps, not duration theater.

Snapshot — the comparison. Sibling or classmate speed becomes the metric. Fix: compare the student to yesterday’s self on the same pattern list.

Snapshot — the tool swap. TTS or dictation quietly replaces the instructional target. Fix: label lanes on the weekly plan — intervention hour vs content-access hour.

Tools, including AI — expanded pointer

The full policy lives in **The English hour**. This chapter only needs the local application.

Allow: parent-facing explanations of today’s pattern; isomorphic practice lists with answer key held by parent; feedback SCRIPTs after the student tries; diagnosis of work already on paper (crop to paper, no face upload); parent-side schedule separating decode/encode targets from audio content.

Deny: paste-the-worksheet completion; write-the-essay; photo-to-key; unsupervised chatbot partner during the attempt; rewrite-on-demand of the decode/encode page that is today’s lesson; detector grading of student writing; invented cure claims; voice-clone “reading teacher.”

Ages: Under 13 — parent account, no child open-chat partner. Middle grades — parent in the room. High school — co-hold and integrity for assessments; still unaided first on code targets that remain the lesson.

Access tools: TTS, audio, and dictation can be civil supports for content and for composition load. They are not substitutes for the instructional target named in this chapter’s sit. Wood and colleagues’ TTS work is about compensation for access, not about replacing phonics.⁵⁹

Bastani caution: unguarded chatbot practice in a high-school math trial inflated practice performance and hurt closed-window learning — OFF-AGE for literacy, not a dyslexia RCT — still a useful mechanism warning for kitchen rules.

⁵⁹Wood et al. 2018 — TTS compensation.

Done-enough narrative

You are done enough with this chapter's focus when the Friday checklist is honest, the talk-box opening has been used without shame, at least one in-home and one out-of-home try-it happened, band placement is by skill, and tomorrow's plan is driven by today's errors rather than by a logo's calendar. Life-of-the-habit tips: keep cumulative review; mix last week's pattern into Thursday; stop while success is still true. Next: Chapter 4 — encoding and spelling.

Place by skill, not birthday. Records titles a stranger can read: Reading / Language Arts / English. Never a brand. Never Dyslexic English I.

Orthographic mapping in parent language

When a student sounds a word a few times successfully, the brain can store the grapheme sequence bonded to the pronunciation and meaning. Later the word is recognized instantly — that is a mapped “sight word,” not a logo memorized by shape. This is why guessing from pictures undermines the very storage system you want. Heart parts (*said, they*) still get attention: teach the unexpected letters honestly while sounding the expected parts. Mapping irregulars is teaching, not magic memorization drills with no phoneme attention.

Controlled text without cults

Controlled or decodable text matches taught patterns so the student practices the code, not a guessing game. It is a tool, not a lifelong literary diet. Interest texts by ear build language. As skill grows, text choice widens. Refuse the false war “decodables forever versus real books never.” Use controlled text for accuracy practice; use rich language experiences for knowledge; keep both lanes labelled.

Multisyllabic procedure sketch (teach explicitly)

1. Spot affixes you know (later chapter deepens).
2. Mark vowels.
3. Decide syllable boundaries with your taught rules.

4. Decode each syllable.
5. Blend syllables.
6. Adjust schwa if needed for a real word you know.
7. Check meaning in sentence.

Students should explain the steps back. Procedure beats vibes.

WWC honesty paragraph you can reuse

If a salesperson says “WWC proved Orton–Gillingham,” answer: the July 2010 unbranded OG report for students with learning disabilities found no studies meeting standards, so WWC drew no conclusions. Wilson Reading System and other products have their own reports — copy ratings honestly when you consult resources, label school/vendor contexts, and still do not crown a single kit as identity.⁶⁰ Principles first: explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic.

Phonics sequence honesty (without printing a franchise)

Different Structured Literacy programs order elements differently. This book will not crown one sequence. It will insist on *having* a sequence: consonants and short vowels before unmanaged chaos; digraphs taught as graphemes; silent-e contrasted with closed syllables; vowel teams introduced deliberately; r-controlled taught; syllable types named; multisyllabic procedures practiced; irregulars mapped. If you use a kitchen program (Barton, All About Reading/Spelling, Logic of English, or others), follow its sequence *and* still obey diagnostic mastery — do not flip pages past shaky accuracy because the calendar is anxious. If you build a home sequence from principles, write it down so cumulative review has a spine. Fit cards live in resources later.

High-frequency words without the shape cult

Words like *the*, *said*, *you*, *they*, *was* appear early. Teach them with phoneme attention: what is expected, what is the heart part, where do we look carefully. Flash

⁶⁰WWC OG unbranded LD July 2010 — no studies meet. Wilson/Barton own reports: copy honestly in Chapter 10.

for automaticity after mapping — not instead of mapping. A wall of unanalyzed logos trains visual guessing that collapses on unfamiliar words.

Connected crumb craft

After isolation success, read sentences that mostly use known patterns. If a sentence needs one untaught word, tell it quickly and mark it as given — do not pretend the student decoded what you supplied. Ask one meaning question so the brain links code to sense. Prosody can wait for Chapter 5's accuracy-then-reread rule; today, true beats theatrical.

Parent anxiety during the wait

Waiting while a child blends incorrectly for three seconds feels longer than it is. Your job is to look at the letters, keep your face calm, and intervene with the smallest prompt that restores the method. Hover-solving teaches helplessness. Shame-sighing teaches fear. Quiet wait plus precise repair teaches decoding.

Weekly dose realism

Torgesen's school figures often cited successful small-group work around 20–45 minutes, four or five days.⁶¹ Your phonics sit may be 10–20 minutes inside a broader English hour. That is enough to matter if explicitness and cumulative review are real. A once-a-week packet is not intensity. Faithful short sits are.

Cross-links

Chapter 2's PA crumb feeds blending. Chapter 4's encoding glues the same map. Chapter 5 refuses stopwatch-first. Chapter 6 accelerates long words with morphology. Chapter 7 builds comprehension on accessible text while code repair continues. Chapter 8 adapts writing without abandoning spelling. This chapter owns left-to-right word reading.

⁶¹Torgesen 2004 dose cues — design hint, not statute.

Extended minimal-pair drills

Minimal pairs force attention to the new element: *kit/kite*, *hop/hope*, *cap/cape*, *mad/made*; *ship/sip*; *coat/cot* carefully; *cart/cat*. Student reads both, explains what changed, encodes both. This is high-yield practice — better than twenty unrelated words.

When pictures are present in life

Life includes illustrated books and labeled packaging. The rule is not “destroy all pictures.” The rule is “pictures do not identify the word.” During the sit, cover or remove picture crutches. During shared pleasure reading by ear, pictures can delight. Label the lane.

Extended parent rehearsal for decoding waits

Practice with a partner or aloud alone: show a word card, count a slow three in your head, only then offer a prompt if needed. If you rescue early in rehearsal, you will rescue early with your child. Rehearse the repair: touch the missed grapheme, give the sound, ask for a re-blend, hand a twin word. Rehearse covering a picture. Rehearse saying “You may change your mind when the letters disagree.” These muscle memories matter more than owning another workbook.

Twenty connected-sentence stems using common early patterns

Use only after the patterns are taught: “The dog sat.” “Sam had a map.” “A fish is in the ship.” “Hope can ride a bike.” “The boat can float.” Build your own list from this week’s words. Controlled does not mean lifeless — it means honest.

What to put in the dated notebook

Date; pattern focus; words practiced; accuracy fraction; one diagnostic note; tomorrow’s first review items. Title the notebook Reading or Language Arts or English. Never “Wilson Level ___” as the credit line. Vendor placement, if used, stays private beside the stranger-readable title.

Refusal drill — three-cueing in the wild

When a visiting adult says “What would make sense there?” as the *first* move on an unknown word, you gently take the pencil and say, “In our house we look through the letters first. Then we check if it makes sense.” Meaning checking after decoding is thinking. Guessing instead of decoding is the habit we are retiring.

Bridging to encoding tonight

Before you close the sit, dictate two of the words just read. Say → stretch → write → read back. That two-minute bridge is Chapter 4 knocking early — take the call.

Extended band guidance — systematic phonics and decoding

Bands 1–3 in practice. At this band, the adult’s voice carries more modeling, but the student’s mouth and hand still do the work. Sessions stay short enough to protect joy and long enough to gather correct trials. Materials look like tiles, sound boxes, pencils, and controlled pages — not worksheets as the only diet. Out-of-home try-its stay gentle: one sign, one label, whisper voices. Listening comprehension may impress relatives; do not let that mask cancel the code sit. Cumulative review is sacred: known graphemes and spellings return before new ones. When fatigue hits, stop at success, not at tears. Tomorrow exists.

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out, first word already chosen, timer for the sit not for shame speed. If language difficulty co-occurs, simplify oral directions and keep examples concrete. Respect is non-negotiable: mature word lists, adult tone, no primary classroom clip art if it undermines dignity.

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pattern. Adult may scribe the rest of the message if spelling load blocks communication — then student encodes the two target words personally.

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Error hospital plus reteach slip (in home, Friday, 8 minutes). Three misses. For each: position of error, likely cause, Monday move. Student helps choose the Monday move. Ownership without shame.

Kitchen white-board sprint (in home, 4 minutes). Adult says three known pattern words; student writes large; read-back chorus; erase; smile; stop.

Dialogue bank — decoding sit

- “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”
- “Finger under each grapheme.”
- “Cover the picture.”
- “Wrong vowel sound — mark it — try again.”
- “Is this closed or silent-e — how do you know?”
- “You may change your mind when the letters disagree.”
- “We read it in a word list, then in a sentence. Both.”
- “I’m waiting. I won’t jump in at one second.”
- “Show me the letters that make the vowel sound.”
- “First letter is not enough — through the word.”

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Snapshot — the comparison. Sibling or classmate speed becomes the metric. Fix: compare the student to yesterday’s self on the same pattern list.

Snapshot — the tool swap. TTS or dictation quietly replaces the instructional target. Fix: label lanes on the weekly plan — intervention hour vs content-access hour.

Snapshot — the franchise flip. Calendar says move on; accuracy says stay. Fix: diagnostic mastery over logo pacing.

Tools, including AI — expanded pointer

The full policy lives in **The English hour**. This chapter only needs the local application.

Allow: parent-facing explanations of today’s pattern; isomorphic practice lists with answer key held by parent; feedback SCRIPTs after the student tries; diagnosis of work already on paper (crop to paper, no face upload); parent-side schedule separating decode/encode targets from audio content and composition dictation.

Deny: paste-the-worksheet completion; write-the-essay; photo-to-key; unsupervised chatbot partner during the attempt; rewrite-on-demand of the decode/encode page that is today’s lesson; detector grading of student writing; invented cure claims; voice-clone “reading teacher.”

Ages: Under 13 — parent account, no child open-chat partner. Middle grades — parent in the room. High school — co-hold and integrity for assessments; still unaided first on code targets that remain the lesson.

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When a student sounds a word a few times successfully, the brain can store the grapheme sequence bonded to the pronunciation and meaning. Later the word is recognized instantly — that is a mapped “sight word,” not a logo memorized by shape. This is why guessing from pictures undermines the storage system you want. Heart parts (*said, they*) still get attention: teach the unexpected letters honestly while sounding the expected parts. Mapping irregulars is teaching, not magic memorization drills with no phoneme attention. Encoding the same words (Chapter 4) accelerates the bonding because the hand must choose each grapheme.

Controlled text without cults (expanded)

Controlled or decodable text matches taught patterns so the student practices the code, not a guessing game. It is a tool, not a lifelong literary diet. Interest texts by ear build language and knowledge while code is repaired. As skill grows, text choice widens. Refuse the false war “decodables forever versus real books never.” Use controlled text for accuracy practice; use rich language experiences for knowledge; keep both lanes labelled. A street sign is controlled enough for a one-word try-it when you choose it on purpose.

Multisyllabic procedure sketch (teach explicitly)

1. Spot affixes you know (Chapter 6 deepens).
2. Mark vowels.

3. Decide syllable boundaries with your taught rules.
4. Decode each syllable.
5. Blend syllables.
6. Adjust schwa if needed for a real word you know.
7. Check meaning in the sentence.

Students should explain the steps back. Procedure beats vibes. If they guess from the first syllable only, return to step 2.

WWC honesty paragraph you can reuse

If a salesperson says “WWC proved Orton–Gillingham,” answer: the July 2010 unbranded OG report for students with learning disabilities found no studies meeting standards, so WWC drew no conclusions. Other products have their own reports — copy ratings honestly when you consult resources later, label school/vendor contexts, and still do not crown a single kit as identity. Principles first: explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic.

Twenty-minute sit anatomy (worked)

Minutes 0–3: cumulative grapheme cards — high success.

Minutes 3–7: teach or reteach one focus pattern with mouth, cards, write.

Minutes 7–13: six to ten isolation words; wait; twin after one model if needed.

Minutes 13–17: encode three to five of the same pattern.

Minutes 17–20: two controlled sentences; one meaning question; exit note.

If time is shorter, cut isolation count before you cut review. Review is the glue.

This is a useful study, not a promise that every home will see the same result. Then teach.

Chapter 4 — Encoding and spelling



Figure 6: Pencil, lined paper, and a short dictation list — still-life, no people, no logos.

Why this matters

Encoding is spelling with the same map you use for reading: say the word, stretch the sounds, link each sound to a grapheme, write, then read back what you wrote. For dyslexic learners, spelling is often among the hardest and most persistent parts of the profile. The IDA definition includes spelling for a reason.⁶² Moats’s account of English spelling — morphophonological, partly regular from sound-symbol alone (about half), mostly predictable when patterns and meaningful parts are included (~84% in the classic Hanna estimates she cites) — explains why invented spelling forever for taught words is not kindness, and why spell-check alone is not a curriculum.⁶³

Snow, Griffin, and Burns (as quoted in Moats’s spelling essay) put the partnership plainly: spelling and reading build on the same mental representation.⁶⁴ When you dictate *ship* and the student writes *sep*, you have diagnostic gold for tomorrow’s review. When you skip encoding because “reading is more important,” you weaken the orthographic map Ehri describes. Foorman Recommendation 3’s strong rating includes writing and recognizing words as part of code teaching.⁶⁵ The National Reading Panel treated spelling-related instruction as bound to phonics learning, not as a Friday quiz sport detached from the code.

This chapter’s locked opening is the whole method in one breath: “Say the word. Stretch it. What do you hear first?” Then the next sounds, then the letters that spell them, then a read-back check. Word chains, sentence dictation, and error analysis turn spelling into teaching. Heart parts — the truly irregular bits — get mapped honestly. Morphology joins as bands rise. Depth beats scatter: five words studied deeply beat fifty words glanced at once.

What we refuse matters as much as what we practice. Invented spelling forever for patterns already taught. Friday quizzes without study. Spell-check offered as the entire spelling program. Encoding treated as optional busywork. Shame for slow accurate spelling. Giant lists that never return in cumulative review. Three-cueing

⁶²IDA Definition of Dyslexia (Oct 2025): accurate and/or fluent word reading and/or spelling.

⁶³Louisa C. Moats, “How Spelling Supports Reading,” *American Educator*, Winter 2005/06: morphophonological English; Hanna et al. estimates ~half regular by sound-symbol alone / ~84% mostly predictable with patterns; spelling supports reading.

⁶⁴Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin cited in Moats, “How Spelling Supports Reading” — spelling and reading share mental representations.

⁶⁵Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Rec 3 strong: decode, analyze word parts, write and recognize words.

habits leaking into “write whatever looks right from the picture.” Wait-to-fail on spelling while reading inches forward. Gift-only talk that says creativity makes spelling optional.

Access tools like speech-to-text can open composition in Chapter 8. They do not finish today’s encoding lesson when encoding *is* the lesson. Headphones and audiobooks open content doors. They do not write the graphemes for today’s pattern. Kindness here is explicit teaching with enough intensity that correct spellings become easier — Foorman and Torgesen’s more explicit, more intensive, more supportive spirit — not louder disappointment.

Encoding is how reading sticks in the hand. It is also dignity: students with dyslexia deserve spelling instruction as careful as their decoding instruction. Place by skill, not birthday. A sixteen-year-old still learning vowel-team spelling gets mature sentences and respectful wording, not baby talk.

For the parent: understand it yourself

One everyday picture

You ask for *boat*. The student writes *bot*. Encoding revealed the missing vowel team. You do not say “close enough.” You say: “Stretch. /b/ /ō/ /t/. What letters spell /ō/ in this word — the *oa* we studied?” The student repairs and reads back *boat*. The map thickens. Tomorrow *coat* and *soap* return in cumulative review.

One precise picture

The encoding loop is four beats: **say** → **tap/segment** → **write** → **read back**. Word chains change one sound at a time (*map* → *mop* → *top* → *tip*). Sentence dictation places today’s pattern beside two review words inside real syntax. Error analysis asks where the miss lived — beginning, vowel, ending, digraph, heart part, syllable boundary, or suffix. Moats’s school dose cue (about 15–20 minutes daily or about 30 minutes three times a week) is a design hint for word study, not a legal statute for parents.⁶⁶ Fuse encoding with the phonics sit from Chapter 3 whenever you can; protect dedicated minutes when fusion gets rushed.

⁶⁶Moats, *American Educator* Winter 2005/06 — practical word-study minute cues; design hint.

English spelling is morphophonological: sounds and meaningful parts both matter. About half of words can be spelled from sound-symbol alone; authors in the Hanna lineage estimated roughly 84% are mostly predictable when patterns are included. That is why “English is random” is a surrender slogan, not a teaching plan. It is also why morphology belongs in spelling as students grow — *heal/health*, *define/definition* — without turning the kitchen into a linguistics seminar.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. **“Invented spelling is fine forever — we’ll fix it later.”**
Early invention can help exploration. Spellings already taught — and mapped irregulars like *they*, *said*, *who* — should not stay invented forever (Moats).
2. **“Friday quiz will motivate them.”**
Quiz without study is sport. Dictation with teaching is instruction.
3. **“Spell-check will handle it.”**
Assistive later. Tools miss many LD misspellings. Spell-check is not a curriculum.
4. **“Fifty words this week.”**
Depth over scatter. Five deep words with cumulative return beat a giant list once.
5. **“Encoding is optional busywork.”**
Same map as reading. Non-negotiable in Structured Literacy.
6. **“If they can read it, spelling doesn’t matter.”**
Spelling often lags and still needs explicit teaching; IDA materials note spelling among severe persistent challenges.
7. **“Just type everything and never study spelling.”**
Keyboarding helps transcription fluency. Spelling sits still happen.
8. **“Shame them into caring.”**
Never. Correct the pattern; protect the person. “Yell try harder” is not this book’s rule; “never correct” is not either.

Heart parts

Truly irregular bits get a heart mark, a careful underline, or another consistent cue — while expected parts still sound out. In *said*, /s/ and /d/ behave; the middle is the heart. Students should explain which part is heart and which parts follow the map. Mapping irregulars is teaching, not logo memorization and not surrender.

How encoding reveals reading holes

Oral reading with picture support can fake security. Dictation removes the picture and the first-letter grab. If the student cannot encode today's pattern, do not rush new decoding patterns. Diagnostic teaching means the miss drives review. That is Structured Literacy, not stubbornness.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Dictate to yourself three words from tomorrow's list. Stretch, write, read back. Mark heart parts. Practice the repair sentence: "You invented a smart try. This word is one we now hold to the correct spelling." Practice waiting before you grab the pencil for them.

Connecting to Chapters 1–3

Chapter 1 refused laziness and wait-to-fail — spelling difficulty is skill, not character. Chapter 2 gave stretch-and-segment with letters. Chapter 3 put the same graphemes into left-to-right reading. Chapter 4 closes the loop with the hand. If PA or decoding is still chaotic, keep those crumbs alive; encoding will not magically stabilize a map that was never taught.

How to teach it this week

Encoding sit (often fused with phonics)

1. Oral say → tap/segment → write → read back.

2. Word chains (change one sound).
3. Sentence dictation with today's pattern + two review words.
4. Error analysis: which sound was missed? Position? Rule? Heart part?

This week's honest plan

- **Focus:** Same pattern as this week's decode focus — encode it toward automaticity.
- **Dose:** About 10–15 minutes encoding most literacy days (inside or beside the phonics sit); four or five days.
- **In-home:** Dictation race against yesterday's self (accuracy over speed); error hospital.
- **Out-of-home:** Postcard/email with two taught patterns; label spelling notice without public shame.
- **Friday:** Five deep words + one sentence; student reads back; misses logged for Monday.

Exact wording you can say

- “Say the word. Stretch it. What do you hear first?”
- “Spelling is not a Friday quiz sport. It's how we glue the word in memory.”
- “Spell-check can help later. Today we learn the pattern.”
- “You invented a smart try. This word is one we now hold to the correct spelling.”
- “We'll study five words deeply, not fifty words once.”
- “Read what you wrote. Does it match your mouth?”

- “Pattern we studied, or a mapped heart part?”
- “Where did the error live — beginning, vowel, ending?”
- “I’m going to wait while you stretch. I won’t grab the pencil at one second.”

Skill-band moves

Bands 1–3. Pattern dictation tied to phonics: CVC, digraphs, blends, silent-e, early vowel teams. Sound boxes on the path to paper. High-frequency irregulars mapped with heart parts. Sentence dictation stays short. If letter formation exhausts working memory, encode with tiles first, then copy the built word — still encoding, not avoidance forever. Keep cumulative review of last week’s spellings on Thursday.

Bands 4–6. Syllable spelling; r-controlled; vowel teams; early morphology spelling (*-ed* sound variations with stable spelling; plurals; *un-*, *-ful*). Multi-syllabic dictation: one syllable at a time, then the whole word. Error hospital becomes more precise. Academic words begin to appear — choose teachable ones.

Bands 7–8. Academic morphology spelling; content words from real text chosen for teachability; schwa honesty in unstressed syllables; continue cumulative review of older patterns that still break in writing under load. Respectful materials; no primary clip-art vibe if it threatens dignity.

Bands 9–12. Morphological depth continues; spell-check literacy (human + tool): student studies patterns, then may use tools on longer drafts after instruction — never “the tool wrote it, so we’re done.” Application essays and lab reports use Chapter 8 adaptations while spelling sits continue for named targets. Age does not retire the map.

Sample week (vowel team *oa* encode)

Mon: Review decode *oa*; encode five (*boat, coat, road, soap, loaf*); read back.

Tue: Word chain including *oa* and knowns; one sentence dictation.

Wed: Mix *oa* / *o_e* / *closed o* encodings; error hospital on misses.

Thu: Postcard or email sentence must include two *oa* words; cumulative two review words from last week.

Fri: Five deep words + sentence; compare clean count to Monday; plan Monday reteach.

Older morphology-spelling illustration

Mon: Teach *struct* family spellings (*construct*, *structure*) with meaning.

Tue: Encode two; read in a sentence from science notes (access lane separate if needed).

Wed: Contrast related forms; note spelling changes.

Thu: Error hospital.

Fri: Student explains one spelling choice to you.

Fade help and when to stop talking

Segment with them at first. Fade to student-only stretch. If they stall on a sound, give the phoneme, not the whole spelling. For heart parts, remind which chunk is heart — do not spell the entire word for them every time. When three clean encodings land, stop. Protect success. Do not “just do ten more” into tears.

First try-it for the student

Three words. For each: say, stretch, first sound, write all graphemes, read back.

Practice that actually builds learning

Try-it — in home: Dictation race against yesterday’s self

- **Time:** 8–10 minutes.
- **Materials:** Yesterday’s five words; pencil; notebook.
- **Safety:** Accuracy over speed; no sibling race; compare to self only.
- **The fun:** Beat-your-yesterday without shame — count clean words; optional gentle timer only after accuracy is solid.

- **The skill:** Retrieval plus encoding automaticity.

Dictate in a new order. Student stretches and writes. Check against the model. Graph clean counts across days in the Reading / Language Arts / English notebook.

Try-it — in home: Error hospital (three misspellings diagnosed)

- **Time:** 8 minutes.
- **Materials:** Three misspellings; notebook columns: word / what I wrote / where it broke / Monday move.
- **Safety:** Misses are information, not identity.
- **The fun:** Detective role.
- **The skill:** Diagnostic teaching.

Student helps classify: beginning consonant, vowel grapheme, digraph identity, ending, heart part, syllable omission, suffix. Choose Monday's first three review items from this page.

Try-it — in home: Word chains on paper

- **Time:** 6 minutes.
- **Materials:** Chain list; paper.
- **Safety:** Short chains; accuracy first.
- **The fun:** Puzzle steps.
- **The skill:** Phoneme substitution plus grapheme choice.

Change one sound each step; write each new word; read back.

Try-it — in home: Sentence dictation

- **Time:** 8 minutes.
- **Materials:** One sentence with two or three focus words plus knowns.
- **Safety:** Repeat the sentence as needed; allow a quick sketch to hold meaning.
- **The fun:** Making a real sentence appear.
- **The skill:** Encoding inside syntax.

Student reads back the whole sentence. Fix focus words first. Choose only one mechanics target beyond spelling if needed.

Try-it — out of home: Postcard / email with two taught patterns

- **Time:** 15 minutes.
- **Materials:** Postcard or email draft; consent about audience.
- **Safety:** Student chooses audience; no forced public exposure of struggle.
- **The fun:** Real message in the world.
- **The skill:** Encode taught patterns in authentic writing.

Stem: “This week I practiced ____ and . **Here is a sentence:** .” Adult may scribe non-target words; student owns the two pattern spellings.

Try-it — out of home: Label spelling notice

- **Time:** 3 minutes.
- **Materials:** Pantry or calm store label.
- **Safety:** Soft voice; consent; aisle courtesy; no public quiz; no nutrition sermon.

- **The fun:** Spy a known pattern.
- **The skill:** Notice taught graphemes in wild print; optionally write the word at home after.

Try-it — out of home: Library craft — spell a title word

- **Time:** 5 minutes.
- **Safety:** Soft voices; no shaming in the aisle.
- **The fun:** Secret mission.
- **The skill:** Stretch and spell one spine word, or copy carefully then explain the pattern.

Talk box

Opening (locked):

“Say the word. Stretch it. What do you hear first?”

Follow-ups:

1. Which letters spell that sound in this word?
2. Pattern we studied, or a mapped heart part?
3. Read what you wrote — does it match your mouth?
4. Where did the error live — beginning, vowel, ending?
5. Check: can you read your spelling back accurately?

How to wait: After “stretch,” give time. Do not grab the pencil. Slow three (classroom think-time convention — useful pause, not a literacy RCT). Wait again after they stop. Eyes on the page, not a glare. Protect the try.

Stuck silence usually means: vague word; wait-time zero; hunting how it “looks”; word outside today’s code; shame from past red-ink storms; thinking writing means fill a blank with no stretch; flooded by too many words; wanting a picture cue. Return to first sound only. Use boxes. Cut the list.

Blocked vs mixed

Blocked: Five *oa* words only after teaching *oa*.

Mixed: After clean days, mix *oa* with *o_e* and closed *o* so choice is required.

Incorrect example to diagnose: Student writes *sed* for *said* forever with a shrug.

Move: map the heart part; hold to correct spelling; read back; put it in cumulative review — not endless invention.

For the student

Spelling is how you glue words into memory with your ear and your hand. You say the word, stretch the sounds, write the letters that fit the map, and read it back to check. It is not a Friday humiliation contest. It is practice — the same map as reading.

You can be a strong thinker and still need spelling practice. Both can be true. Slow and accurate is allowed. Spell-check can help later on long writing. It does not replace today's five deep words.

Tiny worked example.

Word: *boat*.

Stretch: /b/ /ō/ /t/.

First sound /b/ → *b*.

/ō/ → *oa* (pattern we studied).

/t/ → *t*.

Write *boat*. Read back: *boat*. Check matches mouth.

Try 1. Three words: stretch, write, read back.

Try 2. Build a two-step chain on paper. Change one sound. Write both words.

Explain it back. Why do we read back what we wrote?

Challenge. Send a postcard or email that uses two words from this week's pattern. You may get help with the rest of the message — you own those two spellings.

Band notes for you

Early skill: Boxes and short words; proud accuracy; heart parts marked on tricky high-frequency words.

Middle skill: Syllables and endings; explain why you chose those letters.

Older skill: Academic words and word parts; use spell-check *after* you study, not instead of study. No baby talk required. This is craft.

You may change your mind when read-back disagrees with your mouth. Wrong answers help Monday's plan. You are not lazy. You are mapping.

If it isn't clicking**Diagnostic 1 — Invented spelling stuck on taught words**

Hear: Pattern taught Monday; invention still used Friday with a shrug.

Move: Hold taught patterns to correct forms; shrink the list; increase read-back; cumulative review daily.

Diagnostic 2 — Vowel grapheme chaos

Hear: Random vowel letters; mouth has the right sound, hand does not.

Move: Return to phonics contrasts; encode minimal pairs; one vowel pattern per week; clear mouth model.

Diagnostic 3 — Spell-check dependence without study

Hear: "The computer will fix it" during the spelling sit.

Move: Separate lanes — spelling sit unaided for targets; spell-check allowed on longer drafts after instruction.

Diagnostic 4 — Too many words, no mastery

Hear: Fifty-word list, low accuracy, high tears.

Move: Cut to five deep; race yesterday's self; quit the giant list.

Diagnostic 5 — Handwriting blocks encoding

Hear: Hand fatigue; letter formation steals all attention.

Move: Tiles or keyboard for the encoding sit temporarily; still segment and choose graphemes; short handwriting block separate; Chapter 8 adaptations for composition.

Diagnostic 6 — Shame flood from past red ink

Hear: Refusal to write; “I’m stupid at spelling.”

Move: Hard/working card (Chapter 1); three guaranteed clean words first; one target only; never joke about spelling.

When to slow down, go ahead, or seek help

Slow down if accuracy is fake. Go ahead to new patterns when five deep words are clean and stable in review. Seek evaluation conversation when spelling difficulty is unexpected, persistent after systematic teaching, and interfering — spelling is core, not vanity. Not medical or legal advice. Keep teaching the map. Specialist content can travel home even when you are not the specialist title named in school guides.

Tools, including AI

Keep this short. Point back to **The English hour**.

You may (parent account): generate isomorphic dictation lists with the **PARENT KEY** held by you; ask a tool to explain a spelling generalization *to you*; draft a **SCRIPT** for repair language after the student tries; schedule spelling sit separate from composition dictation time.

You may not: let a chatbot spell the words during the child’s attempt; photo a worksheet for answers; ask the tool to “just write the sentence”; use dictation software to produce today’s encoding targets and call them the child’s unaided work; detector-grade writing; invent cure claims.

Under 13: parent holds the account; no child open-chat partner. Older students: still attempt first on instructional targets. Bastani et al. 2025 remains **OFF-AGE for literacy** — unguarded help can inflate practice and hurt real learning.⁶⁷ Kitchen rule: tools prepare the adult; the student stretches and writes.

Speech-to-text and spell-check are **access / drafting supports** in the composition lane. They are not this chapter's spelling curriculum.

What “done enough” looks like

- ☐ Encoding loop used: say → stretch → write → read back.
- ☐ Five deep words beat fifty shallow ones this week.
- ☐ Sentence dictation happened at least twice.
- ☐ Error hospital classified misses for Monday.
- ☐ Heart parts mapped for irregulars in the list.
- ☐ Spell-check not treated as the curriculum.
- ☐ Band-appropriate syllable/morphology expectations held by skill.
- ☐ In-home and out-of-home try-its both attempted.
- ☐ Talk-box opening used without shame.
- ☐ Cumulative review included last week's spellings.
- ☐ Ready for fluency after accuracy (Chapter 5) on text they can already decode — while spelling review continues in cumulative minutes.

⁶⁷Bastani et al., *PNAS* 2025 — OFF-AGE for literacy.

Extended band guidance — encoding and spelling

Bands 1–3. Tiny lists tied to phonics; boxes; celebrate read-back; tiles-then-copy if handwriting exhausts; postcards with two owned spellings.

Bands 4–6. Syllable and early morph spelling; weekly error hospital; access tools for long content writing do not cancel the sit.

Bands 7–8. Morphology-heavy spelling; schwa named; dignity materials; cumulative review under academic load.

Bands 9–12. Spell-check literacy after study; adaptations for long pieces; continued targets; never too old for maps.

Done-enough narrative

You are done enough when Friday's five deep words are mostly clean, read-back is habitual, error hospital feeds Monday, and spell-check is not pretending to be the teacher. Life-of-the-habit: mix last week's spellings into Thursday; keep dictation short and frequent; stop at success. Place by skill, not birthday. Records titles: Reading / Language Arts / English — never a brand spelling level as the credit title. Next: Chapter 5 — fluency after accuracy.

Extended band guidance — encoding and spelling

Bands 1–3 in practice. At this band, the adult's voice carries more modeling, but the student's mouth and hand still do the work. Sessions stay short enough to protect joy and long enough to gather correct trials. Materials look like tiles, sound boxes, pencils, and controlled pages — not worksheets as the only diet. Out-of-home try-its stay gentle: one sign, one label, whisper voices. Listening comprehension may impress relatives; do not let that mask cancel the code sit. Cumulative review is sacred: known graphemes and spellings return before new ones. When fatigue hits, stop at success, not at tears. Tomorrow exists.

Bands 4–6 in practice. Texts suddenly demand more. Multisyllabic words expose gaps that early CVC success hid. Spelling may look worse than reading for a stretch — that is common and is why encoding sits beside decoding. Keep access tools for science and history chapters so knowledge does not starve, and keep a separate decode/encode list so intervention does not starve either. Morphology starts to pull weight: plural, past tense, *un-*, *-ful*, simple Latinate pieces. Still refuse first-syllable guessing and invented spelling forever on taught patterns. Street-sign

and package hunts can include longer words if you pre-choose one target grapheme. Identity talk matters: “You’re in harder print now — that is why we still practice the map.”

Bands 7–8 in practice. Silent reading can hide inaccurate decoding; silent writing can hide guessing at spellings. Ask for oral reading of short skill-matched passages and for spoken stretch-before-write weekly. Academic vocabulary loads working memory; teach a marking habit (vowel teams underlined, suffix boxed) without turning every page into graffiti. If ADHD co-occurs, plan initiation: materials out, first word already chosen, timer for the sit not for shame speed. If language difficulty co-occurs, simplify oral directions and keep examples concrete. Respect is non-negotiable: mature word lists, adult tone, no primary classroom clip art if it undermines dignity.

Bands 9–12 in practice. Age does not retire phonics or spelling maps. A senior who still misreads or misspells vowel teams deserves explicit teaching with academic payoffs — scholarship essays and lab words included — while TTS and dictation open volume reading and drafting in another lane. Self-advocacy scripts belong here: what to ask for on timed tasks, how to use spell-check without surrendering spelling study, how to schedule a twenty-minute code sit beside a heavy reading load. Never title the transcript “Dyslexic English I.” Keep Reading / English. Never confuse assistive technology with giving up. Intensive intervention remains warranted when skill shows need. Place by skill: if the probe says silent-e spelling is shaky, teach silent-e with mature sentences, not a lecture about birthday.

More named try-its for Chapter 4

Dinner table micro-try (in home, 3 minutes). Before plates clear, one word on a sticky note. Run the chapter’s locked opening question once. Everyone hears wait-time. No grading. Laughing is allowed; mocking is not.

Notebook carbon copy (in home, 5 minutes). Student rewrites yesterday’s three focus words from memory, then checks against the model. Mismatches go to error hospital. This is retrieval practice, not punishment.

Partner echo (in home, 4 minutes). Adult reads or says a controlled sentence accurately. Student echoes, then points under any word that would have been hard and decodes or encodes it explicitly. Builds accuracy before fluency games.

Walk-and-return (out of home, 8 minutes). On a neighborhood walk, choose

one printable word (sign, flyer you already own, park rule board). Decode or stretch-and-spell per chapter focus. Return home and write the word. Roads and consent first.

Library two-stack reminder (out of home, 10 minutes). Revisit Chapter 1's decode stack vs hear stack. Pull one controlled/skill-matched text for practice and one interest text for access. Both stacks remain smart.

Postcard / email with taught patterns (out of home-facing, 15 minutes). Student sends a two-sentence message that must include two words using this week's pattern. Adult may scribe the rest of the message if spelling load blocks communication — then student encodes the two target words personally.

Museum or hardware-store placard (out of home, 5 minutes). One word. Through the word or stretch-and-spell depending on chapter. No lectures to strangers. No blocking aisles.

Error hospital plus reteach slip (in home, Friday, 8 minutes). Three misses. For each: position of error, likely cause, Monday move. Student helps choose the Monday move. Ownership without shame.

Kitchen white-board sprint (in home, 4 minutes). Adult says three known pattern words; student writes large; read-back chorus; erase; smile; stop.

Dialogue bank — encoding sit

- “Say the word. Stretch it. What do you hear first?”
- “Which letters spell that sound in this word?”
- “Pattern we studied, or a mapped heart part?”
- “Read what you wrote — does it match your mouth?”
- “Where did the error live — beginning, vowel, ending?”
- “Five deep words — let's glue them.”
- “You invented a smart try; now we hold the correct spelling.”
- “Spell-check later; pattern now.”
- “I'm waiting. I won't grab the pencil at one second.”
- “Show me with boxes, then write.”

Additional diagnostic snapshots

Snapshot — the hovering pencil. Adult’s pencil lands on the answer before wait-time. Fix: sticky note on the table that says “slow three.” Adult pencil stays down until the student stops trying.

Snapshot — the weekend wipeout. Friday looked clean; Monday looks new. Fix: cumulative review is not optional; mix Thursday’s words into Monday’s first four items.

Snapshot — the praise leak. Adult says “Good job using the picture!” or “Close enough spelling.” Fix: replace with through-the-letters or stretch-and-map praise.

Snapshot — the marathon. One two-hour “catch up” session creates tears and refusal. Fix: return to 25–40 minute shaped sits; intensity is reps, not duration theater.

Snapshot — the comparison. Sibling or classmate speed becomes the metric. Fix: compare the student to yesterday’s self on the same pattern list.

Snapshot — the tool swap. TTS or dictation quietly replaces the instructional target. Fix: label lanes on the weekly plan — intervention hour vs content-access hour.

Snapshot — the franchise flip. Calendar says move on; accuracy says stay. Fix: diagnostic mastery over logo pacing.

Tools, including AI — expanded pointer

The full policy lives in **The English hour**. This chapter only needs the local application.

Allow: parent-facing explanations of today’s pattern; isomorphic practice lists with answer key held by parent; feedback SCRIPTs after the student tries; diagnosis of work already on paper (crop to paper, no face upload); parent-side schedule separating decode/encode targets from audio content and composition dictation.

Deny: paste-the-worksheet completion; write-the-essay; photo-to-key; unsupervised chatbot partner during the attempt; rewrite-on-demand of the decode/encode page that is today’s lesson; detector grading of student writing; invented cure claims; voice-clone “reading teacher.”

Ages: Under 13 — parent account, no child open-chat partner. Middle grades — parent in the room. High school — co-hold and integrity for assessments; still unaided first on code targets that remain the lesson.

Access tools: TTS, audio, and dictation can be civil supports for content and for composition load. They are not substitutes for the instructional target named in this chapter's sit. Wood and colleagues' TTS work is about compensation for access, not about replacing phonics or spelling study.⁶⁸

Bastani caution: unguarded chatbot practice in a high-school math trial inflated practice performance and hurt closed-window learning — OFF-AGE for literacy, not a dyslexia RCT — still a useful mechanism warning for kitchen rules.

Done-enough narrative

You are done enough with this chapter's focus when the Friday checklist is honest, the talk-box opening has been used without shame, at least one in-home and one out-of-home try-it happened, band placement is by skill, and tomorrow's plan is driven by today's errors rather than by a logo's calendar. Life-of-the-habit tips: keep cumulative review; mix last week's pattern into Thursday; stop while success is still true. Next: Chapter 5 — fluency after accuracy.

Place by skill, not birthday. Records titles a stranger can read: Reading / Language Arts / English. Never a brand. Never Dyslexic English I.

Moats in kitchen paragraphs (expanded)

Spelling supports reading because both depend on the same orthographic representations. If you only read and never encode, the map stays thinner. If you only quiz and never teach patterns, the quiz measures anxiety. Moats's practical word-study minutes are a reminder that spelling deserves scheduled time — not leftover scraps after everyone is tired. Morphophonological honesty means you will sometimes say, "This spelling shows the meaning family," not only "This spelling shows the sound." Both explanations are teaching.

About half of English words can be spelled from sound-symbol correspondences alone; roughly 84% are mostly predictable when larger patterns are included, in the classic estimates Moats cites from Hanna and colleagues. That leftover irregularity

⁶⁸Wood et al. 2018 — access compensation.

is real — hence heart parts — and it is not a reason to abandon patterns for the majority that can be taught.

Invented spelling — a careful boundary

Young writers invent spellings as they explore the code. That exploration is not the enemy. The enemy is leaving taught patterns in invent-forever status, or praising invention on *they/said/who* after mapping day, or using invention as a reason to skip dictation. Move students from invention to conventional spelling on what you have taught, with kindness and repetition.

Spell-check literacy for older bands

Teach students to: (1) attempt the word using the map; (2) mark uncertainty; (3) after the sit, use spell-check or a dictionary on longer drafts; (4) notice which errors the tool missed; (5) add missed patterns to next week's list. This is adult literacy behavior. It is not “cheating.” It is also not a substitute for step 1.

Dictation craft details

Speak naturally, then repeat once. Avoid exaggerated baby talk. For long sentences, chunk: dictate six words, wait, continue. Allow the student to sketch a quick meaning reminder. Require read-back of the whole sentence. Score focus words first. If handwriting collapses mid-sentence, finish focus words with tiles and copy once — still count as encoding practice for those targets.

Linking encoding errors to PA and phonics

If first-sound errors dominate, return to Chapter 2 identity. If blend errors show in spelling as omitted consonants (*plant* → *plat*), return to segment-with-boxes. If vowel-team errors dominate, return to Chapter 3 contrasts and encode minimal pairs. Encoding is a diagnostic window into the whole code system — use the window.

Sample word lists by band (illustrations — match to your phonics sequence)

Bands 1–3 short-a encode: map, mat, sad, sap, pan — then sentence: “Sam had a map.”

Digraph encode: ship, shop, fish, chop — watch one-sound digraph discipline in boxes.

Silent-e encode: kit/kite, hop/hope, cap/cape pairs written both ways with explanation.

Bands 4–6: market, garden, raincoat, unfinished — syllable by syllable then whole.

Morph early: plays, jumped, helpful, unfair — explain ending jobs.

Bands 7–12: construct, definition, photosynthesis pieces you have taught — never a cold fifty-list from a random textbook page without teaching.

Keep each day’s list at about five deep words plus review. Write the list in the notebook before the sit so you do not invent fifty words midstream out of anxiety.

Parent rehearsal — answering spelling myths

Relative: “Just use spell-check.” You: “We will — after we teach the pattern. Today’s five words are the lesson.”

Relative: “Spelling doesn’t matter anymore.” You: “It matters for reading memory and for being understood. We teach it without shame.”

Relative: “Quiz them harder.” You: “We dictate after study. Quizzes without teaching aren’t our method.”

Relative: “They’re creative — invented spelling is their voice.” You: “Voice stays in ideas. Taught patterns get conventional spellings.”

A two-week mastery arc (illustration)

Week A: Teach and encode pattern; Friday 4/5 clean.

Week B: Cumulative mix with prior patterns; new pattern only if Week A stable; Friday includes three Week A words.

If Week A was 2/5, there is no Week B new pattern — only repair. That is diagnostic teaching. Franchise calendars that ignore 2/5 are not in charge at your table.

Handwriting, keyboarding, and encoding — three lanes

Lane 1: encoding/spelling study (this chapter).

Lane 2: handwriting formation practice (short, separate if needed).

Lane 3: keyboarding fluency for composition (Chapter 8).

Collapsing all three into “just type the spelling test” hides whether the student can map sounds to graphemes. Keep Lane 1 visible even when Lanes 2–3 flex.

Emotional safety scripts during dictation

“This is practice, not a courtroom.”

“Three clean ones and we’re done.”

“Your worth isn’t the vowel.”

“We’ll fix the pattern — not you.”

If tears start, pause, water, shorter list, return. Intensity never means cruelty.

Cross-check with oral reading

After dictation, have the student read a controlled sentence containing the same words. If they read what they cannot spell, note the lag and keep encoding intensity. If they can neither read nor spell the pattern, return to Chapter 3 isolation with stronger PA support. The subjects are partners, not rivals.

What “automaticity” means for spelling

Correct once under perfect scaffolding is not automatic. Automatic means correct and easy enough across days, in mixed lists, and inside a sentence — so attention frees for meaning and composition. IDA’s mastery-to-automaticity language applies here.⁶⁹ Do not confuse a lucky Friday with done-enough.

Resources pointer without crowning

Kitchen spelling companions (All About Spelling, Logic of English, Barton spelling strands, and others) may supply sequences — fit, not rank. Copy any WWC school ratings honestly later in resources. Your job this week is the loop: say, stretch, write, read back.

⁶⁹IDA Effective Reading Instruction / KPS: mastery to automaticity frees attention for meaning.

Why read-back is non-negotiable

Students sometimes finish writing and look up for adult judgment. Train a different reflex: finger under what you wrote, voice reading it aloud, check against the mouth's original stretch. Many "spelling errors" are incomplete transcription the student can catch without you. That self-check is lifelong literacy. If read-back reveals a mismatch and they shrug, prompt: "What do you hear in the middle — does your writing show it?" Hand the repair back to them when possible.

Cumulative review menus for spelling

Build a small card box or notebook list of mastered spellings. Each Thursday, pull five old cards mixed with three new. If an old card fails twice, it returns to teaching status. This spiral is how automaticity happens. Skipping review to "cover more" creates the weekend wipeout snapshot.

Sentence dictation ideas that are not busywork

Use sentences that recycle science or family life without live controversy: "The boat can float on the lake." "We plant seeds in spring." "The magnet can pull the pin." Avoid culture-war content. Keep focus words underlined in your parent key. After writing, ask one meaning question so spelling serves communication.

When ADHD co-occurs during dictation

Initiation is often the cliff. Put paper and pencil in place before you speak the first word. Offer a movement break between word three and four. Keep the list visible as a checklist to tick. Do not interpret slow start as defiance. Do not abandon the sit either — shorten and shape.

When DLD risk co-occurs

Keep oral sentences shorter. Prefer concrete nouns. Provide a sketch box for meaning. Spelling targets remain; language load flexes. Co-occur $\neq$ identical — Chapter 1's care still holds. Seek language evaluation when concerns persist; not medical advice.

Encoding and morphology preview (Chapter 6 handshake)

Even before the full morphology chapter, bands 4+ can spell *un+kind*, *help+ful*, *play+ing* with meaning talk. Ask: “What does *un-* do?” then encode. This prevents treating every long word as an arbitrary letter string. Still sound through bases when needed — morphology aids, it does not replace phonemes.

A note on typing during the spelling sit

Typing can be the response mode if handwriting is the bottleneck — the student still stretches and chooses graphemes. What typing must not become is autocompleting the word while the student watches. Turn off aggressive autocorrect during the instructional sit if it steals the decision. Autocorrect can return in the composition lane later.

Home-life integration without public shame

Spell a grocery need on the family list (*soap*, *peas*) as practice. Write a sibling a one-line note with two pattern words. Label a bin at home. These are out-of-home-facing or life try-its with safety: no cashier quizzes, no forced performance for guests, consent about what is shared.

Parent fatigue is real — design for it

Pre-write the five words before the sit. Use the same talk-box opening every day so you are not inventing language while tired. Stop on time. Success ends the sit. A short clean sit teaches more than a long ragged one. You do not need to be a reading specialist title; you need the loop and the wait.

Final rehearsal before you leave Chapter 4

Say the locked opening aloud. Dictate one word to yourself. Stretch. Write. Read back. Mark a heart part on an irregular. Smile at the plainness of it. Tomorrow you will ask your student to do the same — and you will wait while they try.

Closing the first four chapters as one map

Chapters 1–4 are one story. Definition and refusals (1). Ear with letters (2). Left-to-right decoding (3). Hand encoding the same graphemes (4). Fluency, morphology, comprehension on accessible text, and writing adaptations come next — but they rest on this map. If you feel pressure to jump to “just read more chapter books,” return here. Volume without code teaching recreates secondary consequences. Access tools keep knowledge alive while you glue the map. Both/and.

You now have talk-box openings you can use without inventing language under stress. You have try-its in the kitchen and in the world. You have band moves that refuse birthday locks. You have AI pointers that keep the adult in charge. You have done-enough checklists that are not percentiles. That is enough to teach this week. Then teach again next week. Diagnostic, cumulative, without shame.

One more Friday ritual

End the week by letting the student teach *you* one spelling. They dictate a taught word; you stretch and write; they check your work with kindness. Role reversal makes the method visible and often lifts mood. Keep it to one or two words. Celebrate the teaching, not speed.

Then glance at next week: same pattern if shaky; new pattern if stable; always a cumulative mix. Put the date in the notebook. Title stays Reading, Language Arts, or English. The map is getting denser. That is the point.

Encoding sit — troubleshooting micro-table

What you see	Try this next
Omits ending sounds	Finger-count sounds before writing; exaggerate final sound once
Correct orally, wrong on paper	Slow the hand; boxes; say each sound as the letter is written
Reverses letter forms only	Separate handwriting lane; accept tiles for spelling decisions today
Freezes on irregulars	Heart-part card visible; sound the regular bits first

What you see	Try this next
Perfect on list, fails in sentence	More sentence dictation; reduce list size; hold meaning with sketch
Refuses to write	Three guaranteed wins; shorter session; dignity script from Chapter 1

Encouragement that stays specific

Do not say “You’re awesome” as the only feedback. Say “You held all three sounds in *ship* and chose *sh* as one sound.” Specific praise teaches the next try. Vague praise fades. Shame destroys. Correction with warmth builds the map.

What success looks like after two faithful weeks

The student reaches for stretch-before-write without a prompt. Read-back happens before they look at your face. Error hospital language shows up in their own mouth (“I missed the vowel team”). A postcard goes out with two owned pattern words. Shame talk is quieter. The hard/working card from Chapter 1 still has a code goal — and the goal is now a spelling pattern as often as a reading pattern. You, the parent, wait longer than you used to. You crown no vendor. You refuse spell-check-as-curriculum. You keep the notebook titled so a stranger could understand. That is Structured Literacy at a kitchen table. It is enough to continue. Take the five deep words. Stretch them. Write them. Read them back. Tomorrow’s review is already waiting in the error hospital — and that is not a failure. That is the work.

Reminder before Chapter 5

Fluency comes after accuracy. Do not race spelling or reading to look smooth. Glue the map first. When Chapter 5 asks which words you already know for sure, many of those words will be ones you encoded here until they were easy. That is the quiet victory of dictation: not a quiz score, but words that finally stay. Keep the pencil ready. Keep the wait ready. Keep shame out of the room. The map is worth the stretch.

This is a useful study, not a promise that every home will see the same result. Then teach.

Chapter 5



Figure 7: A short accurate page marked for a second oral reread — still-life, no people, no logos.

Fluency after accuracy

Why this matters

Which words do you already know for sure — and where should we slow down?

That question is the whole chapter in one line. It is not a stopwatch challenge. It is not a contest against a classmate on a screen. It is not a public performance for grandparents. It is a calm inventory of a short passage the student can already read accurately: which words are solid, which word still sticks — and whether a second and third oral reread with feedback can make the reading sound more like talking, in service of meaning.

Fluency after accuracy means: first get the words right; then reread those same words with modelling and feedback so recognition becomes automatic enough that attention can move toward phrasing and sense. Accuracy is the foundation. Rate and expression are what you build on top of a foundation that already holds. If you reverse the order — speed first, accuracy later — you train guessing dressed up as fluency.

The National Reading Panel found that guided repeated oral reading with feedback helped word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Programs that mainly encouraged large amounts of independent silent reading with little guidance did not meet the Panel's bar as causal fluency interventions — especially before alphabetic and word-reading skills are in place. Better readers often read more. That correlation is not your home program for a learner who still guesses from pictures or first letters. “Just read more” alone is refused here as the sole intervention for a code-limited reader. Wide reading can motivate. It does not teach the sticky word.

The Institute of Education Sciences foundational-skills guide asks for connected text every day with modelling, scaffolding, and feedback — accuracy and fluency so comprehension can happen. The evidence tier for that recommendation is **moderate**. Order still matters across the whole book: sounds and letters; decoding; encoding on the same map; daily connected text with feedback; as accuracy stabilizes, rate and expression improve. Leading with a stopwatch for a guessing reader trains guessing. Timing, if you use it at all, is brief and only on already-accurate material. It is never the identity of being a good reader.

What this idea unlocks for a dyslexic learner is **bandwidth**. When every word still costs full attention, vocabulary talk and story sense arrive as exhaustion. When

yesterday's accurate paragraph can be reread smooth and true, tomorrow's meaning questions have a place to land. Writing later needs a reader who can hear how a sentence should sound when it is read aloud. Content courses in middle and high school assume that print can be processed without burning the whole working-memory budget on each syllable. Fluency after accuracy is how you free that budget — honestly, without pretending a timer cured the code.

Two refusals belong in the same sitting as the invitation.

Stopwatch-first fluency is the wrong first move. Theatrical “expression” that sails past wrong words is the other wrong move. Independent silent reading alone is not the fluency program for a child who cannot yet decode well.⁷⁰ Rereading a known page with feedback is the object. Words-per-minute charts and commercial listening apps may become gentle progress checks later; they are not the soul of this week. Accelerated Reader points are not fluency and not comprehension — more on that honesty in Chapter 7; the short version here is that points are not proof the student understood, and they are not Structured Literacy.

Joseph Torgesen's honesty about older intensive remediation belongs on the kitchen table without cruelty. In reviewed school work with older students who received substantial intensive intervention, accuracy and comprehension often moved more readily than fluency gaps versus peers closed.⁷¹ Absolute rate can improve while a relative gap remains. Do not tell a dyslexic teen they “failed fluency” because a peer reads faster. Smooth and true on text they can decode is success. Peer-average words-per-minute is not the moral of the chapter. This is a useful finding pattern from school intervention literature, not a promise that every home will see the same result — and not a licence to stop teaching.

Intensity still matters underneath the crumb. Foorman and Torgesen described instruction for at-risk readers as more explicit, more intensive, and more supportive than typical classroom fare.⁷² Fluency after accuracy is one supportive move inside that intensity: short, frequent, feedback-rich rereads — not a once-a-month “read aloud night” that tries to carry the whole week.

⁷⁰NRP summary (2000): guided oral reading with feedback positive; independent silent reading alone not shown as causal fluency instruction especially before alphabetic skills are in place.

⁷¹Joseph K. Torgesen fluency-gap honesty for older intensive remediation (American Educator / related intervention reviews): absolute rate can improve while relative peer gap remains — useful school-intervention pattern, not a cruelty licence and not a promise every home matches clinic results.

⁷²Foorman and Torgesen 2001.

You do not need to be a reading specialist. You do need to pick a passage that is already accurate before any timing thought, and to ask where to slow down, without grabbing the page or finishing the sticky word for them.

This week you can learn to hear timing-a-guessing-reader, WPM-as-identity, skipping-hard-words-to-go-fast, audiobooks-as-the-whole-fluency-program, and Accelerated Reader points offered as fluency or comprehension as five different misses. Today the student can reread one short accurate page with feedback and name one sticky word — then decode it, then reread.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults remember timed reading as the main fluency memory from school. That memory is incomplete. Accuracy, rate, and expression work together — and accuracy comes first. Five minutes of this section, then the warm-up, is enough for tomorrow. The student still reads aloud. You are not preparing a lecture titled *Prosody*. You are preparing to hear.

Everyday picture. A short paragraph the student decoded yesterday with only one sticky word. You read it once, smooth and ordinary — not theatrical. They read it aloud. You note the sticky word, look at the letters together, they reread the sentence. Tomorrow they read the same paragraph again. It sounds more like talking. A timer sits in a drawer. Another ordinary picture: a learner guessing through a hard page while someone calls time. Speed rose. Reading did not. A third ordinary picture: headphones on for a novel the student loves, and beside them a separate controlled page for oral reread. Two lanes. Both good. Neither replaces the other.

Precise picture. Four ideas sit under “fluency after accuracy,” and they are not the same.

Accuracy first. Choose text the student can already read with a high degree of accuracy — the condition while fluency builds. If they are guessing from pictures or first letters, return to Chapters 2–4. Fluency practice on inaccurate reading practices the wrong thing. “Almost” accurate is not enough if the misses are the content words that carry the meaning.

Guided repeated oral reading with feedback. Adult models once. Student reads aloud. Brief feedback on missed words: look at the letters; decode; student rereads

the sentence. Optional: same passage tomorrow and the day after. That is the National Reading Panel object — not a race, not silent minutes alone as the intervention, not a sibling contest.

Prosody in service of meaning. Does it sound like talking? Does the voice match what the sentence means? Expression without accuracy is a performance. Accuracy without any phrasing can still be a stage — then nudge toward natural speech on the second read. Phrase-pause marks (light slash where a breath would help) are a tool, not a calligraphy project. Commas and periods are clues; they are not the whole of phrasing.

Optional gentle rate check — never as identity. Only on known-accurate passages. Only after calm rereads. Only as information: “Yesterday this page took about two minutes with two sticky words. Today one sticky word.” Never: “You’re a 90.” Never cold timing of frustration text. Never a public race. Never a chart on the fridge that shames.

Write on a scrap: accurate → model → reread with feedback → sound like talking → (optional) gentle check. Circle *accurate*. That is the hinge.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *Timing a guessing reader.* Errors and picture guesses under a stopwatch. Hear the category error. Put the timer away. Fix accuracy first — Chapters 3 and 4 if needed. Say: “We only time what we already own — and we may not time at all.”
2. *Words-per-minute as identity.* “I’m a 90” or “I’m slow” or “I’m not a real reader until I hit X.” Hear the label. Ask which words were sure and which were sticky. The person is not a number. Torgesen honesty sits here for older learners: relative gaps may linger even when absolute rate improves. Growth against yesterday’s self on known text is the only comparison this book invites.
3. *Skipping hard words to go fast.* “Just skip it and keep going — you’ll get the gist.” Hear the fluency theater. Decode the sticky word. Then reread the sentence. Speed that orphans accuracy is not the object. Gist after accurate reading can be thinking; gist instead of reading the words is not word reading.
4. *Accelerated Reader points as fluency or comprehension.* Points and quizzes can motivate some readers in some school settings. A What Works Clear-

inghouse adolescent report found **no discernible** effects on fluency or comprehension in the rated domains for that product — labelled school/vendor, not a kitchen RCT.⁷³ Points are not proof the student understood, and they are not Structured Literacy fluency work. If a co-op uses points, keep your kitchen definition separate.

5. *Audiobooks as the fluency program.* Audio builds language and keeps knowledge growing. That is Chapter 7's access lane, and it is civil. It does not replace oral rereading of text the student can decode. Two lanes. Label them. "They listened for an hour" is not "they did fluency after accuracy."

A sixth you will also hear: they are accurate and slow, and someone starts a speed game before the second calm reread. Slow accurate is information. Add modelling and rereads first; only later, if at all, a brief timing check on the same accurate passage.

A seventh, quieter miss: *fluency before the code is taught*. A family abandons phonics and encoding because "we need to work on fluency for the state test." Hear the order error. Return to the code sit. Fluency crumb follows accuracy on known patterns.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Do this before the lesson, with a short familiar paragraph, no student in the room.

Minute 1. Read the paragraph aloud yourself, smooth and ordinary. Feel "model," not "perform." Notice where you naturally pause.

Minute 2. Mark one word that might stick for your student. Decide the feedback: look through the letters; say the sounds; blend; they reread the sentence — not a lecture about trying harder.

Minute 3. Imagine starting a timer while they guess. Decide what "Which words do you already know for sure — and where should we slow down?" does instead. Say it out loud once to the empty chair.

Minute 4. Put any timer to the side of the table in your mind — present as optional later, not hovering on the page. Decide whether today needs a timer at all (default: no).

⁷³WWC, *Accelerated Reader* (Adolescent Literacy, August 2010): no discernible effects on fluency/comprehension in rated domains — school/vendor labelled.

Minute 5. Write the sentence you will actually say: “Which words do you already know for sure — and where should we slow down?” Under it, write one meaning question you will ask after the third read. Put the pencil down. That pair of sentences is the lesson.

If you can do those five minutes, you are ready to sit down. The student reads. You hear.

How to teach it this week

A good English hour this week has a shape. The English-hour chapter in the front of this book is the full version. Here is the shape scaled to fluency after accuracy. Fluency is usually a **crumb** after accuracy work — five to ten minutes — not the whole hour for most bands. Code repair still owns the center of the sit when skill shows need. You are not replacing phonics week with “fluency week.” You are adding the right crumb in the right order.

Cumulative review (3–5 minutes). Two or three words from yesterday’s sticky list, read accurately in isolation. Already-right material. No new hard book as the warm-up. If a “known” word fails, it returns to the code sit — it does not stay in the fluency crumb as a mystery.

Code sit if needed (as usual from Chapters 3–4). Phonics and encoding. Do not skip repair because you are “doing fluency this week.” Fluency sits on top of accuracy. For older bands, a morphology crumb (Chapter 6) may unlock a sticky multisyllabic word before the reread.

Connected accuracy read (6–10 minutes). Today’s paragraph or page — controlled, practiced, or carefully chosen so accuracy is high. Finger under the word. Look through. Blend. Log sticky words in the dated notebook.

Fluency crumb (5–10 minutes). You model once. Student rereads two or three times with decode-not-guess feedback. One meaning question after, so speed never orphans sense. Optional phrase-pause marks on the second read.

Exit ticket (2–4 minutes). One sticky word decoded cleanly; or the same short paragraph read once more smooth and true; student names where they slowed down. Optional: one line in the notebook comparing today’s feel to yesterday’s — not a public WPM chart.

Exact wording you can say

- “We only reread for fluency after the words are right.”
- “Which words do you already know for sure — and where should we slow down?”
- “A timer is a tool some days. It is not your score as a person.”
- “Skipping hard words to go fast is not allowed in this hour.”
- “Audio books build language. They do not replace decoding practice.”
- “Smooth and true — not fastest in the room.”
- “Wrong isn’t shame. Wrong is information for tomorrow’s review.”
- “We’ll talk about the book you heard while we still build the code for pages you’ll read yourself.”

First try-it for the student (in-home, today). Accuracy-then-reread. Time: about twelve minutes. Materials: one short paragraph already accurate yesterday or just now; pencil for light phrase marks if useful; optional timer in a drawer. Safety: ordinary table courtesy; no public race; no sibling commentary unless invited. The fun: hearing themselves sound more like talking on the third read. The skill: accuracy inventory → decode sticky words → reread with feedback → one meaning answer.

How to fade help. First reread: you may echo-read a phrase if shame is flooding — then hand it back. Second reread: finger under sticky words only; wait. Third reread: student leads; you only stop for a true miss. Do not fade into silence while they guess from context to “look fluent.” Do not fade by finishing every hard word for them so the recording sounds pretty.

When to stop talking. After you ask the locked opening, wait. After they name a sticky word, look at the letters — not at their face if the silence is hard. Do not narrate worry. Do not finish the word. Correct a miss without crushing the try: “Look at that vowel team — what sound?” Then hand the sentence back. If they are mid-blend or mid-reread, do not cut them off.

Skill-band moves

Bands 1–3. Reread known controlled text — the same decodable or carefully controlled paragraph, not a leveled book that invites guessing from pictures. Keep passages short: a few sentences can be enough. Prosody nudge: “Read it like you’re telling me.” No cold timing. Phrase marks optional with a slash between sense groups. One meaning question: “Who did what?” or “What happened first?”

Cumulative review includes yesterday's sticky high-frequency words mapped as heart words when needed — still read accurately before any reread game.

Bands 4–6. Widen to practiced paragraphs from content the student has already decoded accurately, or from controlled multisyllabic text. Still refuse frustration-text races. Begin light phrase awareness on longer sentences. Optional gentle rate note only on a page they already own — against yesterday's self. Morphology from Chapter 6 can unlock sticky multisyllabic words before the reread: strip the affix, read the base, put it back, then smooth the line. Partner echo-read is fine; partner competition is not.

Bands 7–8. Smooth-and-true on accessible academic paragraphs — science or history text the student can decode with support, or a practiced page from the week's code/morphology sit. Separate the access lane (heard text for knowledge) from the fluency lane (oral reread of printable accurate text). Shame about peer rate is common here; name Torgesen honesty once without cruelty: we measure growth against yesterday's self on known text, not against the fastest kid in a co-op. Annotation for meaning (Chapter 7) comes after the words are true — do not ask for deep inference on a page they still cannot decode.

Bands 9–12. Same order lock with mature materials. Fluency work on known-accurate academic paragraphs; content listening for heavier loads. Do not retire decoding because the student is sixteen. Do not use college-board timing culture as the fluency lesson. Optional timing remains secondary. Prosody serves argument and explanation — “Where would a reader need a pause so the claim is clear?” Seminar-light discussion of a heard chapter is allowed; calling that “fluency practice” is not. Keep the decode-and-reread sit visible on the week's plan.

Placement reminder. Place by skill, not birthday. A fourteen-year-old still on early controlled text gets mature wording and respectful materials — not baby animals on every page — and still rereads after accuracy. A nine-year-old who is already accurate on longer practiced paragraphs may widen earlier. Skill leads.

This-week sketch (illustration, not a statute). Monday: accuracy read + model + two rereads. Tuesday: same paragraph + phrase marks + meaning question. Wednesday: new accurate paragraph from the week's pattern + reread. Thursday: mix two known paragraphs. Friday: student chooses which known page to “perform” smooth and true for one listener; exit ticket names one sticky fixed this week. Out-of-home: library two-lanes or street-sign smooth-and-true once.

Practice that actually builds learning

Practice that builds fluency after accuracy looks like repeated oral reading of known text with feedback — in the kitchen and, carefully, out in the world. Library time and audiobooks motivate. They do not replace the Structured Literacy sit. A walk with a street sign is print practice. It is not a sermon about a city.

In-home try-it: Accuracy-then-reread

Time: 10–15 minutes.

Materials: One short paragraph already accurate (yesterday’s exit or today’s connected read); pencil; dated notebook.

Safety: Ordinary; no sibling audience unless the student wants one; no recording posted online without clear family consent and the student’s yes.

The fun: Hearing the third read sound like talk.

The skill: Inventory known words; decode sticky ones; reread; answer one meaning question.

Steps: (1) Student skims and marks or names words they know for sure. (2) You ask the locked opening. (3) Decode sticky words left to right — look through, blend, fix. (4) You model once, ordinary and clear. (5) Student reads aloud twice more with brief feedback on any miss. (6) One meaning question. (7) Note one growth line in the notebook: “Third read smoother; one sticky fixed.” Optional timer only if the page was already accurate and the student is ready — compare to yesterday’s self, not to a chart of strangers.

In-home try-it: Phrase-pause mark

Time: 8–12 minutes.

Materials: Known-accurate paragraph; pencil.

Safety: Ordinary.

The fun: Making the page “breathe” like speech.

The skill: Prosody for meaning after accuracy.

Student (or you, then they copy) puts a light slash where a natural pause would help sense — not after every word. Student reads with the pauses. Check: “Did the pause help the meaning, or did it chop a phrase that belongs together?” Revise one slash. Read again. This is not a grammar diagram. It is speech on the page.

For older bands, add one question: “Where would a listener need a pause so the claim stays clear?”

In-home try-it: Echo then lead

Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Known-accurate paragraph.

Safety: Ordinary; keep volume kind.

The fun: Trading the lead like a duet.

The skill: Model internalization without dependency forever.

You read a sentence; they echo. Next sentence: they lead; you only catch misses. Next day: they lead the whole paragraph; you are the safety net, not the star. Fade the echo as shame drops and accuracy holds.

Out-of-home try-it: Library — two lanes labelled

Time: 20–30 minutes at the library.

Materials: Library card; one book for listening or shared reading at language level; one short controlled or practiced text for oral reread (brought from home if the shelves lack controlled text).

Safety: Aisle courtesy; quiet voices; no quizzing strangers; no photographing other patrons; headphones volume considerate.

The fun: A good story by ear *and* a short decode page that is theirs.

The skill: Label access versus fluency practice.

At the library: hear or share-read a chunk for meaning (Chapter 7 grain). Then sit with the controlled page and run accuracy-then-reread. Say out loud once: “This book feeds my brain. This page trains my reading.” Do not pretend the audiobook finished today’s decoding. Libby/OverDrive and similar library audio are access tools — useful, not a franchise crown.

Out-of-home try-it: Street-sign smooth-and-true

Time: 5 minutes on a walk.

Materials: None beyond a readable street or store sign.

Safety: Sidewalks, crosswalks, no stepping into traffic; no lecturing a cashier; no shaming the student in public; the sign is print, not a city sermon.

The fun: Owning a real-world line.

The skill: Decode through the word, then say it like a person giving directions.

Student looks through the whole sign word. No first-letter grab. Decode. Then say it again smooth and true. One follow-up: “Where would you slow down if this word were new?” If the sign is too hard, choose a shorter label on a package at home later — same skill, lower stakes.

Out-of-home try-it: Museum placard through the word

Time: 5–8 minutes inside a visit.

Materials: One placard sentence.

Safety: Museum rules; quiet voice; no blocking others; no touching objects.

The fun: Being the person who actually reads the label.

The skill: Accuracy then meaning — not photo-guess from the exhibit.

Student reads one sentence through the word. Fix sticky words. Reread smooth and true. Then: “What should a reader remember?” If the placard is far above decoding, you read it for access, and later at home they reread a controlled sentence on the same topic. Two lanes again.

Talk box

Exact opening question (locked):

“Which words do you already know for sure — and where should we slow down?”

Follow-ups (use three to five across the week, not all at once):

1. *Meaning:* “Read this the way it would sound if you were telling me.”
2. *Representation:* “Put your finger under the sticky word — say the sounds, then blend.” Or: “Mark a phrase pause with a slash.”
3. *Type / evidence:* “Which words slowed you down — decode those first, then reread.”
4. *Check:* “After the third read, can you answer one meaning question?” / “Does that match the letters you just fixed?”

5. *Revise*: “You may change where you pause when the meaning says so.” / “Try that sentence another way — smooth and true.”

How to wait. After you ask, count a slow three silently (Stahl’s think-time is classroom-origin guidance for pause, not a literacy RCT; Rowe’s wait-time work was science class — do not mash them as a literacy trial).⁷⁴ After they stop, wait again. If they are mid-reread, do not cut them off. Look at the page, not at their face, if the silence is hard. For dyslexic learners, wait is often longer than anxiety wants — protect the try.

What a stuck silence usually means. The question was vague; wait-time was zero; they are hunting a picture cue; they think fluency means “go fast”; they are flooded with shame from past speed contests; the passage was never accurate; they offered a first-letter grab and froze when you asked for letters; they need a shorter page. Pose, wait, point back at the print. Do not fill the silence with the right word. Do not turn the table into a fight.

Blocked, then mixed

Blocked (new move): Same short paragraph across two or three days — model, reread, sticky-word decode, meaning question. Mastery on one page beats a new hard book every day. Blocked practice here means one text owned deeply, not twenty worksheets.

Mixed (when the move is familiar): Alternate two known paragraphs; or mix a phrase-pause page with a smooth-and-true reread; or add one new accurate sentence into yesterday’s paragraph. Mixing too early invites guessing. Mixing after accuracy builds flexible fluency — the student learns that “smooth and true” travels to new owned pages, not only to one memorized paragraph.

One incorrect example to diagnose

Illustration (not a real child; not a diagnosis): A parent starts a timer on a cold science page the student has never decoded. The student skips three multisyllabic words, finishes “fast,” and the parent writes a WPM score on the fridge.

Diagnosis: Stopwatch-first on frustration text; skipping hard words; WPM-as-identity.

⁷⁴Stahl 1994; Rowe 1972 — classroom-origin wait/think-time.

Next move: Put the timer away. Choose a known-accurate paragraph. Ask the locked opening. Decode sticky words. Model. Reread. One meaning question. Optional gentle check only later, on that same accurate page, against yesterday's self — if at all. Take the fridge chart down.

For the student

You already know how to look through a word and blend. This chapter is about what happens **after** the words are right.

Fluency means your reading can sound more like talking — smooth and true — so your brain has room for what the sentences mean. It does not mean you have to be the fastest person in the room. It does not mean a timer owns you. It does not mean skipping hard words so a score looks better.

Tiny worked example.

Yesterday you read: *The cat sat on the mat and then ran to the van.*

One sticky word was *then* — you looked at *th* and *e* and *n*, blended, and got it.

Today you read the same sentence two more times. The second time it sounded like you were telling someone what happened. That is fluency after accuracy.

Try 1. Pick a short paragraph you can already read with almost no mistakes. Point to three words you know for sure. Point to one word that might slow you down. Decode the slow-down word. Read the paragraph aloud once.

Try 2. Have someone read it to you once, ordinary and clear — not silly. Then you read it twice. After the last read, answer: “What happened?” or “What should a reader remember?” in one sentence.

Explain it back. In your own words: What is the difference between going fast on hard words and reading smooth and true on words you already know?

Challenge. On a walk, find a street sign. Look through the whole word. Say it. Say it again like you're giving directions. No first-letter guess.

If you are in bands 4–6

Your paragraphs may be longer. Sticky words may be longer too. Take the word apart: prefix, base, suffix if you know those parts (Chapter 6). Then put it back

and reread the sentence smooth and true. You may mark a pause with a pencil slash where a breath helps the meaning.

If you are in bands 7–12

You are not “behind” as a person because a peer reads faster. Many older learners who get strong help improve accuracy and understanding more easily than they catch every peer on speed. That is information, not a verdict. Your job this week: own a paragraph you can decode, reread it until it sounds like you talking, and answer one meaning question. Audio for heavy content is allowed and smart. It does not replace your decode-and-reread practice. When someone offers points or a race as proof you “get it,” you can say: “I can tell you what this is mostly about — and show you the line.”

You may change your mind when the letters disagree with a first guess. Slow and accurate is allowed. You are not lazy.

If it isn’t clicking

Diagnostic 1: They “fluent-read” but miss words.

They sound fast. Accuracy is low. Picture or first-letter guesses. Prosody may even sound “expressive” while the words are wrong.

Next move: Stop timing. Return to accuracy on controlled text (Chapters 3–4). Only reread after sticky words are fixed. Say: “Smooth and true starts with true.” Log the error types — vowel teams, endings, multisyllabic — for tomorrow’s code sit.

Diagnostic 2: They are accurate and painfully slow, and shame is rising.

Every word is right; rate is low; someone (or their own memory) calls them slow. Tears or shutdown near any timer.

Next move: Protect dignity. Model. Reread the same short accurate text for several days. Phrase-pause marks. Measure against yesterday’s self only if you measure at all. Name once: growth in accuracy and understanding matters; peer-average speed is not the score of a person. If absolute rate stays very low after months of accurate rereads and strong code teaching, keep the rereads, keep the code, and consider specialist input — without cruelty. Torgesen honesty is for you and for them: gaps versus peers may linger; that does not erase real growth.

Diagnostic 3: They refuse rereads — “We already did that page.”

Boredom, or fear that rereading means they “failed” the first time.

Next move: Explain the object in one line: “Rereading a page you own is the practice — like practicing a piece of music you can already play.” Keep the page short. Offer a tiny choice: which of two known paragraphs today? Celebrate the third-read sound. Do not replace rereads with a new hard book every minute. Do not shame the refusal; rename the job.

When to slow down. New pattern still shaky; accuracy soft on the practice page; fatigue or tears; timer anxiety. Shorten the passage. End on a win. Put the timer away for a week.

When to go ahead. Sticky words rare; third read sounds like talk; meaning question easy. Widen the paragraph. Add phrase marks. Optional gentle check against yesterday. Mix two known pages.

When to reteach from the error log. Same vowel team or multisyllabic pattern fails across days — that is a code problem wearing a fluency mask. Fix the pattern in the phonics/encoding sit; then return to rereads. Fluency cannot glue a pattern that was never taught to mastery.

When to seek a human specialist or evaluation. Persistent, unexpected difficulty despite systematic teaching; rate and accuracy both stuck; secondary frustration affecting the whole day; you need documentation for a plan. This book does not diagnose. Evaluation is a door, not a verdict on worth. Not medical advice. Not legal advice.

Never correct the child is not this book’s rule. Yell try harder is not this book’s rule either. Correct the word. Protect the person.

More exact moves for the accuracy-then-reread crumb

Use this as a pocket card. Say the lines; do not lecture the research.

1. “Show me the words you already know for sure.” Wait.
2. “Where should we slow down?” Wait. Finger under that word.
3. “Say the sounds. Blend.” If wrong: “Look at this grapheme — what sound?” Hand it back.

4. “I’ll read it once the way it would sound if I were telling you.” Model. Stop.
5. “Your turn — smooth and true.” Feedback only on true misses.
6. “Again.”
7. “What is this mostly about in one sentence?” or “What should a reader remember?”
8. Notebook: one sticky fixed; one note on how the third read felt.

If step 3 fails twice on the same pattern, leave the fluency crumb. Open the code sit. Fluency cannot paper over an untaught or unmastered pattern.

What “connected text every day” means at home

Foorman Recommendation 4 asks for connected text daily with modelling and feedback.⁷⁵ At home that does not mean a new chapter book every night for a guessing reader. It means: every Structured Literacy hour includes reading connected words in sentences or paragraphs that use taught patterns — accurately — with an adult who can catch a miss. The fluency crumb is how some of those minutes sound more like talking after the words are right. Shared reading of a harder book by ear can happen the same day. Label the lanes.

Composite week scenes (illustrations, not reported families)

Scene A — bands 1–3. A parent and child sit with a six-sentence controlled paragraph about a van and a hill. Two sticky words appear on the cold accuracy read. They fix *hill* and *when*. The parent models. The child rereads twice. On the third read the child laughs because it “sounds like a story now.” No timer. Exit: child points to *when* and reads it clean.

Scene B — bands 4–6. A student decodes a practiced paragraph about a river habitat from the week’s science read-aloud companion page — rewritten with taught syllable patterns. One sticky multisyllabic word: *habitat*. They cover *-at*, read

⁷⁵Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Rec 4 **moderate**: connected text daily for accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

habit, put it back, blend. Phrase marks between “In the spring” and “the river rises.” Meaning question answered. Optional: parent notes “1:40 yesterday, 1:25 today” privately — never on the fridge.

Scene C — bands 9–12. A sixteen-year-old listens to a history chapter for content. Separately, they orally reread two practiced paragraphs from a morphology sit on *struct* words. They refuse a co-op’s public WPM contest. At home they answer: “Which words did I know for sure — and where did I slow down?” They slow down on *destruction*, strip it, reread smooth and true. Dignity held. Code not retired.

Linking Chapters 4, 6, and 7 without dumping them

Encoding (Chapter 4) and fluency share a truth: what you can read accurately you can often begin to spell; what you can spell you often read more quickly. Use a sticky fluency word as tomorrow’s dictation item. Morphology (Chapter 6) unlocks long sticky words so fluency rereads are possible on academic text. Comprehension (Chapter 7) needs the bandwidth fluency frees — and when print still bottlenecks, comprehension practice moves to accessible text by ear **while** the decode-and-reread sit continues. Do not collapse the three into “just read more.”

Parent self-check before you call the week “done”

Ask yourself, not the student, these yes/no questions on Friday:

- Did every fluency passage start accurate, or did I time cold hard text?
- Did sticky words get decoded, or skipped for speed?
- Did I model at least once most days we claimed a fluency crumb?
- Did a meaning question follow the reread, or did we stop at “sounded fast”?
- Did I keep access-by-ear labelled separately from decode-and-reread?
- If rate came up, did I compare to yesterday’s self — or to a peer, a chart, or a point system?
- Did shame enter the room? If yes, what will I change Monday — passage length, timer removal, or my wording?

If you answered against the locks on two or more lines, the week taught you something useful. Adjust. The student did not fail fluency. The plan needs a clearer order.

Materials that help — and materials that distract

Help: short controlled or practiced paragraphs; a pencil for phrase marks; a dated notebook; a quiet corner; optional timer in a drawer; headphones for the separate access lane.

Distract: a fridge WPM leaderboard; a new hard chapter book as the only “fluency” text; a points app as the definition of comprehension; a sibling audience the student did not choose; a chatbot voice “reading teacher”; colored overlays sold as the fluency fix.

Keep the table boring in the best way: print, voice, feedback, repeat.

Closing the loop with the student on Friday

Keep this under three minutes. You are not holding a tribunal.

“Which words did you already know for sure this week — and where did we slow down?”

Wait.

“Show me one sticky word we fixed.”

Wait. Finger under. Read it.

“Read this short owned paragraph smooth and true.”

One meaning question.

“What should we practice again Monday — a pattern, a longer sentence, or just another reread of a page you own?”

Write their answer in the notebook. That line is next week’s plan seed. Life of the habit for fluency is not a ninth chapter: it is cumulative review of owned pages, sticky words returned to the code sit, and dignity when rate gaps linger.

Why AR points and SSR-alone keep showing up — and what to do instead

Families hear two popular fluency stories.

The first: track points and quizzes, and fluency plus comprehension will follow. Points can motivate book selection for some students. They are not guided oral reading with feedback. A What Works Clearinghouse adolescent report on Accelerated Reader found **no discernible** effects on fluency or comprehension in the

rated domains — school/vendor labelled. If a program your family uses includes points, keep them in the motivation drawer. Do not let them define this chapter. Your kitchen proof is: accurate owned text, model, reread, meaning question.

The second: silent sustained reading alone will grow fluency if you just protect the minutes. Wide reading matters for vocabulary and knowledge when the student can decode enough to benefit — or when they listen. For a code-limited reader, SSR-alone as the intervention repeats the National Reading Panel caution.⁷⁶ Protect a Structured Literacy sit. Add pleasure reading and audio without pretending they finished the sticky word.

Do this instead of either story: accuracy inventory; decode; model; reread; meaning. Repeat on owned pages. Keep intensity kind and frequent. Keep dignity when a peer is faster.

Fluency across a month — without a 180-day dump

Week 1: Own one short paragraph. Accuracy-then-reread daily. No timer. Week 2: Add phrase-pause marks. Second owned paragraph. Mix at week's end. Week 3: Widen length slightly if accuracy holds. Optional gentle self-comparison once. Week 4: Student chooses an owned page to read smooth and true for one trusted listener. Notebook lists sticky patterns fixed. Code sit continues in parallel all four weeks.

If accuracy collapses in week 3, shrink back. Fluency is not a ladder you are not allowed to descend.

Feedback scripts you can use without shaming

- “I heard a sticky word there — finger under. Sounds, then blend.”
- “True — that matches the letters. Now the whole sentence smooth.”
- “You skipped one. We don’t skip to go fast. Let’s get it, then reread.”
- “That third read sounded like talking. What should a reader remember?”
- “Timers are optional tools. Today we don’t need one.”
- “Faster than yesterday on a page you own is information. Faster than a peer is not today’s job.”

⁷⁶NRP (2000): SSR-alone insufficient as causal fluency/intervention claim for code-limited readers.

When audio and fluency share a day

Morning: code sit + accuracy read + fluency crumb on controlled text. Afternoon: headphones + print for a novel or history chapter (access). Evening: optional — student rereads one short owned paragraph for a family member. Never: skip morning decode because afternoon audio was long. Never: call afternoon audio the fluency grade.

Prosody without theater

Aim for ordinary speech. Whisper when the character whispers only if accuracy is solid — and only as a meaning cue, not a performance grade. Avoid forced character voices that hide wrong words. Avoid monotone forever if the student can nudge toward natural rises and falls on the second read. Ask: “Would a person saying this news pause here?” Not: “Be more expressive or it doesn’t count.”

Minute-by-minute fluency crumb (pocket card)

0:00 — “Which words do you already know for sure — and where should we slow down?” Wait. 0:40 — Student marks or names. Decode sticky words left to right. 2:00 — Adult models the paragraph once, ordinary and clear. 2:45 — Student read 1. Feedback only on true misses: letters → sounds → blend → reread sentence. 4:30 — Student read 2. Optional phrase-pause slash. 6:00 — Student read 3. Smooth and true. 7:00 — One meaning question. Wait. 8:00 — Notebook line: sticky fixed / how third read felt. Timer still in the drawer unless you planned a gentle self-check on a fully owned page.

If sticky decoding fails twice on the same pattern, stop the crumb. Open the code sit. Fluency does not glue untaught patterns.

Connecting the week to records without turning fluency into a brand

In the dated notebook under **Reading** or **Language Arts** or **English**, note: date; passage owned; sticky words; rereads completed; meaning answer quality; optional self-time. Never title the credit “Fluency Level 4” or a vendor name. Chapter 9 will carry records fully. Here: keep stranger-readable notes.

Tools, including AI

Keep this short. The full AI box lives in **The English hour**.

You may, on your account after the student has tried: ask a tool to explain guided oral reading versus silent reading-alone to *you*; generate an isomorphic short paragraph using only patterns you name, with a PARENT KEY the child never sees; ask for a labelled SCRIPT of feedback phrases for *you* to say after a sticky word.

You may not: park a chatbot as a “reading partner” during the reread; use text-to-speech to finish the decode page that is today’s lesson and call that fluency practice; photo-to-key a fluency packet; grade the child with a detector; ask the model to “make them sound fluent” by rewriting their oral reading into a fake transcript.

Text-to-speech and audiobooks are access tools for content (Chapter 7). They are not the fluency crumb on today’s accurate print page. Point back to the English-hour rules: parent holds the account; COPPA under-13 when applicable; unaided first on instructional targets; SCRIPT after the try.⁷⁷

What “done enough” looks like

Before you treat fluency-after-accuracy as stable enough to shrink the crumb:

- ☐ Passages chosen for fluency are already accurate — no cold timing of frustration text.
- ☐ Student can name words known for sure and where to slow down.
- ☐ Sticky words are decoded, not skipped, before rereads.
- ☐ Adult models; student rereads at least twice with feedback on a typical fluency day.
- ☐ One meaning question follows the reread.
- ☐ Timer, if used at all, is optional, secondary, and only on known-accurate text — never identity.

⁷⁷COPPA under-13; English-hour AI box locks.

- ☐ Access-by-ear is labelled separately from decode-and-reread practice.
- ☐ Placement is by skill band need, not birthday; older learners use mature materials.
- ☐ Parent can hear stopwatch-first, skip-to-go-fast, WPM-as-identity, audiobook-as-only-fluency, and AR-points-as-proof as misses.
- ☐ Growth notes compare to yesterday's self on known text when rate is discussed at all.
- ☐ Code sit still available whenever accuracy slips — fluency did not retire phonics.

Done enough is not peer-average words per minute. Done enough is smooth and true on text they own — with dignity intact, and with the code sit still on the calendar whenever the error log asks for it.

Chapter 6



Figure 8: Morphology cards stacked beside an informational page — still-life, no people, no logos.

Vocabulary and morphology across the grades

Why this matters

What parts do you see — and what does each part do in this sentence?

That question is how older word reading gets unstuck without guessing from the first syllable. It is also how vocabulary becomes something you can teach on purpose — not a Friday list copied from a dictionary and forgotten by Monday.

Vocabulary is words you can understand and use. Some vocabulary is caught: rich talk, read-alouds, life. Some must be taught: student-friendly definitions, examples and non-examples, multiple encounters, morphology clues. The National Reading Panel treated vocabulary as both direct and indirect, with multiple encounters — and treated dictionary-copying as a weak main move. The Institute of Education Sciences foundational-skills guide recommends academic language (Recommendation 1; evidence tier **minimal**, still recommended). The adolescent literacy guide’s vocabulary recommendation is **strong**. You do not need a specialist title to teach one deep word well. You do need to refuse a packet of ten forgotten words as the whole program.

Morphology means the meaningful parts of words — prefixes, bases/roots, suffixes. English spelling often preserves those parts even when pronunciation shifts (*heal/health, sign/signal*). Academic English packs Latin and Greek layers. The International Dyslexia Association’s 2025 definition notes morphological processing as commonly implicated (not universal).⁷⁸ IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards include morphology in language structure and in multisyllabic decoding.⁷⁹ Louisa Moats’s spelling work treats meaningful parts as participants in the spelling system, not as optional enrichment fluff.⁸⁰

For grades **4–12**, morphology is an accelerator: it helps decoding of long words, spelling of related forms, and vocabulary growth in content areas. It is not a Latin trivia club. It is not a reason to declare phonics “over” at a birthday. Basic phonics and encoding continue whenever skill shows need — with mature materials and

⁷⁸IDA Definition of Dyslexia (Oct 2025) / Explanation: phonological and morphological processing common, not universal.

⁷⁹IDA KPS 2018: morphology in language structure / multisyllabic decoding.

⁸⁰Moats, “How Spelling Supports Reading,” *American Educator* Winter 2005/06 — morphophonological spelling.

respectful wording for older students.

What this idea unlocks for a dyslexic learner is a way through long words that does not depend on picture guessing or first-syllable lunges. *Unhappiness* becomes *un-* + *happy* + *-ness*. *Construction* becomes *con-* + *struct* + *-ion*. The student can ask what each part does in this sentence — tense, number, negation, “person who,” “act of” — and check meaning against both the parts and the sentence.

One honesty about research numbers: meta-analyses of morphology interventions (for example Goodwin and Ahn’s line of work) report positive average effects on some literacy outcomes when labelled carefully as meta-analytic figures — useful, not a promise every kitchen will match a clinic *d*.⁸¹ Correlational studies that link morphological awareness to word reading or comprehension report *r* values; those are not intervention effect sizes. Crosson and Moore’s root-focused work is a labelled companion for older academic vocabulary — not a kitchen RCT.⁸² Say the limit once: this is useful research shape, not a guarantee. Then teach one affix deeply.

You do not need to be a linguist. You do need to hear a weekly list in isolation offered as the whole vocabulary program, morphology treated as trivia, and long-word guessing from the first syllable — and to ask for the parts.

This week you can learn to teach one affix or root with examples and non-examples. Today the student can strip a word into parts and use it in a sentence.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults were taught vocabulary as a list and a quiz. Many never saw prefixes and roots taught as a reading strategy. That rust is normal. Five minutes here, then the warm-up, is enough for tomorrow.

Everyday picture. You and the student look at *replay* on a game screen or a

⁸¹Amanda P. Goodwin and Soyeon Ahn, “A Meta-Analysis of Morphological Interventions,” *Journal of Learning Disabilities* (2010 line): positive average effects on some literacy outcomes (e.g., morphological awareness, related literacy measures) — meta-analytic figures; limit line applies. Page-exact clinic *d* quotes may remain UNVERIFIED where full PDF page quotes were not locked.

⁸²Amy C. Crosson and Debra Moore, “When to Take Up Roots,” *Reading Psychology* / ERIC ED598548: bound Latin roots with academic words for secondary ELs — labelled companion, not a kitchen RCT.

package. You cover *re-*. What's left? *play*. What does *re-* tell you before you finish? Again. You say *replay* in a sentence. Tomorrow you meet *rebuild* and *reheat*. Same part, new bases. Another ordinary picture: a Friday list of twelve unrelated science words copied once. Monday none remain. Depth beat width.

Precise picture. Three strands sit under this chapter.

Caught vocabulary. Talk, read-alouds, audio access to rich text, life experience. Keep them. They motivate and build knowledge. They do not replace teaching the parts of academic words the student will see in grades 4–12.

Taught vocabulary. One to three words from today's text or morphology sit. Student-friendly definition. Example and non-example. Say it. Use it in a sentence. Notice morphology if any. Revisit tomorrow in cumulative review. One deep word beats ten shallow ones.

Morphology as Structured Literacy. Review known affixes/roots. Teach one new element: meaning, spelling changes, examples/non-examples. Build and analyze four to six words. Read them in a sentence from real text when possible. Encode two. Grow a cumulative card stack. Old cards stay in rotation. This is diagnostic and cumulative — same spirit as phonics.

Write on a scrap: parts → meaning → sentence → spell two → revisit. Circle *parts*. That is the hinge for long words.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *Weekly list in isolation as the whole program.* Twelve words, copy definitions, quiz Friday, never see them in a sentence again. Hear the shallow loop. Teach fewer words deeper; demand use in speech and writing; bind to morphology when parts are there.
2. *Morphology as trivia.* "Name three Latin roots" with no reading of the parts in text. Hear the club posture. Ask: What parts do you see — and what does each part do in this sentence?
3. *Guessing long words from the first syllable only.* *In-* ... "instrument? information? infinite?" Hear the lunge. Cover the suffix. Read the base. Put it back. Check the sentence.
4. *"Phonics is over, so we only do vocab packets."* Birthday lock. Hear the retirement error. Place by skill. Morphology accelerates; it does not erase unfinished vowel teams.

5. *First-letter or picture guess called “using context.”* Context helps meaning after words are identified. It is not how we identify the printed word (Chapter 3 lock travels here).

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Pick one element for this week: e.g. *un-*, *-ful*, *-tion*, or *struct*. Write its plain meaning.

Minute 2. List four example words and one non-example (a lookalike that does not use that meaning).

Minute 3. Choose one sentence from real life or a book where the word appears. Decide the talk-box opening you will say.

Minute 4. Plan two words the student will spell (encode) after analyzing.

Minute 5. Say aloud: “What parts do you see — and what does each part do in this sentence?” Put the pencil down.

How to teach it this week

Vocabulary and morphology often share an **8–15 minute sit** several days a week once basic phonics is underway — or in parallel with code repair for older students. They do not replace the phonics/encoding sit when skill shows need. For bands 1–3, keep morphology light (inflections, simple compounds, late light prefixes). For bands 4–12, morphology becomes a load-bearing accelerator.

Cumulative review (3–5 minutes). Two or three known affixes/roots from the card stack. Student gives meaning + one example word quickly.

Teach one new element (4–6 minutes). Meaning in plain language. Spelling changes if any (drop *e*, double consonant, *y* to *i*). Examples and non-examples. Build 4–6 words with tiles or cards.

Read in a sentence (2–3 minutes). From today’s text, a content sentence, or a sentence you wrote. Ask the locked opening.

Encode two (2–3 minutes). Student spells two built words. Read them back.

Vocab use crumb (2–4 minutes, some days). Student-friendly definition; example/non-example; own sentence; “Where else could we use this word this

week?”

Exit ticket. Strip one word into parts; or spell one; or use one in a sentence that shows meaning.

Exact wording you can say

- “Big words are often small parts stuck together. We’ll take them apart on purpose.”
- “This is not a Latin club. This is how you read science and history words.”
- “If you can read the parts, you don’t have to guess from the first syllable.”
- “One deep word beats a packet of ten forgotten ones.”
- “We’ll hear this word again at dinner — that’s the homework.”
- “If reading is hard today, we’ll still learn the word by ear.”

First try-it (in-home, today). Morphology Lego from one root or affix. Time: about fifteen minutes. Materials: index cards or tiles; pencil; notebook. Safety: ordinary. The fun: building a family of words that share a part. The skill: analyze → read in sentence → encode two → own-words meaning.

How to fade help. First words: you segment the parts with them. Mid-week: they cover the suffix first, you confirm. Later: they analyze independently; you only catch true misses. Do not fade into “just look at the first syllable.”

When to stop talking. After the locked opening, wait. If they stare at the whole word, prompt the procedure: “Cover the suffix. What’s the base?” Wait again. Look at the cards, not at their face, if silence is hard.

Skill-band moves

Bands 1–3. Inflections: *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing* — what each does in the sentence (more than one; past; happening now). Simple compounds (*sun + set*). Late in the band or when ready: light prefixes *un-*, *re-*. Keep tied to phonics. Vocabulary: one word from a read-aloud; own-words meaning; use at dinner. Do not drown early readers in Latin roots.

Bands 4–6. Common prefixes and suffixes (*un-*, *re-*, *pre-*, *dis-*, *-ful*, *-less*, *-ness*, *-ment*, *-tion/-sion* as appropriate). Anglo-Saxon bases. Syllable division procedures plus morphology — not morphology instead of syllables. Content words from science/social studies rewritten or chosen so parts are visible. Cumulative card stack begins in earnest.

Bands 7–8. Latin layers: *struct, port, rupt, form, spect, tract, dict, scrib/script*, etc. Spelling shifts (*ceive/ception, duce/duction*). Content-area roots from actual history, science, civics reading. Morphology-in-argument: “What does *unconstitutional* claim?” Encode related forms. Still repair unfinished phonics without shame.

Bands 9–12. Greek combining forms (*bio, geo, chrono, photo, tele, micro, phobia, ology...*). Dense academic morphology in paired texts. Morphology supports claim/evidence vocabulary (*implication, contradict, transformative*). Integrity: student analyzes and uses the word; a chatbot does not “gift” the essay sentence. Age does not retire decoding of new long words.

Placement. A sixteen-year-old who still needs *re-* and *-tion* taught deeply gets that teaching with mature example words (*reconsider, legislation*), not primary clip art. A ten-year-old ready for *struct* may begin Latin layers early. Skill leads.

This-week sketch. Mon: review *un-*; teach *-ful*; build *helpful, hopeful, useful, forgetful* (discuss true base); encode two; sentence. Tue: cumulative; new words with *-ful*; dinner word. Wed: teach *struct*; build family; read in a science sentence. Thu: mix *un-, -ful, struct*; store morphology hunt. Fri: diagnostic strip-and-spell; done-enough on this week’s element.

Practice that actually builds learning

In-home try-it: Morphology Lego

Time: 12–15 minutes.

Materials: Cards for prefix/base/suffix; notebook.

Safety: Ordinary.

The fun: Building and rebuilding word families.

The skill: Part meaning + sentence use + encoding.

Review two known parts. Teach or deepen one. Build 4–6 words. Student reads each, then uses two in sentences. Spell two with the cards put away. Check: “Did the spelling change when you put the suffix on?”

In-home try-it: Dinner word-of-the-day

Time: 3–5 minutes at a meal.

Materials: One word on a scrap or mental note.

Safety: No public shame; no forcing a performance for guests who mock.

The fun: Family gets the joke of the part.

The skill: Multiple encounters; oral use.

Student teaches the family the part's meaning and one example. Each person tries a sentence (silly allowed if kind). Parent asks: "Non-example?" Revisit tomorrow's cumulative review.

In-home try-it: Affix hospital

Time: 10 minutes.

Materials: Three misspelled or misread multisyllabic words from the week.

Safety: Ordinary; errors are information.

The fun: Being the doctor for the word.

The skill: Diagnostic morphology + phonics.

For each word: What parts are there? Which part was wrong — sound, spelling change, or meaning guess? Reteach. Re-encode. Log the pattern.

Out-of-home try-it: Store morphology

Time: 10 minutes in a store aisle.

Materials: None.

Safety: Aisle courtesy; no tasting; no shoplifting a "test"; no quizzing a cashier; no photographing strangers; package is print, not a nutrition sermon.

The fun: Finding *un-*, *-ful*, *-tion*, *re-* in the wild.

The skill: Parts in real print.

Student finds three words with taught parts. For each: What parts? What does each do? Own-words meaning. Optional photo of the generic word area later for notebook — avoid readable brand logos in any shared illustration.

Out-of-home try-it: Museum placard word parts

Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: One placard.

Safety: Museum rules; quiet.

The fun: Sounding scholarly on purpose.

The skill: Morphology in authentic academic sentences.

Find one long word. Strip parts. Explain what each does in that sentence. If decoding fails, adult reads the sentence for access; student still names parts they hear and later analyzes the printed word at home.

Out-of-home try-it: Library craft — word in use

Time: 15 minutes.

Materials: Library book or article at accessible level (print or audio+print).

Safety: Ordinary library courtesy.

The fun: Hunting a live specimen.

The skill: Vocabulary in use, not in a vacuum.

Student finds this week's word or a relative. Reads/hears the sentence. Says what the parts contribute versus what the sentence contributes. Writes one new sentence of their own in the notebook.

Talk box

Exact opening question (locked):

"What parts do you see — and what does each part do in this sentence?"

Follow-ups:

1. *Meaning:* "Say the word in your own words. Give an example and a not-an-example."
2. *Representation:* "Cover the suffix — what's the base? Show me with cards."
3. *Type / evidence:* "Did the spelling change when you put it back? Where else could we use this word this week?"
4. *Check:* "Does the meaning come more from the root or from the sentence — check both?"

5. *Revise*: “You may change your mind when the parts and the sentence disagree with your first guess.”

How to wait. Slow three after the question; wait again after they stop. If mid-analysis, do not cut off. Point at the cards.

Stuck silence usually means. Vague question; zero wait; first-syllable lunge frozen mid-guess; word outside taught parts; shame from past “sound it out” yelling on a word that needed morphology; they think the answer is a dictionary recital. Prompt procedure: cover suffix; name base; put back; check sentence.

Blocked, then mixed

Blocked: One element for several days (*-tion* family) until analysis and spelling are clean.

Mixed: Combine two known affixes with a new base; or old root + new suffix; or contrast *pre-* vs *re-*. Mixing too early creates trivia fog. Mixing after mastery builds flexible word reading.

Incorrect example to diagnose

Illustration: Student sees *instructor* and says “construction” because both are long and start with a bump. Parent says “close enough — use context.”

Diagnosis: First-syllable/shape guess; morphology not applied; context used as word ID.

Next move: Cover *-or*. Base? *instruct*. Parts: *in-* + *struct* + *-or*. Meaning of each. Read in the sentence. Encode *instruct* and *instructor*. Contrast with *construction* on purpose tomorrow.

For the student

Long words look scary until you see they are often small parts stuck together.

Morphology means those parts. A prefix comes before the base and changes meaning (*un-* = not). A suffix comes after and can change meaning or how the word works in a sentence (*-ed* for past; *-ness* for a state). A root or base carries the core idea (*struct* $\approx$ build).

Tiny worked example.

Word: *helpful*.

Parts: *help* + *-ful*.

-ful $\approx$ full of.

Sentence: “She was helpful when we moved the boxes.”

Not an example of the same use: “She was help” (incomplete).

Spell: *helpful*.

Try 1. Take *replay*. Cover *re-*. What’s the base? What does *re-* do? Use *replay* in a sentence.

Try 2. Take *unhappy*. Parts? What does each do? Give a non-example word that looks similar but does not mean “not happy.”

Explain it back. Why is guessing from only the first syllable a bad plan for long words?

Challenge. On a package or sign, find a word with *un-*, *re-*, or *-ful*. Name the parts. Say what each does.

Bands 4–6

Build a card stack. Every time you learn a part, keep the old cards alive in review. When you meet a long word, try: cover suffix $\rightarrow$ read base $\rightarrow$ check prefix $\rightarrow$ put together $\rightarrow$ check the sentence.

Bands 7–12

Your content classes are full of Latin and Greek layers. That is not showing off. That is the doorway. When you write, choose one morphology-rich word on purpose and spell the related forms (*decide*, *decision*). Audio can teach you the word by ear on a hard day; you still take it apart on paper in the morphology sit. You are not too old for word parts.

You may change your mind when the parts disagree with a first guess. You are not lazy.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1: They recite definitions but cannot use the word.

Next move: Drop the packet. One word. Example/non-example. Two spoken sentences. One written sentence. Dinner revisit. Morphology clue if any.

Diagnostic 2: They guess long words from the first chunk.

Next move: Procedure drill: cover suffix; base; prefix; blend; sentence check. Nonsense or less-familiar bases with known affixes to block memorizing whole shapes.

Diagnostic 3: Morphology feels like trivia; spelling doesn't transfer.

Next move: Always encode two words. Always read in a real sentence. Tie to content they care about. Cut the Latin lecture. Increase cumulative review of the card stack.

Slow down when parts are confused, spelling changes ignored, or fatigue high.

Go ahead when they strip and use independently. **Reteach from error log** when the same affix fails. **Seek specialist/evaluation** when unexpected persistent word-level difficulty continues despite systematic teaching — this book does not diagnose.

Morphology accelerator — why grades 4–12 feel different

By the middle grades, texts stop being mostly short Anglo-Saxon words. Science, history, and civics fill with words built from meaningful parts. A student who can decode *cat* and *ship* may still stall on *photosynthesis* or *reconstruction* if nobody teaches how to take words apart. That stall is not laziness. It is unfinished Structured Literacy for longer words.

Morphology does three jobs at once:

1. **Decoding:** recognizing chunks reduces letter-by-letter overload on long words.
2. **Spelling:** related forms share spellings even when sounds shift (*magic/magician*).
3. **Vocabulary:** knowing *spect* $\approx$ look helps *inspect*, *spectator*, *retrospective*.

Teach those jobs in text the student is actually reading or hearing — not only on isolated worksheets.

Deep teach template for one element (use every week)

1. **Name it:** “Today’s part is *re-*.”
2. **Plain meaning:** “Again / back.”
3. **Examples:** *replay, rebuild, return, rethink*.
4. **Non-example:** *red* (the *re* is not the prefix).
5. **Spelling notes:** usually just add; watch doubles rarely apply with *re-*.
6. **Build/analyze 4–6 words** with cards.
7. **Sentence from real life or book.**
8. **Locked opening.**
9. **Encode two with cards away.**
10. **Plan dinner encounter.**
11. **Add card to cumulative stack.**
12. **Exit:** student teaches the part back in one minute.

Common affixes — starter bank (teach deeply, not all at once)

Prefixes: *un-, re-, pre-, dis-, mis-, non-, over-, under-, in-/im-/il-/ir- (not), inter-, trans-, sub-, super-, anti-, de-, con-/com-*.

Suffixes: *-s/-es, -ed, -ing, -er/-or, -est, -ly, -ful, -less, -ness, -ment, -tion/-sion, -able/-ible, -ous, -ive, -al, -ity, -ology*.

Latin roots (samples): *struct, port, rupt, form, spect, tract, dict, scrib/script, mit/miss, duc/duct, fac/fect, tend/tens, vid/vis, aud, ject*.

Greek (samples): *bio, geo, graph, phone, photo, tele, micro, scope, chron, hydro, path, phil, phobia, auto, hydro*.

Do not dump this bank in a week. It is a pantry. Cook one ingredient at a time.

Spelling changes worth teaching explicitly

- Drop silent *e* before *-ing/-able* sometimes: *hope* → *hoping* (and teach exceptions carefully when they appear).
- *y* to *i* before certain suffixes: *happy* → *happiness*.
- Doubling finals in short stressed patterns when taught in your phonics sequence.
- Bound roots that need a prefix to feel like a word: *struct* needs company (*construct*).

When a student misspells a change, the error hospital asks: sound error, morphology rule, or irregular mapped part?

Vocabulary in use — the dinner and notebook loop

Monday: teach word + morphology clue.

Tuesday: cumulative review + new sentence.

Wednesday: find or hear it in text.

Thursday: student uses it in writing (Chapter 8 focus-word list).

Friday: teach-it-back to a family member.

Notebook: date, word, parts, own definition, one sentence. That is the assessment — not a bubble quiz alone.

Band portraits (composite illustrations)

Bands 1–3 portrait. Child learning *-ed*. Sorts spoken verbs into “happening now” vs “already happened,” then matches print endings. Reads two controlled sentences. Encodes *jumped*. Dinner: everyone says one *-ed* sentence about the day.

Bands 4–6 portrait. Student building *transport*, *export*, *reporter*, *portable* from *port*. Misreads *portable* as *probable* once; parent asks for parts; student self-corrects. Store hunt finds *reusable*. Card stack grows to fifteen parts.

Bands 7–8 portrait. History week on Reconstruction. Words: *reconstruction*, *unconstitutional*, *inequality*. Student strips each before the accessible read (print or audio+print). Writes two sentences with focus spellings. Still does ten minutes of vowel-team repair three days that week — skill, not shame.

Bands 9–12 portrait. Biology: *photosynthesis*, *chlorophyll*, *mitochondrion* approached with Greek combining forms and syllable support. Student listens to the chapter for content, then analyzes three printed terms on a study card. Essay draft uses *transformation* correctly; speech-to-text captured ideas; student typed and spelled focus morphology words by hand in revision.

Wrong turn: morphology instead of phonics

A family drops all grapheme–phoneme teaching because “we’re doing roots now.” Long words still contain vowel teams and syllable types. Morphology rides on top

of the code map. If *ea* is shaky, *teacher* will be shaky even if *-er* is known. Keep both sits visible on the weekly plan.

Wrong turn: academic vocabulary packets with no oral use

Copying “photosynthesis: process by which...” twenty times does not create use. Demand: own words, example, non-example, sentence, part analysis, later retrieval at dinner. Fewer words. More muscle.

Cross-checks with Simple View spirit

Reading comprehension $\approx$ decoding $\times$ language comprehension. Morphology helps both factors: it boosts word reading and it boosts word meaning. It still does not replace Chapter 5’s fluency-after-accuracy or Chapter 7’s gist-with-evidence on accessible text. It does not replace Chapter 3’s left-to-right grapheme reading.

Research labels you can say accurately

- NRP: vocabulary direct + indirect; multiple encounters.⁸³
- Foorman Rec 1: academic language — **minimal** evidence tier, still recommended.⁸⁴
- Kamil Rec 1: vocabulary — **strong**.⁸⁵
- Moats: meaningful parts in the spelling system.
- Goodwin & Ahn-type morphology metas: cite only as labelled meta figures if you cite a number; not a kitchen guarantee.
- Crosson & Moore: labelled companion for root-focused academic vocabulary work.
- Lee et al.-style correlations: $r \neq$ intervention d .

⁸³NRP summary (2000): vocabulary — direct and indirect; multiple encounters.

⁸⁴Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Rec 1 **minimal**.

⁸⁵Kamil et al., NCEE 2008-4027, Rec 1 **strong**; explicit vocabulary instruction.

Limit line: useful study shape, not a promise every home matches a published effect.

Extended talk-box week

Mon: locked opening on *rebuild*.

Tue: “Cover the suffix — what’s the base?” on *happiness*.

Wed: example/non-example for *fragile* vs morphology cousin if taught.

Thu: “Where else could we use *re-* this week?” after store hunt.

Fri: “Does meaning come more from the root or the sentence — check both?” on a content sentence.

Materials

Index cards; plastic bag for the stack; tiles optional; content textbook page or printed sentence; dated notebook; pencil. No brand crown required. Library books supply sentences. Packages supply wild specimens.

Safety out of home (repeat once)

Roads, aisle courtesy, no tasting unknowns, no shoplifting a test, no cashier quiz, no stranger photos, no public shame. A label is print. A placard is print. Neither is a culture-war prompt.

How to teach it this week — worked hour sketches by band

Bands 1–3 hour sketch (morphology light). Cumulative review of letters and words (4 min). Phonics+encoding sit on today’s pattern (15 min). Connected accuracy (8 min). Morphology crumb: *-ed* meaning in sentences (6 min). Exit: one verb spelled with *-ed* (2 min). Dinner: one past-tense sentence each.

Bands 4–6 hour sketch. Cumulative affix cards (4 min). New suffix *-ment* teach deep (8 min). Build *payment*, *treatment*, *movement*, *enjoyment* (5 min). Read two in science sentences (3 min). Encode two (3 min). Phonics repair if error log asks (10 min). Exit: strip *movement* (2 min).

Bands 7–8 split-day sketch. Morning code/morphology: *spect* family 20 min including encodings. Afternoon accessible content read on “inspection of bridges”

article — print or audio — with gist (Chapter 7). Evening: dinner word *inspect*. Spelling responsibility list for tomorrow's writing includes *inspect*, *spectator*.

Bands 9–12 sketch. Morphology sit 15 min on *gen/genesis* and *bio*. Student analyzes three terms from biology. Content listening 25 min. Writing plan (Chapter 8) uses one morphology-rich word with unaided spelling of focus forms. Integrity: no model-written sentence submitted as theirs.

Practice depth — more named try-its

In-home: Root web. Time 12 min. Materials: paper. Draw one root in the center; branch four words; write one sentence each for two branches; spell two with eyes on the web then eyes away. Fun: seeing the family tree. Skill: generative morphology.

In-home: Non-example hunt. Time 8 min. Given prefix *re-*, student finds words that contain the letters *re* but are not the prefix (*red*, *bread*, *read*). Prevents false chopping. Skill: discrimination.

In-home: Related-forms spelling. Time 10 min. Say *magic*; student writes *magic*, *magical*, *magician* with attention to the retained *c* / sound shift honesty. Skill: Moats-style morphophonological spelling — meaning parts stay visible.

Out-of-home: Postcard with taught parts. Time 15 min including walk to mailbox or email send. Student writes 3–5 sentences using two taught affixes/roots; optional scribe for non-focus words; student spells focus words. Safety: ordinary mail courtesy. Fun: real audience. Skill: vocabulary in use + encoding.

Out-of-home: Package morphology trio. Find three packages; three words; three part analyses. Same aisle safety rules as store morphology.

Extended wrong-answer hearing

6. “Sound it out” yelled at a word that needed morphology. Hear the incomplete prompt. Add: “What parts do you see?”
7. Chatbot defines ten words; student copies. Hear the substitute. Student attempts own-words definition first; tool may explain to parent later.
8. Only Greek roots, never tied to a sentence. Hear trivia. Return to locked opening.

9. *Skipping encoding because “they know it when they hear it.”* Hear the split. Encode two every sit.
10. *Using morphology to avoid teaching syllable types.* Hear the mash. Teach both.

Student pages — additional tries by band

Bands 1–3 extra try. Sort six picture-free verbs on cards into “now” vs “past,” then match *-ing* / *-ed* print endings. Read them. Spell two.

Bands 4–6 extra try. Take *disappear*. Parts? What does *dis-* do? Base? Use in a sentence about a magic trick. Spell *appear* and *disappear*.

Bands 7–8 extra try. Take *interrupt*. *Inter-* $\approx$ between; *rupt* $\approx$ break. Sentence about a conversation. Related: *rupture*, *bankrupt* (discuss bound senses carefully). Spell *interrupt*.

Bands 9–12 extra try. Take *contradict*. Parts and plain meaning. Find or hear it in an article. Write one sentence that uses it to describe two claims. Spell *contradict* and *contradiction*.

If it isn’t clicking — more branches

Diagnostic 4: They analyze on cards but freeze in connected text. Next move: always end the sit inside a sentence from real text. Practice the locked opening daily for a week on easy known parts.

Diagnostic 5: Multilingual home — transfer confusion. Next move: welcome comparisons (“Spanish *struct* cousins”) without abandoning English pattern teaching; keep examples clear; do not shame accent or home language.

Diagnostic 6: Overwhelm from too many new parts. Next move: freeze new elements for two weeks; cumulative review only; depth on two parts until automatic.

Done-enough extras

- ☐ Non-examples used at least once per new element.

- ☐ Real-text sentence weekly.
- ☐ Focus morphology words appear on writing spelling lists (Ch 8).
- ☐ Error hospital visited when the same part fails twice.

Morphology and multisyllabic decoding — same hour, clear jobs

When a long word appears, use a stable order:

1. Look through the whole word (Chapter 3 spirit).
2. Spot recognizable prefixes/suffixes and peel them.
3. Read the base using syllable knowledge you have taught.
4. Blend parts.
5. Check meaning in the sentence (this chapter's locked opening).
6. If still stuck, return to grapheme-by-grapheme on the base — do not invent from context alone.

This order refuses first-syllable lunges and refuses three-cueing. It also refuses morphology-as-only-method for students who still need vowel-team work.

Cumulative card stack — how to run it without chaos

Keep cards in a bag labelled by the student. Each card: part | plain meaning | two examples | one non-example. Daily review: shuffle; student draws three old cards; rapid meaning + example. Weekly: retire nothing early; “easy” cards stay in a slow rotation so automaticity holds. Monthly: student teaches five cards to a family member. That teach-back is your done-enough probe.

Content-area word lists that are honest

Do not assign thirty biology words on Monday. Choose three. For each: morphology clue, own-words definition, example/non-example, sentence, encoding,

later retrieval. The rest of the chapter's terms may be accessed by ear during content reading with a glossary support — while the three remain instructional targets. Access for the many; depth for the few.

Parent learns / student tries — weekly checklist

Parent: - [] One element taught with non-example

- [] Four to six builds
- [] Two encodings
- [] One real sentence
- [] Dinner or out-of-home encounter

Student: - [] Stripped at least five words

- [] Used two in speech
- [] Spelled two cleanly
- [] Explained one part to someone else

Composite month (illustration)

Week 1: *un-*, *-ful*. Store hunt.

Week 2: *re-*, *-ness*. Postcard.

Week 3: *struct*. Science sentences.

Week 4: mix review; error hospital; done-enough on flexible use — not on memorizing a root poster.

Morphology sit scripts — five days

Day 1 script. “Our part is *pre-* — before. Examples: *preheat*, *preview*, *prepaid*. Non-example: *pretzel*. Build four. Sentence. Encode *preview*, *preheat*. Dinner tonight.” **Day 2 script.** Cumulative *pre-* + old *un-*. New words. Locked opening on a package word if available. **Day 3 script.** Teach *-able*. Spelling with drop-e when needed on taught words. Build *readable*, *usable*, *enjoyable*. Encode two. **Day 4 script.** Mix *pre-* and *-able* (*predictable*). Error hospital on any miss. **Day 5 script.** Student teaches the week's parts for one minute each. Done-enough probe: strip *unpredictable* if ready, or *preview* if not.

Academic morphology across subjects (safe topics)

Science: *therm, photo, hydro, bio, chron.*

History/civics: *dem, crac/crat, port, scribe, jur, civ.*

Math word problems: *tri, quad, meter, graph* — as vocabulary support, not as math teaching.

Arts: *photo, graph, phon, scop.*

Always: parts → sentence in that subject → encode two → comprehension crumb on accessible subject text.

Why “vocab in use” is non-negotiable

A word you cannot use in speech or writing is a word you borrowed for a quiz. Demand use. Dinner, postcard, science notebook, plan box in Chapter 8 — those are the homework. Packets are optional supplements with PARENT KEY, never the program.

Extended student challenge bank

1. Build five words from *ject*; use two in speech.
2. Find *-tion* on a museum placard; explain the part.
3. Spell *decide/decision* pair; explain what stayed.
4. Teach *anti-* without using the word *opposite* — find another plain gloss.
5. Take a misread long word from fluency (Ch 5); hospital it with morphology.

Parent rust repair

If you never learned roots, learn one per week ahead of the student during the five-minute warm-up. You are allowed to be one week ahead — not a semester of insecurity. Tools may explain the named element to you after you try. They may not teach the child alone.

Morphology across a term — without dumping

Month A: Focus inflections + un-/re-. Bridge to compounds. Weekly store or placard hunt. Keep unfinished phonics alive if skill shows need.

Month B: Focus -ful/-less/-ness/-ment. Bridge to syllable+morph. Weekly store or placard hunt. Keep unfinished phonics alive if skill shows need.

Month C: Focus struct/port/rupt. Bridge to content sentences. Weekly store or placard hunt. Keep unfinished phonics alive if skill shows need.

Month D: Focus spect/form/dict. Bridge to related spellings. Weekly store or placard hunt. Keep unfinished phonics alive if skill shows need.

Month E: Focus tion/sion/able. Bridge to academic reading. Weekly store or placard hunt. Keep unfinished phonics alive if skill shows need.

Month F: Focus Greek bio/photo/chrono. Bridge to science access+print. Weekly store or placard hunt. Keep unfinished phonics alive if skill shows need.

Encoding link — every morphology sit ends in spelling

If analysis never becomes encoding, morphology stays trivia. Close every sit with two spellings, eyes on cards then eyes away, read-back check. Put winners into Chapter 8 focus lists. Put losers into error hospital.

Talk-box week map

- Mon locked opening on new element
- Tue cover-suffix procedure
- Wed example/non-example
- Thu where else this week
- Fri root vs sentence check both

Worked parent–student dialogue (illustration)

Parent: What parts do you see — and what does each part do in this sentence?

Student: *Unfair* ... *un* and *fair*? Parent: Cover *un-*. What's the base? Student:

fair. Parent: What does *un-* tell you before you finish? Student: Not. Parent: Read the whole sentence again. What does *unfair* do there? Student: It tells that the rule was not fair. Parent: Example and not-an-example? Student: Example: unfair call in a game. Not: *under* — that's not *un-* plus *der*. Parent: Spell *unfair*. Read it back. Student: U-n-f-a-i-r. Unfair. Parent: We'll use it at dinner. Where else this week? Student: Maybe on a package that says reusable — wait, that's *re-*. Parent: Good catch. Different part. Card stack tomorrow.

That dialogue is the chapter. Cards, dinner, encoding, non-example, locked opening — not a Latin club.

Morphology and Ehri's phases — plain kitchen bridge

As word knowledge grows, students move toward recognising words as bonded sound-spellings with meaning. Morphology helps older readers bond long words because meaningful chunks become familiar units. This is not a claim that a kitchen month matches a laboratory phase study. It is a reason to keep taking words apart on purpose instead of guessing from the first syllable.

Multilingual note (care, not a unit on identity fights)

If home languages share Latin/Greek cousins, welcome the connection as a memory hook. Still teach the English printed forms and English sentence use. Do not shame accent. Do not skip English morphology because another language “already has it.”

Assessment without AR

Exit ticket: strip one word; spell one; use one in a sentence. Done-enough: flexible use across the week. Optional vendor placement stays optional and is never the transcript title. Formal evaluation, when sought, sits beside kitchen probes — it does not replace them.

Deep examples bank — teach one per day, not all

un-: unlock, unclear, unfinished — non-example: uncle. *re-*: rebuild, return, rewrite — non-example: real. *pre-*: preheat, preview, prepaid — non-example:

pretty. *dis-*: disappear, disagree, dishonest — non-example: disk. *-ful*: helpful, fearful, thankful — watch *full* vs *-ful*. *-less*: hopeless, useless, fearless. *-ness*: kindness, darkness, happiness (y→i). *-ment*: payment, movement, treatment. *struct*: construct, instruct, destruction, restructure. *port*: transport, export, porter, portable. *rupt*: erupt, interrupt, rupture. *spect*: inspect, spectator, respect, perspective. *bio*: biology, biography, antibiotic (careful layers). *photo*: photograph, photosynthesis (chunk carefully). *chron*: chronicle, chronological, synchronize.

For each chosen element: meaning, examples, non-example, four builds, sentence, two encodings, dinner plan, card.

Why first-syllable guessing feels smart — and fails

Long words share openings. *In-* begins *instrument*, *information*, *infinite*, *inspect*. Guessing from *in-* plus context is still a gamble. Morphology plus syllables plus sentence check is a procedure. Teach the procedure until it replaces the lunge.

How to teach it — exact minute map for an 12-minute morphology sit

0:00 Cumulative: three old cards — meaning + example (rapid). 1:30 “Today’s part is ____.” Plain meaning. Write it. 2:30 Examples (3) and non-example (1). Student repeats. 4:00 Build with cards: four words. Say each. 6:30 Read two in a prepared sentence. Locked opening. 8:00 Encode two with cards away. Read back. 9:30 Add new card to stack. Plan dinner word. 10:30 Exit: student teaches the part in 30 seconds. 11:30 Note errors for tomorrow.

If encoding fails, do not “save it for later” forever — those two spellings *are* the sit’s proof.

Parent learns / student tries — expanded

Parent learns this week: teach one affix deeply with a non-example and two encodings; hear first-syllable guesses. Student tries today: strip a word, say what each part does in the sentence, use it aloud, spell it once cleanly.

Closing the week with dignity

Friday: student teaches three parts from the card stack. Parent asks the locked opening on one content sentence. Two spellings. Dinner word recap. If a sixteen-year-old is still on *un-* and *-tion*, mature example words and respectful tone — never baby talk. Morphology accelerated their week; unfinished phonics, if any, still has a chair at the table. That is placement by skill.

One more out-of-home: street morphology without a lecture

On a walk, find a sign with a prefix or suffix you know (*parking, reopen, unlimited* if present). Decode through the word. Ask the locked opening about the sign's sentence or phrase. Safety: sidewalks and crosswalks; no stopping traffic; the sign is print. Skill: parts in the wild tied to meaning.

Morphology accelerator honesty for grades 4–12

From band 4 upward, texts thicken with academic vocabulary. Morphology is the Structured Literacy move that keeps word reading growing when basic CVC and early vowel teams are no longer the main diet — without declaring phonics finished by birthday. Keep a code-repair chair available. Use mature examples. Bind every new part to a sentence and to spelling. That is the accelerator: not faster trivia, but faster access to long words that used to trigger first-syllable guesses.

If a root meta-analysis figure is mentioned in parent reading, label it meta and remember the kitchen limit line: useful study shape, not a promise. Crosson-shaped root work is a companion idea for older academic vocabulary — still teach with cards, sentences, and encodings at your table.

Vocab in use — three encounters minimum

Encounter 1: teach with parts and non-example. Encounter 2: find or hear in text. Encounter 3: speak or write at dinner / postcard / Chapter 8 focus list. Without three encounters, the word was only displayed — not taught.

Done-enough reminder

Flexible use of taught parts in reading, spelling, and speech beats a trophy root quiz. Keep the card stack alive. Keep phonics repair available. Keep vocabulary

in sentences and at dinner. That is morphology across the grades.

Parent learns one affix deeply this week; student strips and uses one word today.

Tools, including AI

Short pointer to **The English hour**. You may ask a tool to explain a named affix to *you*, or to generate isomorphic word families with a PARENT KEY. You may not let a chatbot finish the morphology page, write the student's sentence as their work, or photo-to-key a vocab packet. TTS may pronounce a word for access after a try — it does not replace analysis. Parent holds the account.

What “done enough” looks like

- ☐ Vocabulary includes taught words in use — not lists alone.
- ☐ Morphology sits analyze parts in sentences, not only as trivia.
- ☐ Student can strip a taught word and say what each part does.
- ☐ Two encodings per sit are routine.
- ☐ Cumulative card stack exists and rotates.
- ☐ Bands match skill: light in 1–3; accelerator in 4–12.
- ☐ Phonics repair not retired by birthday.
- ☐ Parent hears list-only, trivia-only, first-syllable guess, and phonics-over-at-birthday as misses.
- ☐ Dinner or real-text encounters happen weekly.
- ☐ Placement by skill; mature materials for older learners.

Done enough is flexible use of taught parts in reading, spelling, and speech — not a root quiz trophy.

Sample morphology sits (illustrations)

Sit A — -ed (bands 1–3). Meaning in the sentence: past. Examples: *jumped*, *landed*, *wanted* (notice sounds of -ed differ; meaning same). Non-example: using -ing when you mean past. Encode *jumped*, *landed*. Read: “Yesterday we landed on time.” Locked opening on that sentence.

Sit B — un- + -ful (bands 4–6). Build *unhelpful*, *unhopeful* (discuss rarity), *useful*, *thankful*. Spelling: *help* + *ful*. Sentence from life. Encode *useful*, *unhelpful*. Store hunt later for -ful.

Sit C — struct (bands 7–8). *construct*, *destruction*, *instructor*, *restructure*. Spelling shifts noted. History sentence: “They voted to restructure the committee.” Student explains each part’s job. Encode *construct*, *destruction*. Contrast *structure* vs *stricture* if useful — or skip if fog rises.

Sit D — chrono / bio (bands 9–12). *chronology*, *synchronize* (note Greek layers), *biology*, *biography*. Student uses one in a thesis-like sentence for a real assignment — their sentence, not a model’s. Encode two. Check integrity: unaided attempt first.

Connecting vocabulary to comprehension and writing

Chapter 7 will ask for gist with evidence. Morphology-rich words often carry the claim (*unnecessary*, *transformation*, *contradicts*). Teach the word before or during the accessible read — by print when possible, by ear when print bottlenecks — then ask how the parts steer the meaning. Chapter 8 will ask for job + plan in writing. Put two focus morphology words on the spelling responsibility list for the draft. Scribe may capture ideas; the student still spells today’s focus words.

Parent learns / student tries (this week’s one-liner)

Parent: teach one affix or root deeply with examples, non-examples, and two encodings.

Student: strip a word into parts, say what each does in the sentence, and use it aloud.

Chapter 7



Figure 9: Headphones beside a print book on a wooden table — still-life, no people, no logos.

Comprehension on accessible text

Why this matters

What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

That question is comprehension without theater. It asks for a gist and for evidence — from print the student can decode, or from text they heard while the code is still under repair. It refuses two popular mistakes at once: treating picture-guessing as “good comprehension,” and treating strategy worksheets as a reason to abandon decoding.

Comprehension means understanding what is read or heard: the gist, how the text is built, what a reader should remember, what is claimed and what supports it. Strategies can be taught — predicting with care, clarifying, summarizing, inferring with evidence, noticing text structure. The Shanahan and colleagues practice guide rates comprehension strategy instruction **strong**, text-structure instruction **moderate**, and discussion **minimal** (still useful as talk). The adolescent literacy guide rates vocabulary and comprehension-strategy recommendations **strong**, and extended discussion **moderate**. None of those ratings say “skip the code.”

The International Dyslexia Association’s definition names secondary consequences that can include problems of reading comprehension and reduced reading experience.⁸⁶ Those consequences are reasons to **teach** language, knowledge, and strategies — not reasons to skip word reading. In Simple View spirit: reading comprehension depends on both decoding and language comprehension.⁸⁷ If either factor is near zero, comprehension collapses. If print decoding consumes working memory, comprehension practice happens on text the student can decode accurately and/or on read-aloud or audio-supported text at language level — **while decoding sits continue separately**.

Access is not skipping decoding. Headphones beside a print book can open content doors. Text-to-speech can support comprehension access (Wood and col-

⁸⁶IDA Definition of Dyslexia (Oct 2025) and 2002 Lyon–Shaywitz companion: secondary consequences (comprehension/experience) are real; reasons to teach language and strategies — not reasons to skip word reading.

⁸⁷Simple View of Reading spirit (Gough & Tunmer / Hoover & Gough lineage): $R = D \times C$ — if either factor near zero, comprehension collapses. Kitchen framing, not a full theoretical reprint.

leagues' meta-analytic average effect on comprehension is often summarized near $\bar{d} \approx 0.35$ — compensation, not phonics instruction).⁸⁸ That is civil and instructional. It is not a licence to retire Structured Literacy. Access $\neq$ substitute.

Refuse “just read more” alone as the intervention for a code-limited reader. Wide reading and audio reading build knowledge when the student can benefit. They do not teach the sticky grapheme. The National Reading Panel cautioned that independent silent reading alone was not shown as causal fluency instruction especially before alphabetic skills are in place.⁸⁹ Torgesen's Matthew-effects logic is blunt: weak early word reading makes independent reading unpleasant; reduced practice then damages vocabulary, strategy growth, and fluency.⁹⁰ Kindness is teaching the code and teaching comprehension on accessible text — both clocks.

Refuse Accelerated Reader points as comprehension. Points and quizzes may motivate book choice in some settings. A What Works Clearinghouse adolescent report found **no discernible** effects on fluency or comprehension in the rated domains for that product — labelled school/vendor.⁹¹ Points are not proof the student understood. Your kitchen proof is gist plus evidence from the text or from what they heard.

What this idea unlocks is a student who can think about ideas even while the code is under repair — without being told they must wait for perfect fluency before anyone talks about meaning, and without being told meaning work replaces the code sit.

You do not need to be a literature professor. You do need to label the access hour and the decode hour, ask for gist with evidence, and wait.

This week you can learn to separate those hours on a plan. Today the student can give a one-sentence gist with one evidence line.

⁸⁸Wood et al. 2018: $\bar{d} \approx 0.35$ TTS comprehension compensation — not phonics.

⁸⁹NRP summary (2000): SSR-alone caution for code-limited readers.

⁹⁰Torgesen, “Catch Them Before They Fall” / related Matthew-effects prevention logic — kitchen framing of school-intervention literature.

⁹¹WWC Accelerated Reader Adolescent Literacy (August 2010): no discernible fluency/comprehension — school/vendor.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults were graded on worksheets that asked for the “main idea” after a struggle through print they could not decode. Many others were told comprehension would appear if they just read more. Both memories need a reset.

Everyday picture. A student listens to a chapter about volcanoes on headphones while following the print lightly. After a chunk, you ask the locked opening. They say what it is mostly about and point to a sentence they heard that makes them think that. Later the same day, they sit for fifteen minutes of vowel-team decoding on a different page. Two hours. Two jobs. Another picture: a student guesses the story from the cover art and calls it comprehension. That is not this chapter.

Precise picture. Three locks.

Accessible text. Text the student can decode accurately (controlled or practiced), **and/or** text heard through read-aloud, shared reading, or audio/TTS at language level. Accessibility is about matching the channel to the bottleneck so thinking can happen.

Strategies and talk. Preview structure. Read or listen to a chunk. Make a strategy move. Discuss with wait-time. Exit: what did the writer do / what should a reader remember?

Two clocks. Intervention clock repairs decoding/encoding/morphology. Content clock builds knowledge and comprehension. Mixing them without labels creates either guilt (“we didn’t decode”) or drift (“we only listen now”).

Write on a scrap: gist + evidence | access channel labelled | code sit separate. Circle evidence.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *Picture-guess as word reading called comprehension.* “What do you think it says?” while pointing at the photo. Hear the three-cueing leak. Identify words through letters; then think about ideas.
2. *Dropping the code sit for strategy worksheets only.* “We’re focusing on comprehension this year.” Hear the secondary-consequence trap. Keep both clocks.
3. *AR points as proof.* “They quiz at 90%.” Hear the category error. Ask for gist with evidence aloud.

4. *“Just read more” alone for a code-limited reader.* Hear the NRP/Torgesen caution. Add Structured Literacy intensity; keep pleasure reading labelled as motivation/access.
5. *Culture-war unit as the hook.* This book stays on safe literacy objects. Choose volcanoes, kitchens, sports mechanics, animal habitats, invention histories — not live controversy as the comprehension prompt.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Choose today’s access channel: print they can decode, or hear-and-follow.

Minute 2. Choose one chunk (a page, a section, a short article).

Minute 3. Write one structure preview question (story: who/problem; info: headings/cause).

Minute 4. Write the locked opening and one follow-up about evidence.

Minute 5. Put the decode sit on the same day’s plan in a different box. Say both jobs out loud.

How to teach it this week

Comprehension is often a **crumb or a parallel block**, not a reason to cancel phonics. Bands 1–6 may use 8–15 minutes after accuracy reading, plus separate read-aloud time. Bands 7–12 often split: code/morphology sit; then 20–30 minutes content reading with scaffolds.

Session crumb

1. Preview structure (2–3 min).
2. Read or listen to a chunk (5–15 min).
3. Strategy move: gist, clarify, infer with evidence, summarize, notice structure (3–5 min).
4. Discussion turn with wait (3–5 min).
5. Exit: “What did the writer do?” / “What should a reader remember?” (2 min).

Exact wording

- “Guessing the word from the picture is not reading. Guessing the *idea* from clues after the words are read (or heard) can be thinking.”
- “We’ll talk about the book you heard while we still build the code for books you’ll read yourself.”
- “AR points are not proof you understood.”
- “What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?”
- “Point to the line — or tell me the sentence you heard.”

First try-it. Gist in one sentence after hear-or-read. Time: 10–12 minutes. Materials: one chunk; notebook. Safety: ordinary. Fun: being right about the big idea. Skill: gist + evidence.

Fade help. First: you model gist + evidence. Midweek: they gist; you ask for evidence. Later: they offer both; you only check match to text. Do not fade into accepting cover-art guesses.

Stop talking. After locked opening, wait. After evidence ask, wait. Look at the page or pause the audio. Do not fill with your summary.

Skill-band moves

Bands 1–3. Story sense on accessible/heard text: characters, problem, what happened. Controlled print for accuracy; richer listen for language. One gist sentence. Evidence: “Which sentence told you that?” Keep decoding sit sacred.

Bands 4–6. Informational structure: headings, sequence, cause/effect, compare. Gist of a section. Evidence star on a paragraph (pencil star beside the line). Begin light inference with mandatory evidence. Morphology words taught before hard sections (Chapter 6).

Bands 7–8. Inference load rises; annotation: claim, support, question mark for confusion. Accessible academic text — print if accurate enough; audio+print if not. Strategy instruction explicit. Discussion moderate length with wait. Code/morphology repair continues.

Bands 9–12. Claim/evidence on accessible academic text. Seminar-light: one claim, two supports, one counter-consideration. Research-light edges: find one source sentence that supports a point — student states it; no culture-war bait. In-

tegrity: no chatbot summary submitted as their comprehension. Age does not retire decoding.

This-week sketch. Mon: hear chunk + gist/evidence; separate decode. Tue: structure preview on info text. Wed: evidence star. Thu: library craft question. Fri: student teaches back what writer did; done-enough.

Practice that actually builds learning

In-home: Gist in one sentence

Time: 10 minutes. **Materials:** chunk + notebook. **Safety:** ordinary. **Fun:** short sharp clarity. **Skill:** gist.

Hear or read. Locked opening. Write one sentence gist. Check: whole chunk, not one shiny detail.

In-home: Evidence star

Time: 8–12 minutes. **Materials:** paragraph + pencil. **Fun:** detective mark. **Skill:** evidence.

Student stars the sentence that supports their gist. Reads it aloud. If audio-only, they restate the heard sentence; later match to print if available.

In-home: Structure sketch

Time: 10 minutes. **Materials:** blank paper. **Fun:** map the text. **Skill:** text structure.

Story mountain or boxes for problem/events/end; or boxes for heading→facts. Label from text, not from inventing.

Out-of-home: Library craft question

Time: 15–20 minutes. **Materials:** library card; book or audio. **Safety:** courtesy; quiet. **Fun:** real shelves. **Skill:** “What did the writer do here?”

After a page read or heard: locked opening; then craft question. Optional: borrow for continued access at home. Bring a separate decode page if library lacks controlled text.

Out-of-home: Museum placard — what should a reader remember?

Time: 5–8 minutes. **Safety:** museum rules. **Fun:** owning the label. **Skill:** gist of a short informational text.

Read through the word if possible; or hear parent read; then answer what a reader should remember. Not a photo-guess from the exhibit alone.

Talk box

Locked opening: “What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?”

Follow-ups:

1. Meaning: “How is this section organized?”
2. Representation: “Point to the line / name what you heard / sketch the structure.”
3. Type/evidence: “If we removed this paragraph, what would a reader lose?”
4. Check: “Is your gist about the whole chunk, not one shiny detail?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind when the text disagrees with your first gist.”

Wait. Slow three; wait again; do not cut off a retell.

Stuck silence: vague question; zero wait; picture cue; shame; they think you want a trick answer; chunk too long; they need audio because print bottlenecked thinking. Shorten chunk; switch channel; ask for one evidence sentence only.

Blocked then mixed

Blocked: same strategy (gist+evidence) across several short chunks.

Mixed: alternate gist, structure, clarify, infer-with-evidence once each is familiar.

Incorrect example

Illustration: Student looks at a cover of a dog story, says “it’s about a dog who gets lost,” never opens the book; parent praises “great prediction.” Actual text is about a dog training class with no lost plot.

Diagnosis: picture-guess as comprehension; no evidence from text.

Next move: Read/hear a chunk. Locked opening. Require a line. Compare prediction to text; revise.

For the student

Comprehension means understanding. You show it by saying what something is mostly about and pointing to proof — a line you read or a sentence you heard.

You do **not** have to wait until every book is easy in print before you get to think. You can listen and think while you still practice decoding on other pages. Listening is not cheating when it is labelled access. Skipping decoding forever *is* a problem — your adult keeps that sit on the plan.

Tiny worked example.

Heard: a short piece about bees dancing to show food direction.

Gist: “It’s mostly about how bees tell each other where food is.”

Evidence: “I heard the part about the dance showing direction.”

Try 1. Hear or read one page. Answer the locked opening.

Try 2. Star or restate the evidence sentence.

Explain it back. Why is a cover guess not enough?

Challenge. At a museum or library, answer: “What should a reader remember?” about one label or page.

Bands 4–6

Notice headings. Ask how a section is built. Your gist should cover the section, not one cool fact only.

Bands 7–12

Claims need support. When you infer, say what in the text (or what you heard) made you think that. If print eats all your attention, use audio for that chapter and keep your decode practice separate. Points apps are not your understanding. Your spoken gist + evidence is.

You may change your mind when the text says so. You are not lazy.

If it isn’t clicking

Diagnostic 1: Gist is one shiny detail.

Next move: “What’s the whole chunk about?” Cover the detail; ask again; model

a wider gist.

Diagnostic 2: They understand by ear but shut down in print — and print practice stopped.

Next move: Restore decode sit. Keep access for content. Say both jobs kindly.

Diagnostic 3: Strategies feel like worksheet fog; no talk.

Next move: Drop the packet. One chunk. Locked opening. One evidence ask. Wait. Real conversation.

Slow down when chunks are too long or channel wrong. **Go ahead** when gist+evidence are routine. **Reteach** when they return to picture-guess word reading. **Seek help** when language comprehension itself seems unexpectedly weak even by ear — could be broader language needs; evaluation is a door; this book does not diagnose. Not medical advice.

How to teach it this week — fuller session shapes

After an accuracy read (bands 1–6). You already decoded a controlled paragraph. Now ask: “What is this mostly about — and what in the text makes you think that?” Keep it to five minutes. This is comprehension on accessible print.

Parallel access block (any band when print bottlenecks). Separate calendar box: “Content by ear.” Headphones + optional print follow. Chunk 5–10 minutes for younger; 15–25 for older. Locked opening. Evidence from what they heard. Then close the box. Open decode box later or earlier — different page.

Strategy mini-lessons (one per week, not all at once). - Gist in one sentence.
- Clarify: what word or idea confused you, and how did you fix it? - Structure: story parts or informational headings/cause. - Infer: what do you think, and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that? - Summarize: three notes → one sentence. Model; guided try; student try; exit.

Exact parent wording bank. - “We’ll use ears for this chapter’s ideas and eyes for today’s decode page.” - “Show me the line — or tell me the sentence you heard.” - “Is that the whole chunk, or one shiny detail?” - “You may change your gist when the next paragraph disagrees.” - “Points are not understanding. Your evidence is.”

Practice — more try-its

In-home: Claim / support / question. Time 12 min (bands 7–12). Three-column notes while hearing or reading: claim the writer makes; support sentence; my question. Fun: feeling like a seminar. Skill: academic comprehension.

In-home: Remove-a-paragraph test. Time 8 min. After a chunk, ask: “If we removed this paragraph, what would a reader lose?” Skill: relevance and structure.

In-home: Dual-lane log. Time 5 min end of day. Notebook two columns: Access today (title + gist); Decode today (pattern + accuracy note). Skill: labelling lanes until it is habit.

Out-of-home: Recipe step comprehension. Time 10 min in kitchen. Read/hear one recipe step; gist what to do; evidence words from the step (*simmer, fold*). Safety: stove adult-handled as needed; no nutrition sermon; no tasting unknowns. Skill: procedural comprehension.

Out-of-home: Nature placard or zoo label. Same as museum craft with outdoor safety.

Band teaching menus

1–3 menu. Listen to a short story; who/want/problem/what happened; draw one evidence moment; decode sit separate on controlled text about a related but easier pattern.

4–6 menu. Informational article at accessible level; heading walk; gist per section; evidence star; morphology pre-teach two words; decode sit on syllable pattern.

7–8 menu. History chunk by audio+print; annotation; discussion turn; morphology of *reconstruction*-type words; continued word-level intervention if skill shows need (Kamil Rec 5 content travels; parent $\neq$ specialist title).⁹²

9–12 menu. Argument essay or science paper abstract by accessible means; claim/evidence chart; seminar-light talk; student writes three-sentence response with job+plan (Ch 8); unaided first; no chatbot ghostwrite.

⁹²Kamil et al., NCEE 2008-4027, Rec 5 strong — intensive specialist intervention; content travels home.

Why secondary consequences are instructional, not fatalistic

IDA language about secondary consequences can scare families into either despair or into “so we only do audiobooks now.” The instructional reading is: reduced reading experience and comprehension risk are reasons to flood the environment with accessible knowledge *and* to intensify code teaching so print experience can grow. Both. Matthew effects cut both ways: practice grows skill; avoidance shrinks opportunity. Your job is to keep opportunity open without lying that access finished the code.

AR and “just read more” — kitchen scripts

When a co-op celebrates points: “We’re glad they’re reading. At home we also ask for gist with evidence, and we keep a decode sit.” When a relative says just read more: “More books help when decoding allows — or by ear. We also teach the code on purpose every week.”

Student extras

Try 3. Listen to two minutes of a nonfiction audio. Gist. Evidence sentence restated.

Try 4. After a controlled print paragraph, gist without looking at a picture.

Explain challenge. Teach a sibling or parent: access lane vs decode lane.

If it isn’t clicking — more

Diagnostic 4: They parrot your gist. Next move: you stay quiet; they speak first; you only ask for evidence after. **Diagnostic 5: Working memory melts in print.** Next move: shorter chunks; more audio for content; keep decode short and sharp; consider evaluation if language memory concerns persist — not a diagnosis from this book. **Diagnostic 6: Strategies become a poster they ignore.** Next move: one strategy live on one paragraph; no poster lecture.

Done-enough extras

- ☐ Dual-lane log used at least three days this week when print was hard.

- ☐ One structure conversation.
- ☐ One revise-your-gist moment.
- ☐ Safe topics only.

For the parent — longer precise picture

Comprehension instruction for dyslexic learners fails in two opposite ways.

Way one: endless strategy posters while the student still cannot read the words on the worksheet. The page looks like “comprehension class.” The student is still stuck at word ID. Working memory is spent guessing. Strategies cannot float without access to the language of the text.

Way two: endless decoding with no talk about ideas, because “we’ll do comprehension when they’re fluent.” Years pass. Knowledge gaps grow. Motivation drops. Secondary consequences the definition warns about become a lifestyle.

The repair is the two-clock model. Clock A: Structured Literacy intensity on the code, morphology, encoding, fluency after accuracy. Clock B: meaning, knowledge, strategies on accessible text — including by ear. Label both. Schedule both. Shame neither.

Wood and colleagues’ TTS comprehension findings support compensation: technology can open understanding of text when reading disability blocks print. IDA assistive-technology guidance treats tools as bridges. Bridges are not the destination road of decoding instruction. Say that without cruelty and without romanticizing struggle-only print.

How discussion works without becoming a lecture

Shanahan’s guide rates discussion **minimal** evidence — still recommended as a practice with limits. At home, discussion means: one good question, wait, follow-up for evidence, student talk longer than adult talk. It does not mean a parent monologue about what the book “really means.” It does not mean a culture-war seminar. Safe objects: how a machine works, why a character changed a plan, what a heading promised versus what the section delivered.

Stahl-style think-time (classroom-origin) helps: ask; wait a slow three; wait again after they stop.⁹³ If they are mid-retell, do not cut them off.

Practice that builds — detailed library try-it

Library craft afternoon (30–40 min total).

1. Choose access book (interest + language level).
2. Hear or shared-read one section.
3. Locked opening + evidence.
4. Craft question: “What did the writer do here — describe, explain, persuade a little, tell a story?”
5. Checkout for continued access.
6. Sit in the children’s or teen room with a brought controlled page; accuracy-then-reread (Chapter 5).
7. On the way out, student states the two lanes in one sentence each.

Safety: courtesy; volume; no stranger quizzes; no photographing people.

Writing bridge from comprehension

After gist+evidence, ask once a week: “Write two sentences that tell what a reader should remember.” Use Chapter 8 adaptations: scribe for ideas if spelling blocks; student spells focus words; one revision target. Comprehension talk becomes composition fuel without abandoning craft.

Full incorrect examples set

- A. Strategy packet on frustration-level print → restore access channel; shorten; keep decode separate.
- B. Audio all day; no decode for two weeks → put decode back on calendar tomorrow.
- C. Parent summary offered as student’s comprehension grade → student must speak gist first.
- D. AR 100% quiz; cannot answer locked opening orally → points demoted; oral evidence promoted.
- E. Inference with no evidence (“I just feel it”) → require text/heard hook.

⁹³Stahl 1994 classroom-origin think-time.

Student section expansion

Thinking about books and articles is part of being a person who reads — including a person who uses ears while eyes still train on the code.

When print is hard, say: “I can understand this by listening, and I still practice decoding on my lesson page.” That sentence is power. It is not an excuse to avoid all print practice.

Worked example 2. Print-accessible paragraph about a soccer rule. Gist: “It’s mostly about what offside means.” Evidence: sentence defining the rule. Structure: definition → example → non-example.

Challenge 2. Teach your adult the locked opening and make them answer it about a paragraph *you* choose.

Intensity honesty for comprehension weeks

Foorman & Torgesen intensity applies to word-level intervention primarily, but the supportive spirit travels: shorter chunks, more modelling of gist, more feedback on evidence quality, more success reps. A rare three-hour “homeschool co-op reading day” cannot replace daily short meaning talks on accessible text plus daily code sits.

What done enough adds for older bands

- ☐ Can annotate claim/support on an accessible academic page.
- ☐ Can revise an inference when evidence fails.
- ☐ Can state when they used audio vs print and why.
- ☐ Still engages in word-level work if skill shows need — age is not a retirement party for decoding.

Session crumb — annotated example (informational)

Text (heard or read): a short piece on how bridges handle wind. Preview: “This will explain a problem and a design solution.” Chunk. Strategy: gist — “It’s

mostly about why bridges are built to move a little in wind.” Evidence: “I heard/read the part about flexibility stopping breaks.” Structure: problem → solution → example. Exit: “What should a reader remember?” — “Bridges flex on purpose.” Decode sit later: separate page with *flex*, *bridge*, *wind* patterns as appropriate to skill — not the whole article forced as cold decode if it is frustration level.

Access tools menu (label, don’t crown)

OS TTS (Speak Screen, Narrator, Select-to-Speak, Edge Read Aloud). Library Libby/OverDrive. Bookshare for qualifying U.S. students with print disability (IEP/504 not required; certification path).⁹⁴ NLS where eligible. Learning Ally when available through school/organization — omit unverified prices.⁹⁵ Human read-aloud always allowed. **Audio access ≠ decoding instruction.**

Motivation without bribing with points

Choice of accessible topic within safe objects. Short chunks with success. Share gist with a real listener. Track dual-lane log as competence, not as AR points. Celebrate revised gist when evidence changes a mind — that is intellectual honesty.

Connecting Matthew effects to today’s calendar

If decode practice is unpleasant, students read less; vocabulary and knowledge grow slower; fluency lags; comprehension opportunities shrink. Interrupt the cycle: make decode sits short and successful; keep knowledge growing by ear; return gains to print as skill allows. That is Torgesen prevention logic in kitchen clothes — not a claim your home matches a clinic trial’s effect size.

Full Friday diagnostic

1. Oral gist+evidence on a heard chunk.

⁹⁴Bookshare qualify page (opened 6 September 2026): free for qualifying U.S. students; IEP/504 not required; dyslexia/print disability path.

⁹⁵Learning Ally — assistive access; omit unverified 2026 individual list prices. Vendor/organization paths vary.

2. Oral gist+evidence on a short accurate print paragraph.
3. One structure question.
4. Dual-lane log complete?
5. Code sit happened how many days?
Adjust next week's balance from the answers — not from a percentile story.

Why accessible text includes the ear — without ending the code sit

A dyslexic learner's language comprehension is often stronger than their print decoding. That strength is real. It is an instructional asset. It is not proof that decoding instruction is optional. When you read aloud or turn on TTS, you are letting language comprehension work on rich sentences while word reading is still under construction. When you skip decoding for months because "they understand everything by ear," you recreate the reduced print experience the definition warns about.

Label the hours on a sticky note if you must: ACCESS and DECODE. Same day is fine. Same page is sometimes fine when the page is accurate enough. Same *job* is not fine — do not pretend access finished decode.

Wood and colleagues' meta-analytic average around $\bar{d} \approx 0.35$ for TTS effects on comprehension is a compensation figure. Compensation means the tool helped understanding of text. It does not mean the tool taught grapheme–phoneme mapping. Keep that sentence in your pocket when a salesperson says audio replaces Orton–Gillingham-style work. Programs are fit, not magic; audio is access, not a franchise crown.

Accessible comprehension sketch 1: volcanoes

Genre lens: informational. **Structure to name:** cause and effect.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on volcanoes. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on volcanoes with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for cause and effect.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does cause and effect fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about volcanoes?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the volcanoes talk went well.

Accessible comprehension sketch 2: bridge design

Genre lens: informational. **Structure to name:** problem and solution.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on bridge design. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on bridge design with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for problem and solution.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does problem and solution fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about bridge design?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the bridge design talk went well.

Accessible comprehension sketch 3: a soccer rule

Genre lens: informational. **Structure to name:** definition and example.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on a soccer rule. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on a soccer rule with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for definition and example.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does definition and example fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about a soccer rule?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the a soccer rule talk went well.

Accessible comprehension sketch 4: a kitchen experiment

Genre lens: procedural. **Structure to name:** sequence.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on a kitchen experiment. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on a kitchen experiment with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for sequence.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does sequence fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about a kitchen experiment?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the a kitchen experiment talk went well.

Accessible comprehension sketch 5: migration of birds

Genre lens: informational. **Structure to name:** sequence and cause.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on migration of birds. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on migration of birds with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for sequence and cause.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does sequence and cause fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about migration of birds?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the migration of birds talk went well.

Accessible comprehension sketch 6: how mail moves

Genre lens: informational. **Structure to name:** sequence.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on how mail moves. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on how mail moves with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for sequence.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does sequence fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about how mail moves?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the how mail moves talk went well.

Accessible comprehension sketch 7: a character who wants a tool

Genre lens: narrative. **Structure to name:** want and problem.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on a character who wants a tool. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on a character who wants a tool with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for want and problem.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does want and problem fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about a character who wants a tool?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the a character who wants a tool talk went well.

Accessible comprehension sketch 8: inventing a simple machine

Genre lens: informational. **Structure to name:** problem and solution.

Access channel: If print is accurate for this student, read a short controlled or practiced page on inventing a simple machine. If print bottlenecks, hear a short chunk on inventing a simple machine with optional print follow — library audio, OS TTS, or parent read-aloud.

Preview (2 min): “We’ll look for problem and solution.”

Chunk (5–12 min): Read or listen once without stopping for every hard word if this is the access block. Hard words for meaning can be glossed quickly; word ID teaching belongs in the decode sit on a separate page unless the text is already accurate.

Locked opening: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?

Follow-up: How is this organized — does problem and solution fit? Point to the line or restate the heard sentence.

Exit: What should a reader remember about inventing a simple machine?

Decode sit same day: Different page; patterns from Chapters 3–4/6 as skill shows need. Do not cancel it because the inventing a simple machine talk went well.

Strategy modelling scripts (parent says; student tries)

Gist. Model: “I’ll say the whole chunk in one sentence without listing every fact.” Practice: “Now you try — one sentence.” Reflect: “What helped?”

Clarify. Model: “That word/idea confused me; I reread / asked what it means in this sentence.” Practice: “What confused you, and how did you fix it?” Reflect: “What helped?”

Infer. Model: “I think the designer cared about safety because the text mentioned flex stopping breaks.” Practice: “What do you think — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that?” Reflect: “What helped?”

Summarize. Model: “Three notes: problem, solution, example. One sentence summary.” Practice: “Give me three notes, then one sentence.” Reflect: “What helped?”

Structure. Model: “This section is problem/solution — I can label the parts.” Practice: “What structure do you see?” Reflect: “What helped?”

Wrong turns — expanded kitchen hearings

Cover walk as reading. Hear: Student narrates the story from illustrations before letters are read. Move: Close the meaning guess as word ID. Read/hear words. Then talk meaning.

Strategies poster year. Hear: Six strategies assigned nightly; no book finished. Move: One strategy on one chunk. Finish the talk.

Fluency score as comprehension. Hear: WPM chart used as proof they understood. Move: Ask locked opening. Chapter 5 rate is not Chapter 7 evidence.

Gift-only skip. Hear: “They’re so verbal we can skip phonics and just discuss.” Move: Verbal strength feeds Clock B. Clock A continues.

Wait-to-fail. Hear: “We’ll do comprehension seriously in high school.” Move: Teach now on accessible text; repair code now.

Culture-war hook. Hear: Choosing inflammatory current events to ‘engage.’ Move: Safe literacy objects only.

Student practice cards

Card A: Hear two minutes. Gist. Evidence. Self-check: whole chunk?

Card B: Accurate print paragraph. Gist without picture. Evidence line.

Card C: Structure label on a placard. What should a reader remember?

Card D: Dual-lane log — one access title + one decode pattern.

Card E: Teach a parent the locked opening; make them answer with evidence.

If language comprehension itself is the fray

Sometimes print is fine enough and understanding by ear is still unexpectedly hard — vocabulary thin, syntax confusing, retell empty even after listening. That profile may involve broader language needs (developmental language disorder can co-occur with dyslexia; co-occur $\neq$ identical). This book does not diagnose. Keep teaching vocabulary/morphology (Ch 6), keep accessible talk, and seek a human specialist/evaluation when persistence and unexpectedness warrant documentation. Not medical advice.

Worked parent–student dialogue (illustration)

Parent: What is this mostly about — and what in the text (or what you heard) makes you think that? Student: Bees... dancing? Parent: Whole chunk — one sentence. Student: It's mostly about how bees tell each other where food is. Parent: What did you hear that makes you think that? Student: The part about the dance showing direction. Parent: Is that the whole chunk, or one shiny detail? Student: Whole chunk — they also said why it matters for the hive... so maybe "how bees share food locations with a dance." Parent: You may change your mind — that revise is good. Finger on the decode page later for a different job.

When co-op homework assumes frustration-level print

Send the dual-lane plan: student will access the chapter by audio/TTS or parent read-aloud for meaning work; student will complete a separate Structured Literacy page for credit toward Reading/Language Arts. Ask the co-op for oral evidence options when possible. You are not required to invent a legal strategy here — Chapter 9 maps high-level records with not-legal-advice. Teach now.

Knowledge building without controversy bait

Topics that grow comprehension: weather systems, animal habitats, simple machines, sports mechanics, food traditions as culture of cooking steps (not moral war), invention histories, geography of rivers, music instruments' physics at a light level. Build a topic three days running on accessible text. Vocabulary/morphology (Ch 6) supplies the words. Writing (Ch 8) uses the ideas.

Simple View household poster (one sentence)

If decoding is weak, understanding of *print* collapses even when oral understanding is strong — so teach decoding and keep oral/accessible comprehension growing. If language comprehension is weak, understanding collapses even when decoding is accurate — so teach vocabulary, knowledge, and strategies. Product, not average.

Evidence habits that transfer to writing

When a student can answer the locked opening with a pointed line or a restated heard sentence, Chapter 8's analyze/persuade jobs get easier. Once a week, after gist+evidence, ask them to write two sentences: gist + evidence. Use scribe if needed; spell focus words. Comprehension and writing share an evidence muscle.

Refusal scripts you can borrow

To AR pressure: "Points can be a game. Understanding is gist plus evidence." To just-read-more: "We read and listen a lot — and we still teach the code on purpose." To skip-decode-for-strategies: "Strategies on accessible text; decoding on the lesson page — both this week." To picture-guess praise: "Great imagination. For reading the words, let's look through the letters — then we'll talk meaning."

How to teach it — exact minute map for a 12-minute comprehension crumb on accessible text

0:00 Label channel: print-accurate or by-ear. 0:20 Preview structure in one line. 1:00 Read or listen to chunk. 6:00 Locked opening. Wait. 7:00 Evidence follow-up. Wait. Point or restate. 8:30 Structure or clarify follow-up. 9:30 Exit: what should a reader remember? 10:30 Dual-lane reminder: decode sit time named on the plan. 11:00 Notebook gist sentence.

Protect wait. Do not fill with your perfect summary.

Closing the week with two clocks visible

Friday notebook shows: access titles heard/read with gist lines; decode patterns practiced; one structure talk; zero reliance on AR points as proof. If print was

hard, audio was used without apology. If someone said just read more, you answered with Structured Literacy plus accessible meaning. Access opened doors. Decoding still got taught.

Access $\neq$ skipping decoding — final pocket card

ACCESS: hear/read-aloud/TTS for ideas on hard print.

DECODE: Structured Literacy sit on patterns you can teach.

COMPREHEND: gist + evidence on accessible channel.

REFUSE: AR-as-comp; just-read-more alone; picture-guess as word reading; dropping code for strategies-only.

Tools, including AI

Point back to **The English hour**. TTS/audio = access accommodation $\neq$ substitute for decoding lessons. You may ask a tool to suggest structure-preview questions for a named topic for *you*. You may not photo-to-key a comprehension packet, let a chatbot summarize the chapter as the student's work, or park an unsupervised "reading friend" chat. Parent holds the account. Unaided gist attempt first.

What "done enough" looks like

- ☐ Access hour and decode hour both appear on the week's plan when print is a bottleneck.
- ☐ Student gives gist + evidence from text or heard text.
- ☐ Picture-guess is not accepted as word reading.
- ☐ Strategy work did not cancel code/morphology sits.
- ☐ AR points are not treated as comprehension proof.
- ☐ "Just read more" alone is not the intervention.

- ☐ Bands match: story sense → info structure → inference/annotation → claim/evidence.
- ☐ Safe literacy topics; no live-controversy bait.
- ☐ Wait-time protected.
- ☐ Placement by skill; older learners use mature accessible text.

Done enough is thinking with evidence on text they can access — while the code continues to be taught.

Chapter 8



Figure 10: Plan boxes and a short draft with one revision target circled — still-life, no people, no logos.

Writing with adaptations

Why this matters

What's the job of this piece — tell, explain, persuade, or analyze — and what's the plan?

That question is writing without the blank-page terror and without the chatbot ghostwriter. It names a purpose. It asks for a plan. It assumes the student will produce thinking on the page — with adaptations when transcription (handwriting, spelling, typing rate) blocks composition, and with spelling and sentence craft still taught on purpose.

Writing with adaptations means: process stays; transcription flexes. The student still plans, drafts, and revises. You may scribe ideas for a short window, allow speech-to-text for longer drafts, teach keyboarding, shorten product length while keeping quality criteria, and pick **one** revision target. You may not abandon spelling sits forever, treat grammar packets as the whole writing program, or call a model-written essay an accommodation.

Steve Graham and colleagues' elementary writers guide rates teaching a writing process for a variety of purposes **strong** (Recommendation 2).⁹⁶ Teaching handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, and typing as foundations rates **moderate** (Recommendation 3). Daily writing time is recommended even where evidence is **minimal** — and the panel is clear that merely providing time is insufficient. The secondary guide rates Model–Practice–Reflect for writing strategies **strong**.⁹⁷ *Writing Next* (Graham and Perin) offers labelled companion effect sizes for grades 4–12 adolescent streams — useful shape, not a kitchen RCT guarantee.⁹⁸

For dyslexic learners, transcription load is often the bottleneck that makes people conclude “they hate writing.” Often they hate the blank page plus spelling plus handwriting all at once while being asked for brilliant ideas. Separate the loads. Capture ideas with a labelled scribe or speech-to-text window. Keep a spelling sit.

⁹⁶Steve Graham et al., *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*, NCEE 2012-4058 (2012; rev. 2018): Rec 2 process+purposes **strong**; Rec 3 handwriting/spelling/sentence/typing **moderate**; Rec 1 daily write **minimal** (time alone insufficient).

⁹⁷Steve Graham et al., *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*, NCEE 2017-4002 / 2016 guide: Model–Practice–Reflect **strong**.

⁹⁸Steve Graham and Dolores Perin, *Writing Next* (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007): companion effect sizes grades 4–12 — labelled companion, not a kitchen RCT.

Teach sentence craft inside revision, not as a standalone shame packet. Moats's honesty travels: spell-check does not rescue many LD misspellings; it is assistive, not a curriculum.⁹⁹ IDA assistive-technology guidance treats speech-to-text as a bridge, not a retirement party for spelling instruction.

What this idea unlocks is a student who can show thinking in English class across grades 1–12 — including older students who still need encoding repair — without being told they must handwrite perfect orthography before they are allowed to have ideas, and without being told ideas alone are enough forever.

Life-of-the-habit tips live in this chapter's "done enough" section: cumulative review next Tuesday; mix last week's sentence move; keep the dated notebook under Reading / Language Arts / English. There is no ninth teaching chapter titled "life of the habit."

You do not need to be a composition professor. You do need to name the job and the plan, separate idea capture from spelling responsibility, and refuse the chatbot essay.

This week you can learn to run a scribe-and-spell window. Today the student can state job + plan and spell today's focus words.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults remember writing school as either red-pen massacre or "just write whatever." Dyslexic learners often got both: a blank page with no teaching, then fifteen corrections at once. Reset.

Everyday picture. The student says three sentences about a science demo. You scribe for five minutes on the plan box. Then they spell five focus words from this week's patterns into the draft. Then you pick one revision target: add one evidence sentence. Handwriting stays neat enough to read; it is not the grade. Another picture: a blank page, a sigh, a chatbot "just write it," a polished paragraph nobody in the family can explain. That is not accommodation. That is substitution.

Precise picture. Process + purposes. Transcription foundations. Adaptations with refuse-when lines. One revision target.

⁹⁹Moats, "How Spelling Supports Reading" — spell-check assistive, not a spelling curriculum for many LD misspellings.

Process + purposes (Graham Rec 2 spirit). Tell, explain, persuade, analyze — name the job. Plan (boxes, bullets, talk). Draft. Revise for a target. Share one sentence aloud. The process is taught, not assumed.

Transcription foundations (Rec 3 spirit). Handwriting or keyboarding fluency, spelling, sentence construction. These get their own minutes so composition is not asked to carry them alone every day.

Adaptations table (honest). Adult scribe for ideas when spelling/handwriting blocks composition — refuse when used to avoid all encoding forever. Speech-to-text for longer drafts and teen independence — refuse as substitute for daily spelling sit. Keyboarding instruction when handwriting pain or rate blocks output — refuse assuming it is automatic without teaching. Shorten length; keep quality — refuse endless shortening with no skill growth. Spelling sit separate from some composition minutes — refuse never connecting spelling to writing. One revision target — refuse fifteen red marks at once.

Write on a scrap: job → plan → capture ideas → spell focus words → one revise. Circle *job* and *focus words*.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *Blank page with no teaching.* “Just write.” Hear the missing process. Ask the locked opening. Build a plan box.
2. *Grammar pack as the writing program.* Diagramming forever; no drafts for purposes. Hear Writing Next’s cautionary story about traditional grammar as program.¹⁰⁰ Teach conventions inside revision.
3. *“Type everything forever” with no spelling sit.* Hear the retirement error. Keyboard is a tool; spelling still matters; encode focus words.
4. *Chatbot essay as accommodation.* “It helps them get their ideas out.” Hear the substitute. Ideas may be scribed or dictated by the *student*; a model must not write the piece as their work.
5. *Fifteen red marks at once.* Hear the overwhelm. One target tomorrow.

A sixth: speech-to-text used during the encoding lesson that *is* today’s spelling target, then called the student’s spelling work. Label dictation as accommodation

¹⁰⁰Graham and Perin, *Writing Next* (2007): traditional grammar-as-program cautionary pattern — teach conventions inside revision.

when it is idea capture — not when it hides the instructional encoding task.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Name today's job: tell / explain / persuade / analyze.

Minute 2. Draw a three-box plan (beginning/middle/end or claim/support/support).

Minute 3. List five focus spelling words from this week's patterns.

Minute 4. Decide adaptation: scribe window, STT, keyboard, or short length — and what you refuse today.

Minute 5. Say the locked opening aloud. Write one revision target for after the draft. Pencil down.

How to teach it this week

Writing often needs **15–25 minutes**, band-adjusted, several days per week — plus a short encoding warm-up so spelling does not vanish.

Writing session shape

1. Warm sentence or dictation (3–5 min) — encoding maintained.
2. Model one move (plan / topic sentence / evidence / revise target) (3–5 min).
3. Student attempts with scaffolds (8–12 min).
4. Share one sentence aloud; wait; feedback on the target only (2–3 min).
5. Exit: “What will you fix tomorrow?” (1–2 min).

Exact wording

- “What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, persuade, or analyze — and what’s the plan?”
- “I’ll scribe your ideas for five minutes. Then you spell the focus words.”
- “Typing is a tool. Spelling still matters.”
- “We’re revising for evidence today — not for pretty handwriting.”
- “A blank page with no teaching is not struggle-worth-having. A planned hard try is.”

- “Say the sentence you want. Now we’ll get it on paper.”
- “Which words are today’s spelling responsibility?”

First try-it: scribe-and-spell. Time 15 min. Materials: plan box, pencil, focus-word list. Safety: ordinary; no public mockery of spelling. Fun: ideas flow, then craft. Skill: separate idea capture from encoding responsibility.

Fade help. Early: you scribe freely for five minutes. Mid: student spells focus words into your scribe. Later: student drafts more; scribe only for overload moments. STT for older bands follows the same honesty — labelled accommodation for draft length, not retirement of spelling sit.

When to stop talking. After locked opening, wait. After “say the sentence you want,” wait. Do not rewrite their sentence into yours. Correct focus-word spelling without crushing the idea.

Skill-band moves

Bands 1–3. Talk → label → sentence. Plan with two boxes. Scribe heavily if needed; student writes or spells two focus words. Sentence craft: capital, end mark, complete thought. Topics from life and controlled reading — safe objects.

Bands 4–6. Paragraph with scaffolds: topic sentence, two supports, closer. Focus-word list of five. Keyboard introduction if handwriting rate blocks. One revision target (add detail *or* fix two end marks — not both categories at once if overwhelm).

Bands 7–8. Multi-paragraph adapted: plan for three sections; STT or keyboard for draft; student responsible for morphology-rich focus spellings; revise for evidence or sentence combining one day at a time. Content writing tied to accessible reading (Ch 7).

Bands 9–12. Argue / explain / analyze with integrity. Job + plan required before draft. Unaided thinking first. Essay feedback after a draft — revision questions, not a rewrite from a model. No AI ghostwrite. Spelling sits continue for academic morphology words. Transcript titles stay English / Composition / Literature — never Dyslexic English I.

This-week sketch. Mon: dictation warm-up; job+plan; scribe-and-spell narrative. Tue: explain paragraph scaffold. Wed: one-target revision. Thu: postcard out-of-home. Fri: share one sentence; diagnostic on focus words; done-enough.

Practice that actually builds learning

In-home try-it: Scribe-and-spell

Time: 15 minutes. **Materials:** plan box, lined paper, focus-word list (5). **Safety:** ordinary. **Fun:** speed of ideas without spelling freeze. **Skill:** adaptation labelled + encoding kept.

Steps: locked opening; plan bullets; parent scribes student speech five minutes; student inserts/spells focus words; read aloud; choose tomorrow's one revise target.

In-home try-it: One-target revision

Time: 10–12 minutes. **Materials:** yesterday's draft; colored pencil for ONE target. **Fun:** visible improvement without massacre. **Skill:** revise for purpose.

Targets rotate across days: end punctuation; capitals; add one evidence sentence; combine two choppy sentences; replace one vague word with a morphology-taught word; check job match.

In-home try-it: Sentence gym (short)

Time: 5–8 minutes. **Materials:** two kernel sentences. **Skill:** sentence construction (Graham Rec 3 spirit).

Expand kernels with when/where/why; or combine with *because/when/although*. Keep topics safe and concrete.

Out-of-home try-it: Postcard with two taught patterns

Time: 20 minutes including walk. **Materials:** postcard or email. **Safety:** mail courtesy; no mean messages. **Fun:** real audience. **Skill:** encoding in authentic writing.

Student plans job (tell a small news). Writes 3–5 sentences. Two taught patterns must appear spelled by the student. Optional scribe for other words. Send.

Out-of-home try-it: Community notice structure steal (safe stakes)

Time: 10 minutes at library bulletin board or community center. **Safety:** public courtesy; do not remove notices; do not photograph people. **Fun:** spy craft for structure. **Skill:** notice job + plan in wild print.

Find a notice. What's the job? What's the plan of the text (what / when / where)? At home, write a parallel notice for a fictional club using today's focus spellings.

Talk box

Locked opening: "What's the job of this piece — tell, explain, persuade, or analyze — and what's the plan?"

Follow-ups:

1. Meaning: "Say the sentence you want — now we'll get it on paper."
2. Representation: "Show the plan in boxes / bullets / a quick sketch."
3. Type/evidence: "Which words are today's spelling responsibility? What's one change that would help a reader?"
4. Check: "Does the draft match the job you named?"
5. Revise: "What will you revise for tomorrow — and why that target only? You may change the plan when the job gets clearer."

Wait. Slow three; wait after plan talk; do not snatch the pencil mid-word if they are encoding a focus word.

Stuck silence: vague job; no plan; blank-page fear; shame from past red pens; spelling flood; they think writing means fill lines with anything; they want a chat-bot to start. Give plan boxes; offer labelled scribe window; name focus words; refuse model-write.

Blocked then mixed

Blocked: same job (explain) for several short pieces until plan+draft feel routine. Mixed: rotate tell/explain/persuade/analyze once each is familiar; mix revision targets across days.

Incorrect example

Illustration: Parent pastes a prompt into a chatbot, pastes the essay into the student's Google Doc, and calls it "accommodation because of dyslexia."

Diagnosis: write-the-essay ban broken; adaptation confused with substitution; integrity gone.

Next move: Delete the ghostwrite. Student states job+plan. Scribe or STT captures *student* sentences. Focus words spelled by student. One revision target. Label tools honestly.

For the student

Writing means getting ideas into words other people can read. Dyslexia can make the spelling and handwriting part loud. That does not mean your ideas do not count. It also does not mean spelling never matters.

This chapter teaches a habit: name the **job**, make a **plan**, get ideas down (sometimes with help writing the letters), spell the **focus words** yourself, then fix **one** thing to help a reader.

Tiny worked example. Job: explain. Plan: what a magnet does → two examples → one non-example. Scribe captures your talk. You spell *magnet*, *metal*, *pull*. Revise target tomorrow: add the non-example sentence.

Try 1. Pick a job. Draw three plan boxes. Say one sentence per box.

Try 2. Write or spell three focus words from your list into those sentences.

Explain it back. What is the difference between a scribe helping with ideas and a chatbot writing the essay?

Challenge. Send a postcard with two patterns you studied. Real stamp or real email.

Bands 4–6

Your pieces grow to a paragraph. Use a topic sentence. Keep a focus-word list on the table. If handwriting hurts, learn keyboarding on purpose — still spell focus words carefully.

Bands 7–12

Multi-paragraph plans. Speech-to-text is allowed for drafts when labelled. You still own the thinking and the focus spellings. For school integrity and applications, unaided work means unaided — your adult will co-hold that line. A model may give revision questions after you draft. It may not “fix this to an A.”

You may change your plan when the job gets clearer. You are not lazy.

If it isn’t clicking

Diagnostic 1: Meltdown at the blank page. Next move: locked opening + plan boxes before any lines. Scribe window labelled. Shorten length. Success first.

Diagnostic 2: Ideas good; spelling blocks everything; spelling sit disappeared. Next move: restore daily encoding (Ch 4). Focus-word list on every writing day. STT for draft length only.

Diagnostic 3: Draft exists; revision is either nothing or a red massacre. Next move: one target; colored pencil; celebrate the fix; stop.

Diagnostic 4: Chatbot dependence. Next move: devices away during attempt; parent-hosted tools only after try; SCRIPT for parent questions, not student prose.

Slow down when fatigue or shame floods. **Go ahead** when job+plan+focus spellings are routine. **Reteach** sentence completeness or a spelling pattern from the error log. **Seek specialist/evaluation** when transcription or language needs persist unexpectedly despite teaching — not a diagnosis here. Not medical/legal advice.

Never correct the child is not this book’s rule. Yell try harder is not either. Correct the focus word. Protect the thinker.

Why adaptations need refuse-when lines

Every helpful tool can become a quiet retirement of instruction if nobody names the line. Scribe is kindness when spelling blocks composition; it is drift when the student never encodes. Speech-to-text is independence for long drafts; it is drift when the daily spelling sit vanishes. Keyboarding is a fluency tool for transcription; it is drift when handwriting pain is ignored *and* spelling is ignored. Shorten

length to protect quality; do not shorten forever so nothing is ever asked. One revision target prevents massacre; zero revision prevents growth.

Dictation as accommodation must be labelled. When the student dictates ideas, label it: idea capture. When today's lesson is encoding those words by hand, dictation must not produce the instructional target and call it done. Same honesty as TTS in Chapter 7: access $\neq$ substitute.

Writing sketch 1: job = tell

Topic (safe): narrative of a small real event.

Plan: beginning / middle / end boxes.

Adaptation pick one: scribe 5 min; STT draft; keyboard; shortened to paragraph.

Focus words: five from this week's phonics/morphology list — student spelled.

Locked opening before drafting.

Revision target tomorrow: add one sensory detail.

Integrity: student thinking; no chatbot prose; parent may use a SCRIPT of questions after the try.

Writing sketch 2: job = explain

Topic (safe): how something works.

Plan: what / how / why boxes.

Adaptation pick one: scribe 5 min; STT draft; keyboard; shortened to paragraph.

Focus words: five from this week's phonics/morphology list — student spelled.

Locked opening before drafting.

Revision target tomorrow: add a non-example.

Integrity: student thinking; no chatbot prose; parent may use a SCRIPT of questions after the try.

Writing sketch 3: job = persuade

Topic (safe): why we should try a kitchen experiment.

Plan: claim / reason / reason.

Adaptation pick one: scribe 5 min; STT draft; keyboard; shortened to paragraph.

Focus words: five from this week's phonics/morphology list — student spelled.

Locked opening before drafting.

Revision target tomorrow: add one counter-consideration.

Integrity: student thinking; no chatbot prose; parent may use a SCRIPT of questions after the try.

Writing sketch 4: job = analyze

Topic (safe): what a short accessible article claims.

Plan: claim / evidence / evidence.

Adaptation pick one: scribe 5 min; STT draft; keyboard; shortened to paragraph.

Focus words: five from this week's phonics/morphology list — student spelled.

Locked opening before drafting.

Revision target tomorrow: check job match; strengthen one evidence sentence.

Integrity: student thinking; no chatbot prose; parent may use a SCRIPT of questions after the try.

Model–Practice–Reflect expanded

Move: topic sentence. Model aloud on one sentence. Student practices on their draft. Reflect: What will you reuse tomorrow?

Move: embedding a because-clause. Model aloud on one sentence. Student practices on their draft. Reflect: What will you reuse tomorrow?

Move: adding a cited evidence sentence from accessible text. Model aloud on one sentence. Student practices on their draft. Reflect: What will you reuse tomorrow?

Move: combining two choppy sentences. Model aloud on one sentence. Student practices on their draft. Reflect: What will you reuse tomorrow?

Move: replacing a vague word with a morphology-taught word. Model aloud on one sentence. Student practices on their draft. Reflect: What will you reuse tomorrow?

Move: checking that the draft matches the named job. Model aloud on one sentence. Student practices on their draft. Reflect: What will you reuse tomorrow?

Spelling responsibility lists — how to build them

Each writing day, pull 3–5 words from: yesterday’s dictation errors; this week’s morphology sits; heart words still mapping; content words the student will insist on using. Those are today’s spelling responsibility. Other words may be scribed, approximated temporarily, or corrected later — but the list is non-negotiable student work. Moats honesty: spell-check will miss many LD errors; do not outsource the list to autocorrect alone.

Band portfolios (what accumulates in the notebook)

1–3: dated sentences; two focus spellings circled; plan scribbles.

4–6: paragraphs with scaffolds; revision colored marks for one target; keyboard samples if used.

7–8: multi-paragraph plans; STT drafts with focus words corrected by hand; evidence revisions.

9–12: analytical paragraphs; integrity log (unaided attempts noted); morphology spellings; never a brand as the course title.

Wrong answers — expanded

Brave blank page myth. Hear: Struggle on a blank page with no teaching builds character. Move: Planned hard try builds skill. Blank terror builds avoidance.

Grammar program swap. Hear: Buy a grammar workbook; cancel drafting. Move: Conventions inside revision; purposes stay.

STT forever. Hear: Teen dictates everything; spelling sit gone two years. Move: Restore encoding; keep STT for length.

Sibling ghostwrite. Hear: Older sibling writes the essay ‘so they’re not sad.’ Move: Scribe student’s words; sibling may be scribe with labelling — not author.

Detector grading. Hear: Parent runs a detector; punishes ‘AI style.’ Move: Detectors false-positive risk; judge process you watched.

Fifteen targets. Hear: Correct every error in one sitting. Move: One target; return tomorrow.

Out-of-home writing menu

Postcard; thank-you note; library display caption (with permission); recipe rewrite of one step; museum ‘what to remember’ sentence; sports rules card for a family game — safe stakes, taught patterns, labelled help.

Life-of-the-habit calendar cues (still not a ninth chapter)

Daily: tiny encoding warm-up some days; job+plan before drafts on writing days.

Weekly: one postcard or authentic audience; one error hospital on spellings; Friday done-enough.

Monthly: reread an old paragraph; revise with a new target; note growth vs shame.

Across years: place by skill; mature topics; integrity rises in high school; spelling craft never fully retires.

Full week plans by band (illustrations, not statutes)

Bands 1–3 week. Mon: warm dictation of three pattern words; job=tell; two-box plan; scribe-and-spell three sentences; focus *ran*, *jump*, *stop*. Tue: reread draft; one-target capitals. Wed: sentence gym expand kernels. Thu: postcard with two patterns. Fri: share aloud; error hospital on focus misses; done-enough checklist.

Bands 4–6 week. Mon: explain job; four-box plan; keyboard draft; five focus words including one *-tion* if taught. Tue: revise add non-example. Wed: morphology focus spellings into paragraph. Thu: community notice structure steal; parallel write. Fri: diagnostic focus spellings + job match check.

Bands 7–8 week. Mon: analyze job on heard history chunk; claim/evidence plan; STT draft labelled; hand-correct three academic spellings. Tue: Model–Practice–Reflect on evidence sentence. Wed: encoding sit heavy; writing light revise. Thu: multi-paragraph second section. Fri: read aloud one paragraph smooth and true (Ch 5 link); integrity note in notebook.

Bands 9–12 week. Mon: job=analyze; unaided plan; typed draft from accessible science text; focus *hypothesis*, *evidence*, *transform*. Tue: parent revision questions only (no rewrite). Wed: student revises two sentences; morphology spell check. Thu: brief oral defense of claim+evidence. Fri: file sample under English/Composition; note accommodations used (STT/extra time) in private family log if needed — not as a brand credit.

Scene: Blank page freeze

See: Parent asks locked opening; student shrugs.

Move: Parent draws three empty boxes; asks only for box 1 talk; scribes one sentence; student spells one focus word; stop on success.

Scene: STT drift

See: Teen has not handwritten spellings in a month.

Move: Restore 10-minute encoding sit; STT allowed for history essay draft only; focus list required.

Scene: Red massacre relapse

See: Parent corrects eighteen errors in one night.

Move: Pick end punctuation only; schedule spelling for tomorrow's warm-up; apology without drama: 'One target is our rule.'

Scene: Chatbot temptation

See: Student asks AI to write the paragraph.

Move: Device away; scribe student's spoken sentences; tool may later explain a sentence move to parent.

Scene: Sibling author

See: Sibling rewrites the piece overnight.

Move: Thank sibling energy; rewrite from student's plan; sibling may scribe labelled words student speaks.

Sentence craft mini-moves

Complete sentence. Every draft sentence needs who/what and what's happening. Use: Fix fragments as tomorrow's one target.

Because clause. Add reason without starting a new choppy sentence. Use: Practice on explain job.

Combining. Two short sentences → one with *when/although/so*. Use: Model–Practice–Reflect.

Precise word. Replace *thing/stuff/good* with morphology-taught word. Use: Link Ch 6.

Audience check. Read aloud; mark where a reader gets lost. Use: Revise that spot only.

Additional named try-its

In-home: Plan pitch. Time 5 min. Student pitches job+plan orally before any paper. Fun: sales pitch energy. Skill: planning.

In-home: Focus-word gate. Time 8 min. Cannot “finish” draft until five focus words appear spelled correctly — ideas may already be scribed. Skill: spelling responsibility.

In-home: Revision museum. Time 10 min. Keep before/after of one paragraph in notebook. Skill: seeing growth without shame.

Out-of-home: Thank-you note. Time 15 min. Real note after a visit; two taught patterns; labelled help OK. Safety: kind content only.

Out-of-home: Caption a photo you took of an object (not a stranger). Time 10 min. One explain sentence + focus spelling. Safety: privacy.

For the student — more tries

Try 3. Record yourself saying three sentences (voice memo). Transcribe with help. Spell focus words into the transcript.

Try 4. Take a paragraph you wrote last month. Choose one new revision target. Improve only that.

Try 5. Write a three-sentence analysis of a placard you saw (Ch 7). Job=analyze. Plan=claim/evidence/evidence.

Explain challenge. Teach someone the difference between accommodation and having a bot write your work.

If it isn't clicking — more branches

Diagnostic 5: Great talker; refuses any print production. Next move: scribe window daily for a week labelled; require two focus spellings; gradually increase student-produced words; keep dignity.

Diagnostic 6: Keyboard typos hide spelling needs. Next move: periodic hand-written encoding probes; don't let typing speed mask pattern gaps.

Diagnostic 7: Persuade/analyze jobs feel impossible. Next move: stay on tell/explain longer; build evidence habit from Ch 7; model analyze on a tiny claim.

Life of the habit — Tuesday return cues

When Tuesday arrives, open last Friday's notebook. Mix one old focus pattern into warm-up dictation. Reuse one revision target on a new job. If last week's error hospital named *-tion*, morph spell two *-tion* words before drafting. If shame spiked, shorten today's product and protect one clean success. Intensity is more explicit support and more successful reps — not louder criticism. Foorman and Torgesen's more-supportive spirit applies to writing sessions too: scaffold the process; do not abandon the student to a blank page and call it rigor.¹⁰¹

Across a season, the habit is visible: plans before drafts; labelled tools; spelling sits surviving busy weeks; one-target revisions; authentic audiences monthly; records

¹⁰¹Foorman and Torgesen 2001 — more supportive; Graham process scaffolds.

a stranger can read as English or Composition. That is done enough as a lifestyle of teaching — not a diploma, not a percentile, not a vendor level.

Purpose menu — what each job needs

Tell. Job: recount events. Plan: beginning/middle/end or first/next/last. Watch-fors: time order; complete sentences; who did what. Adaptation tip: scribe the middle if fatigue hits; student still spells focus verbs.

Explain. Job: help a reader understand how/why. Plan: what it is / how it works / why it matters / non-example. Watch-fors: precise words; sequence words. Adaptation tip: diagram plus sentences; STT for longer explains in older bands.

Persuade. Job: move a reader toward a choice. Plan: claim / reason / reason / answer a doubt. Watch-fors: reasons tied to evidence from life or accessible text — not insults. Safe stakes: why we should try a weekend hike, why a recipe step matters, why a library visit helps. No live controversy prompts.

Analyze. Job: break a claim or craft move into parts. Plan: what the text claims / evidence / evidence / what it means. Watch-fors: evidence from text or heard text (Ch 7). Adaptation tip: annotation first; then write; scribe allowed for first pass of ideas.

Practice cycle 1 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 1 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Practice cycle 2 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 2 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Practice cycle 3 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 3 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Practice cycle 4 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 4 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Practice cycle 5 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 5 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Practice cycle 6 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 6 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Practice cycle 7 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 7 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Practice cycle 8 — short sharp writing day

Warm dictation (4 min). Locked opening (1). Plan boxes (3). Adaptation window (6). Focus-word gate (4). Read aloud one sentence (2). Exit: tomorrow's one target named (1). Total ~20–25 minutes. Cycle 8 reuses the shape with a new job or topic so the habit hardens without a 180-day packet.

Transcription tools — teaching notes

Handwriting. If pain or illegibility blocks, shorten handwriting demand; teach letter forms in tiny doses; do not make pretty handwriting the only writing grade.

Keyboarding. Teach on purpose — home row, short drills — not assumed. For dyslexic spellers, keyboarding helps rate but can hide pattern gaps; keep handwritten encoding probes.

Speech-to-text. Train the student to pause, punctuate by voice, and then fix focus spellings on screen. Label the draft “STT + my spellings.”

Scribe. Parent/sibling writes student words. Student must speak complete thoughts. After five minutes, student takes the pencil for focus words. Never silent parental authorship.

Integrity ladder by band

1–3: adult heavily scaffolds; honesty is “these are my ideas; I spelled these words.”

4–6: student drafts more; help labelled; no secret sibling rewrite.

7–8: STT OK; co-hold accounts; unaided first on instructional encoding; discuss what counts as their work for co-op.

9–12: co-hold + integrity for timed work and applications; essay feedback after draft; ban write-the-essay; document accommodations privately when needed.

Connecting Graham recommendations to Friday

If the week had process+purposes (job/plan/draft/revise), you honored the strong recommendation's spirit. If transcription warm-ups happened, you honored moderate foundations. If you only provided “writing time” with a blank page, you hit

the panel's warning: time alone is insufficient. Fix next week with the session shape.

Composite year edges (illustration)

A family keeps a folder of six writing samples across months: early scribed sentences; mid-year paragraph with focus spellings; later multi-paragraph with STT labelled; one analytical paragraph citing an accessible article. Growth is visible without a percentile. Shame shrinks because adaptations were honest and craft continued.

How to teach it — exact minute map for a 20-minute writing session

0:00 Warm dictation / sentence (4). 4:00 Locked opening — job + plan (2). Wait. 6:00 Model one move on the plan (3). 9:00 Student attempt with chosen adaptation (8). 17:00 Share one sentence; feedback on target only (2). 19:00 Exit: what will you fix tomorrow? (1).

Focus-word gate can sit inside the attempt block: ideas first, then spellings.

Scribe-and-spell — annotated walkthrough

1. Student states job: explain how a zipper works.
2. Plan boxes: what / how / why.
3. Student talks; parent scribes five minutes exactly — timer optional for the *scribe window*, not for shaming rate.
4. Parent stops. Hands pencil. Focus list: *zipper, teeth, pull, stuck, metal*.
5. Student finds places to insert/correct those spellings.
6. Read aloud. Choose tomorrow's target: add a non-example (a button is not a zipper).
7. Notebook: labelled "scribe + my focus spellings."

That label is integrity training.

More out-of-home try-it detail: postcard

Materials: postcard or email draft. Time 20 min. Student plans tell job about one weekend fact. Writes 3–5 sentences. Must include two taught patterns spelled by student (-ed verbs, or re- words, etc.). Optional scribe for names of places if overload. Address with help. Mail. Safety: kind content; no mean public writing; sidewalk safety if walking to box. Fun: real stamp. Skill: authentic encoding + purpose.

More out-of-home: community notice structure steal

Find a lost-pet or club-meeting notice (safe). What's the job? (inform/persuade lightly). What's the plan of info (what/when/where/contact)? At home write a fictional club notice using today's focus spellings. Do not remove real notices. Do not prank. Skill: structure transfer into writing.

Student dignity scripts

"My ideas can be scribed. My focus words are mine to spell." "STT is a tool for long drafts. Spelling practice still happens." "A chatbot writing my essay is not help — it's someone else's work." "One fix tomorrow is enough. I don't need fifteen red marks to grow."

Closing parent paragraph

Writing with adaptations is how dyslexic learners stay in the English conversation across grades 1–12. Process stays. Transcription flexes. Spelling and sentence craft continue. Life of the habit is Tuesday's return to last week's move, mixed practice, and a dated notebook under a stranger-readable title. You can do this without shame and without a ghostwriter.

Additional band-specific model sentences (student tries to match job)

Tell (1–3): "We drove to the hill. The van stopped. We ran." Student expands with plan. **Explain (4–6):** "A magnet pulls some metals. It pulls iron. It does not pull wood." Add how/why box. **Persuade (7–8):** "We should practice the fire drill. Reason one. Reason two." Keep stakes practical and safe. **Analyze (9–12):**

“The article claims bridges flex on purpose. Evidence A. Evidence B.” Require heard/print source.

Adaptation refusal drills (parent practice)

Say out loud: 1. “Scribe for five minutes — then you spell.” 2. “STT for the draft — spelling sit still at 10:00.” 3. “One revision target — end marks only.” 4. “No, the chatbot can’t write it. Tell me the sentences.” 5. “We’ll shorten to one paragraph and keep the quality bar.”

What “done enough” looks like — expanded checklist

- ☐ Job named before draft on writing days.
- ☐ Plan visible (boxes/bullets).
- ☐ Adaptation labelled when used.
- ☐ Focus spellings student-owned.
- ☐ Encoding sit present in the week.
- ☐ One-target revision habit.
- ☐ Authentic audience at least monthly.
- ☐ Samples filed under English/Reading/Language Arts/Composition as appropriate.
- ☐ Life-of-the-habit Tuesday return happening.
- ☐ Shame from red massacres reduced by rule of one.

Done enough is a writer who can start with job and plan, use honest tools, and keep craft growing — across grades, by skill, without abandonment of spelling and without a ghostwriter.

Warm dictation banks (rotate; tie to Chapters 3–4 and 6)

Early patterns: short CVC sentences the student can spell. Vowel teams: two words from this week’s team in a sentence. Morphology: *helpful, rebuild, construction* as skill allows. Academic: *evidence, explain, because* as heart/mapped plus morph.

Dictation warms encoding so writing time is not the only spelling exposure. Label speech-to-text separately when it is used for composition.

Parent encouragement that stays specific

“You named the job. That is writing.” “You spelled the focus words. That is craft.” “We used scribe for five minutes on purpose. That is an adaptation, not a secret.” “Tomorrow’s one target is enough.” “Age does not retire spelling — and you are allowed tools while you learn.”

Dictation as accommodation — labelled examples

Label A — idea capture: “Dictating your paragraph to me / to STT so your ideas get down. Then you spell today’s five focus words.”

Label B — instructional encoding: “Dictation warm-up: I say the word; you stretch and write. This is today’s spelling lesson.”

Never mix B into A’s credit. Never call a chatbot essay Label A.

Graham spirit in one kitchen paragraph

Teach process and purposes with modelling. Build transcription skills so composition is not asked to carry handwriting, spelling, and typing alone. Reflect briefly after practice. Provide time — and teaching inside the time. Adaptations keep dyslexic writers inside that process instead of outside English.

Why this chapter closes Stage 3 teaching

Chapters 5–7 freed bandwidth, grew word meaning, and taught thinking on accessible text. Chapter 8 asks the student to produce English with job and plan — using adaptations without abandoning spelling and sentence craft. Life of the habit lives in done-enough and in records next. You have a path through English/ELA with Structured Literacy intensity across grades 1–12. Place by skill. Keep dignity. Host tools as parent-side helps. Teach.

Done-enough reminder

Job and plan before drafts. Adaptations labelled. Focus spellings owned. Encoding sits alive. One revision target. No ghostwriter. Samples under stranger-readable English titles. Tuesday returns last week’s move. That is writing with adaptations — and the life of the habit without a ninth chapter.

Final parent warm-line

You separate idea capture from spelling responsibility. The student states the job and the plan, then spells today's focus words. That is enough of a north star to start tomorrow's English hour without a blank page and without a machine author.

Parent separates idea capture from spelling responsibility; student states job + plan and spells focus words.

Tools, including AI

Short pointer to **The English hour**. Dictation/speech-to-text = accommodation for idea capture when labelled — not a substitute for today's encoding lesson. You may ask a tool to explain a sentence-combining move to *you*, or to generate isomorphic practice prompts with PARENT KEY. You may not: write-the-essay; photo-to-key; unsupervised chat partner during the attempt; “fix this to an A”; detector-grade the child's writing (detectors false-positive risk is real).¹⁰² Parent holds the account. COPPA under-13 when applicable. Bastani's chatbot-practice caution is **OFF-AGE for literacy** — one mechanism reminder only: the model may prepare the adult, not do the student's instructional work.¹⁰³

What “done enough” looks like

Before you shrink scaffolds:

- ☐ Student can name job + plan before drafting.
- ☐ Adaptations are labelled (scribe/STT/keyboard/shorten) with clear refuse-when lines.
- ☐ Focus spelling words are student-owned each writing day.
- ☐ Spelling/encoding sit still exists in the week.
- ☐ One revision target per pass — not fifteen.
- ☐ Grammar taught inside revision, not as the whole program.

¹⁰²Liang et al. 2023: **61.22%** average FPR on TOEFL essays — do not detector-grade a child's writing.

¹⁰³Bastani et al. 2025 — OFF-AGE for literacy.

- ☐ No chatbot ghostwrite; integrity held for assessments.
- ☐ Bands match: sentence → paragraph → multi-paragraph → argue/explain/analyze.
- ☐ Records use Reading / Language Arts / English titles — never Dyslexic English I.
- ☐ Parent hears blank-page-only, grammar-pack-as-program, type-forever-no-spelling, chatbot-essay, and red-massacre as misses.

Life of the habit (lives here — not a ninth chapter)

Next Tuesday: cumulative review of last week's sentence move or focus pattern. Mix an old revision target with a new job. Keep the dated notebook. Reteach from Friday's error hospital. Stop when melted; return tomorrow. Intensity stays kind: short sharp writing sessions beat rare marathons of shame. Place by skill. Age does not retire spelling craft. Access tools stay bridges. The habit is the process repeated with dignity — job, plan, attempt, focus spellings, one fix — week after week.

Done enough is thinking on the page with honest tools — not perfect orthography on day one, and not a machine's polished essay under the student's name.

Adaptation decision tree (plain)

If handwriting pain or extreme rate blocks ideas → keyboarding instruction + temporary scribe; still spell focus words. If spelling blocks composition → scribe or STT for ideas; daily spelling sit; focus words in the draft. If fatigue after school therapy → shorten length; keep quality criteria; do not cancel process teaching. If older student needs independence → STT + keyboard; weekly morphology spellings; integrity rules for graded work. If someone offers a chatbot essay → refuse; offer scribe of *their* sentences instead.

Model–Practice–Reflect in kitchen language (Graham 2016 spirit)

Model: you write one plan box aloud thinking. Practice: they try the next box. Reflect: “What helped? What will you do tomorrow?” Strong evidence rating in

the secondary guide — still not a promise every home matches a study. Useful shape. Then teach.

Sentence craft without the shame packet

Teach one move at a time inside real drafts: complete sentences; because-clauses; combining; varying starters; replacing vague words. Skip yearlong diagramming as the program. When a convention error repeats, add a two-minute warm-up — then return to purpose-driven writing.

Composite scenes

Bands 1–3: Child dictates a three-sentence story about a van ride; spells *van*, *hill*, *stop*; draws a quick plan; capital letters repaired as tomorrow’s one target. *Bands 4–6:* Paragraph explaining how to make toast; keyboard draft; focus words *butter*, *heat*, *bread*; revise to add a warning sentence. *Bands 7–8:* Three paragraphs on a heard history chunk; STT draft; student corrects *reconstruction*, *citizen*, *rights*; revise for evidence. *Bands 9–12:* Analytical paragraph on a science claim; unaided plan; typed draft; morphology focus *transform*, *evidence*; revision questions from parent (optionally tool-assisted for the parent); student rewrites two sentences themselves.

Linking to Chapters 4–7

Encoding (4) supplies focus words. Fluency (5) helps them hear sentence rhythm when reading drafts aloud. Morphology (6) upgrades academic word choice and spelling. Comprehension (7) supplies something worth telling, explaining, persuading about, or analyzing — from accessible text. Writing is where those streams meet without abandoning any stream.

Out-of-home safety reprise

Postcards and notices are print and civic courtesy. No mean public notes. No photographing strangers. No shaming spelling in a store line. A recipe card as writing model is a structure steal — not a nutrition war.

Parent self-check Friday

Did we name jobs? Plans before drafts? Label adaptations? Keep spelling sits? One revise target? Refuse ghostwrite? Note samples in the dated English/Reading notebook? If yes on most, you taught writing with adaptations. If not, adjust Monday — the student did not fail as a person.

Chapter 9 — Records and next steps



Figure 11: A dated notebook titled Reading / Language Arts / English — still-life, no people, no logos.

The work of English lives in the hour. The proof of English lives in a quiet file you can open years later without shame.

This chapter is about that file. Not a percentile. Not a franchise level. Not a courtroom binder. A dated notebook, a few honest checks, short writing samples, and titles a stranger can read.

You already know the teaching path from Chapters 1–8 and from **The English hour**. Here you learn how to keep the habit on paper so tomorrow’s review has somewhere to land — and so a transcript, a portfolio visit, or a later dual-enrollment conversation does not invent a course that never existed.

Titles a stranger can read

Print these subject names, and only these, when a name is needed at all:

- **Reading**
- **Language Arts**
- **English**
- At high school, when the year’s work matches: **English I / English II / English III / English IV (or English 9 / 10 / 11 / 12), Literature, Composition, American Literature, British Literature, Speech**

If you teach other subjects, keep their ordinary names too: Mathematics or Arithmetic; Science; Social Studies or History; Art; Music; Physical Education.

Never put a brand on the credit line. Never Barton Level 4. Never Wilson Reading System. Never Take Flight. Never All About Reading Level 3. Never Logic of English Essentials. Never SPIRE. Never “Orton–Gillingham Therapy” as the course title. And never **Dyslexic English I**.¹⁰⁴

The disability is not the course name. The materials list and the course description can say what you used. The credit line stays ordinary English.

Wrong (illustration, not a real family’s record):

Dyslexic English I – Barton Level 4

Right:

Language Arts

Course notes (private or portfolio narrative): intensive structured literacy — phonemic awareness with letters, systematic phonics and encoding, guided

¹⁰⁴Transcript lock: never Dyslexic English I; never brand as credit title.

decoding, morphology; literature and content via shared reading and audio access while code is repaired; writing with transcription supports and sentence craft.

High school: **English 9**, not “Barton 9.”

Brand names belong on receipts, on a materials shelf list, and inside a lesson plan. They do not belong where a registrar, a college reader, or a compliance officer expects *Reading*, *Language Arts*, or *English*.

What the file holds

Keep it simple enough that you will actually use it.

1. A dated notebook (or dated digital log with the same discipline).

Date every sit. Note the focus skill in ordinary language: short vowels; consonant digraphs; vowel teams; closed/open syllables; common suffixes; accuracy reread of known text; paragraph plan with scribe option. One or two sentences is enough. “Tuesday — vowel team *ai/ay*; three misses on *ay* at end; reteach Wednesday” beats a blank week and a guilty memory.

2. An oral reading check.

Not a stopwatch-first race. Note accuracy first: which words were known for sure; where the student slowed; whether they looked through the letters or grabbed a first letter. Rate and phrasing can appear later, after accuracy is honest. For younger bands, a short controlled page is enough. For older bands repairing code, the same rule holds with mature wording and age-respectful text.

3. Spelling dictation.

Same map as decoding. Stretch the word; write what you hear with taught patterns; mark heart words you are mapping, not guessing. Keep the dictation page with the date. Spelling is often the hardest slice of the profile — IDA’s honesty travels here — so the dictation is not optional decoration.¹⁰⁵

4. A short writing sample.

Sentence, then paragraph, then (when ready) a short piece with a job: tell, explain, persuade, or analyze. Scribe, speech-to-text, or keyboard are adaptations when transcription is the bottleneck. The thinking and the sentence craft still belong to

¹⁰⁵IDA materials on persistent spelling difficulty within the dyslexia profile; IDA Definition includes spelling.

the student. Spell-check is an access tool for content production; it is not today's spelling curriculum.

5. An error log.

Wrong answers are information for tomorrow's review — that line from the English hour becomes a column in the notebook. Pattern of miss (vowel team? suffix? skipped letter? picture guess offered as reading?). Next move. Recheck date. This is the life of the habit on paper: cumulative review seeded by real errors, not by a random worksheet pile.

6. Exit tickets.

One tiny close to the sit: blend three words; spell two; strip an affix; retell the gist with one evidence line from print or from heard text. File the ticket with the date. "Done enough" from Chapters 2–8 is a skill checklist, not a birthday. Exit tickets feed that checklist.

7. Optional vendor placement.

Publisher placement tests place by skill inside a program. They are useful when you use that program. They are not IDEA eligibility. They are not a national reading census. They are not NAEP. Start where the placement says, not at "grade level," and keep the result in the materials file — not as the transcript title.

8. Evaluation and plan notes — private.

If you seek a private evaluation, an LEA evaluation, an IEP, or a Section 504 plan, keep reports and notices in a **confidential family file**. You may note "evaluation dated ..." or "plan type ..." in a private log. You do not need to print disability language on every transcript shared broadly. Share minimally. Follow privacy rules when dual-enrolling or returning to school.

Also useful, when you have them: a list of controlled or practiced texts completed; accommodations used in daily work (audio for content subjects, extra time on quizzes, speech-to-text for long responses); attendance or instructional-log lines if your state asks for them.

You do not need a color-coded binder empire. You need dates, samples, and ordinary titles.

Screening is not diagnosis

People say “tested for dyslexia” as if it were an afternoon quiz. **Evaluation** is the better word when a full look is needed.

Screening is a brief risk flag. Its job is to notice who may need help *now* so preventive teaching can start — even when a formal label is only suspected. School tools of this kind (brief early-literacy risk measures named in IDA materials as examples of the *type*) are flags, not labels. A parent-observable checklist and a careful ear for persistent word-reading or spelling struggle are also flags. A twenty-minute online quiz is not a diagnosis.

A comprehensive evaluation gathers history and measures that speak to word recognition, decoding (including nonsense words when used), spelling, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, and related processing — and yields a **written report**, a tentative identification when the profile fits, a starting point for intervention at **current skill** (not chronological grade), and documentation that can later support services or testing accommodations. IQ discrepancy is not required under the frame IDA describes for current regulations.¹⁰⁶ An initial identification is tentative; strong response to appropriate teaching can also clarify whether prior opportunity gaps were part of the story.

Teach now on risk. Do not freeze Structured Literacy until a report arrives. Do seek evaluation when you need documentation, a differential look at co-occurring concerns, or a clearer map than kitchen observation alone.

Practical triggers that often mean “seek evaluation” (not a diagnosis of any fictional child):

- Accurate or fluent word reading or spelling stays hard **despite** instruction that works for the child’s peers
- Family history of reading or spelling difficulty
- Early speech/language delay, or persistent trouble with rhyming and letter–sound links

¹⁰⁶IDA Testing and Evaluation fact sheet / 2025 Explanation: IQ discrepancy not required; unexpectedness relative to effective instruction and peer progress.

- Screening or teacher concern that does not resolve after targeted help
- Need for IEP or 504 documentation, private-school accommodations, or later College Board / ACT processes
- Co-occurring concerns (attention, language, anxiety secondary to reading failure) that need sorting

Good grades do not rule dyslexia out. Failing grades do not prove it without looking at instruction quality, attendance, vision and hearing, language proficiency, and opportunity to learn. Colored lenses are not the evaluation. A publisher placement is not the evaluation.

When documentation matters — and when teaching is enough for today

Some families teach for months on suspicion, keep dated samples, and only later seek a formal look because dual enrollment, testing accommodations, or school services need paper. That sequence can be wise.

Some families need the evaluation sooner because differential diagnosis matters, or because an LEA conversation is already underway.

Either way: the English hour continues. Access tools (text-to-speech, audiobooks, dictation) can open content doors while code is repaired. Access is not a substitute for today's decoding or encoding lesson when that lesson *is* the code.

IDEA and Section 504 — high-level map

Not legal advice. This is a plain map of publicly available U.S. Department of Education / OCR / OSEP guidance patterns. It is not a substitute for the IDEA statute and regulations, Section 504 regulations, state rules, or advice from a qualified attorney or trained advocate. Procedures and timelines vary by State and local education agency (LEA). Read your own notices. Keep copies. This book does not draft due-process strategy.

Two federal frames, different jobs.

IDEA Part B is the special-education statute: child find; evaluation; eligibility as a child with a disability who needs special education and related services; a free appropriate public education (**FAPE**) through an **IEP**.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a disability **civil-rights** law for recipients of federal funds (including public schools). The disability definition is broader. FAPE under 504 means regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's needs as adequately as peers' needs are met. Title II of the ADA overlaps for public entities. OCR's 2016 Parent and Educator Resource Guide walks differences at a high level.¹⁰⁷

Child find includes homeschooled children. OSEP guidance (QA 21-05, Question A-4) states that child-find obligations apply to children who are home schooled; generally the LEA where the parents **reside** is responsible for child find for homeschooled students, including initial evaluations and reevaluations.¹⁰⁸ Leaving public-school enrollment does not erase that duty in the way families sometimes fear. Implementation quality still varies. **Not legal advice.**

MTSS / RTI cannot be used to delay or deny an initial evaluation. OSEP guidance restates that an LEA may not reject a referral or delay an initial evaluation because the child has not finished an MTSS framework.¹⁰⁹ Parents may request evaluation at any time. Helpful intervention while you wait for a meeting is fine. Using the wait to **deny** evaluation is not, under that guidance. **Not legal advice.**

Eligibility is not identical to a clinical label. A private or educational identification of dyslexia does not automatically equal IDEA eligibility. IDEA requires meeting State criteria for a disability category (often Specific Learning Disability) **and** needing special education and related services as a result. States differ on how they name dyslexia inside SLD. A child can have dyslexia and a 504 plan without an IEP; an IEP can serve reading without ever printing the word "dyslexia"; a child denied IDEA eligibility may still qualify under 504 if an impairment substantially limits a major life activity. **Not legal advice.**

Reading counts as a major life activity under 504. OCR's 2016 guide lists reading among major life activities. Mitigating measures (except ordinary eyeglasses

¹⁰⁷U.S. Department of Education, OCR, *Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504* (December 2016). **Not legal advice.**

¹⁰⁸OSERS/OSEP, *Return to School Roadmap: Child Find Under Part B of IDEA* (OSEP QA 21-05, 24 August 2021), Question A-4 — homeschool child find. **Not legal advice.**

¹⁰⁹OSEP QA 21-05 (MTSS/RTI must not delay or deny initial evaluation). **Not legal advice.**

and contacts) are not considered when deciding whether an impairment substantially limits. OCR's explicit dyslexia example matters for families who hear "but the grades are fine": a student substantially limited in reading who earns good grades through extreme effort may still need a multisensory approach and additional time.¹¹⁰ **Not legal advice.**

Plans. A written 504 plan is common practice; IDEA-eligible students with IEPs are protected under 504 and are not required to hold a separate 504 plan — the IEP can meet 504 FAPE. For many students who need specialized reading instruction, the IEP is the heavier tool. For students who need access accommodations without specialized instruction as the LEA defines it, 504 may be the path. Local practice varies. District evaluations, when the district evaluates, are framed as no cost to parents in OCR's guide pattern; independent private evaluations are a parallel path families sometimes buy. **Not legal advice.**

Parent action pattern (content only — not a legal form). A dated written request can name the child, the residence address, the suspected areas (reading accuracy or fluency, spelling, written expression), prior interventions tried, and a clear ask: initial evaluation under IDEA Part B and consideration under Section 504. Attach screening results or private reports if any. Ask for procedural safeguards and for the child-find or special education coordinator's contact. Keep proof of delivery. If the child is homeschooled, say so. Tone stays factual. Do not lead with threats, with a parent-issued final diagnosis posed as fact, or with a demand that the district purchase a specific brand by Friday. Asking for intensive structured literacy / Orton–Gillingham–informed intervention as a *category* is different from ordering a SKU. Parent Centers (the parentcenterhub.org network), OCR resources, and IDA fact sheets are better next steps than this chapter's footnotes. **Not legal advice.**

Then return to teaching.

Accommodations — honesty for the file

Accommodations change *how* the student accesses instruction or shows learning without changing the destination standard. **Modifications** change *what* is expected or taught. Homeschool parents still need the split so help does not quietly lower

¹¹⁰OCR 2016 Section 504 Resource Guide — dyslexia/good-grades example; reading as major life activity. **Not legal advice.**

the destination.

Extra time is a timing tool. Alone, it rarely remediates decoding. It helps when the student has been taught how to use the minutes — to apply strategies, reread complex syntax, work through slow processing — and when the same tool is practiced in ordinary work before high-stakes exams.

Audio and text-to-speech open grade-level **content** (history, science, literature meaning) when decoding is the barrier. They do not teach decoding. If the construct being measured is reading comprehension of print, audio can become a modification. For knowledge-building while intervention runs, audio is often essential.

Speech-to-text, scribe, and keyboarding let thinking show without a handwriting or spelling bottleneck. Spelling and written expression still need instruction. College Board and ACT list tools such as extended time, text-to-speech, and speech-to-text as available **with documentation and approval** — not automatic, not a score guarantee.

Match the tool to the functional limitation. Practice in daily English what you will later request on an exam. Combine intervention with accommodations. Accommodation is not a substitute for appropriate remediation — IDA's closing frame.¹¹¹

In the dated notebook, note which accommodations you used and when. That history helps later SSD or school conversations. It also keeps you honest at the kitchen table: headphones beside the science chapter, tiles on the decoding page.

Five-state grain — pattern, not a fifty-state treatise

Homeschool rules differ. These five states show the pattern that matters for English titles. Read your own statute. None of them requires **Dyslexic English I**. None requires a brand on the face of the record.

Texas. Under the *Leeper* frame as TEA describes home schools operating as private schools: a bona fide written curriculum consisting of **reading, spelling, grammar**, mathematics, and good citizenship. TEA does not regulate home schools or award a state diploma for them. Map dyslexia work onto reading / spelling / grammar.

¹¹¹IDA, "Accommodations for Students with Dyslexia" fact sheet (2020): accommodations + intervention; accommodation ≠ substitute for remediation.

North Carolina. DNPE requirements include notice of intent and an annual nationally standardized test in **English grammar, reading, spelling, and mathematics**. The state does not prescribe your curriculum brand and does not issue your diploma or transcript. Test objects are ordinary English nouns — not “Take Flight.”

Pennsylvania. Statute (24 P.S. § 13-1327.1) says elementary education **shall include** English (**spelling, reading, writing**), among other subjects. Portfolio patterns include reading/language arts evidence at grades 3, 5, and 8. Keep portfolio English evidence ordinary-named.

Virginia. Under § 22.1-254.1 patterns, the parent provides a description of the curriculum **limited to a list of subjects**. Write **Language Arts, Reading, or English** on that list — not a brand. Evidence-of-progress options (achievement composites, certain college-admission equivalents, evaluation letters) are not publisher placement PDFs.

New York. Under 8 NYCRR 100.10, grades 1–6 required subjects include **reading, spelling, writing, English language**, among others. IHIP, quarterly reports, and annual assessment rules apply by grade band. Home instruction does not yield a local or Regents diploma from the district. Required nouns are again ordinary.

Across these five: the expected English object is ordinary subject language. Accommodations and interventions live in instructional notes and, when relevant, in IEP/504 documents handled under privacy rules.

If your state is not one of these five, borrow the pattern: ordinary titles, dated samples, brand names on materials lists, parent reads own rulebook.

Assessment honesty — what this file is not

Exit tickets, diagnostic wrongs, done-enough checklists, optional vendor placement, and formal evaluation when sought — that is this book’s assessment grain.

It is **not** a percentile as the only story of the child.

It is **not** NAEP as a homeschool census (NCES has not published a nationally representative homeschooled NAEP reading score of the kind people invent in conversation).¹¹²

¹¹²NCES/NAEP honesty: school-population NAEP is not a homeschool census. Sempeles and

It is **not** Accelerated Reader points as comprehension.¹¹³

It is **not** a stopwatch cult before accuracy.

It is **not** a 180-day worksheet dump pretending to be a record.

SAT Subject Tests were discontinued in June 2021 — do not build a plan around them. For NCAA core-course English worksheets, AP Language or Literature, and CLEP Composition grain, see *English for Homeschooling* once, then return here for dyslexia-appropriate **Reading / Language Arts / English** records. Do not send an elementary learner's parent into AP paperwork as the main path.

Publisher "Level 3" is a scope sequence inside a kit. It is not a legal grade. It is not a transcript line.

Life of the habit — the file you keep

The English hour already carries the weekly rhythm: cumulative review; reteach from today's errors; stop before shame. Chapter 8's "done enough" carries writing habit tips. This chapter carries the **file**.

Tuesday's miss becomes Wednesday's review because the error log exists.

Friday's exit ticket shows whether the week's focus skill is ready to mix, not whether a birthday arrived.

September's oral reading note sits beside March's so growth is visible without a sales chart.

When someone asks what you taught, you open **Language Arts** samples — not a brand war.

Keep the private evaluation folder private. Keep the public-facing titles stranger-readable. Keep the sits short enough to finish. Keep going without waiting for a perfect label to grant permission to teach the code.

You do not need to be a reading specialist to date a notebook. You do need to hear a picture guess offered as word reading, to write what happened, and to ask for the letters again tomorrow.

That is records. That is next steps. That is enough for the paper side of a real English path.

Cui, NCES 2024-113 for homeschool pond figures.

¹¹³WWC Accelerated Reader Adolescent Literacy 2010 — no discernible; points $\neq$ comprehension proof.

Chapter 10 — Resources by fit



Figure 12: Library card, headphones, and a blank fit card — still-life, no people, no logos.

Structured Literacy is an **approach**: explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic. Programs may deliver it. This book does not crown one.

You choose by **fit**, not by rank. Fit axes that actually matter:

- **Who teaches** — you after a tutor screening; a hired tutor; a classroom teacher; a Wilson Dyslexia Practitioner or Therapist; a Certified Academic Language Therapist
- **What dose** the family can sustain — minutes per day × days per week × years
- **What skill band** — early code, remediation, adolescent repair
- **What setting** — one-to-one kitchen, small group, school Tier 3
- **What documentation** you have — none, screening risk, private evaluation, IEP or 504
- **What bandwidth** you have — training load, frustration tolerance, siblings at the same table

Vendor marketing is not a ranking. “Research-based” on a sales page is a label until it is tied to a named study, practice guide, or What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report. When WWC ratings exist, this chapter copies them honestly and labels **school** / **vendor** products as such.¹¹⁴

WWC “no studies meet” means the Clearinghouse could not validate eligible evidence under that protocol at that time. It does **not** mean “parents must not use it.” It does ban crowning the program as WWC-proven for that protocol.

Omit sticker prices you cannot verify. Costs change. Time is also a cost — a program that needs hours you cannot protect needs a different fit, not a quieter PDF of the same kit.

Start with access that costs a library card or less. Then choose an instructional path. **Access without instruction withholds reading. Instruction without access withholds knowledge.**

¹¹⁴WWC honesty rule — copy ratings; label school/vendor; access date 6 September 2026.

First: library \$0 and free access tools

Public library

A library card is the first content path for many families. National household surveys have long shown libraries among major sources of books and curriculum materials for homeschoolers; recent NCES figures also show homeschooled students more likely than the full K–12 population to have visited a library in the past month.¹¹⁵ Use the card for print when collections hold useful text, for audiobooks, and for a quiet table.

A story hour is motivation. It is not the Structured Literacy sit. It is not a transcript line.

Libby / OverDrive (and similar library apps) put audiobooks and ebooks on a phone or tablet through your card. Use them for science, history, and literature **meaning** while decoding intervention runs in a separate block.

Bookshare

Bookshare provides accessible ebooks for people with **print disabilities**, including **dyslexia**¹¹⁶ and related reading / specific-learning-disability processing impairments, vision impairments, and physical impairments that block standard print. It operates under the **Chafee Amendment** copyright path — **not** under IDEA — so an **IEP or 504 plan is not required** for membership. A qualified professional (educators, medical or mental-health providers, librarians, social-service workers, and others on Bookshare’s certifier lists) certifies eligibility. Reciprocal membership paths with NLS and Learning Ally are recognized.

Free for qualifying U.S. students (project support from the U.S. Department of Education / OSEP is noted on Bookshare’s materials). Adult non-student fees may exist — verify current terms; this book does not invent 2026 dollar amounts. The lock for student readers is the free qualifying path.

Bookshare can open content access. **It does not teach decoding.**

¹¹⁵Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113 (and related PFI/homeschool tables): library use patterns for homeschooled vs full K–12 — access path, not a curriculum.

¹¹⁶Bookshare qualify page: print disability including dyslexia; Chafee path; IEP/504 not required; free for qualifying U.S. students.

National Library Service (NLS) — Library of Congress

Audio and braille materials for blind and print-disabled residents, with an eligibility certification path, free to qualified users. Overlaps with Bookshare reciprocal recognition. Useful for severe print disability and for families already in that service system.

Learning Ally

Human-narrated audiobooks aimed at print-disabled readers. School site licenses often cover students; individual membership paths exist. Treat as assistive access parallel to Bookshare. **Omit unverified 2026 individual list prices** — check current terms before you budget.

Device-native tools (\$0 marginal)

Modern operating systems include **text-to-speech** (Speak Screen, Narrator, Select-to-Speak, browser Read Aloud, Immersive Reader—class tools in education accounts) and **speech-to-text** dictation. Browser reader views, larger text, and magnification are presentation supports. Teach the child to use the tool — accommodations help when practiced (IDA's point). These are still not a phonics curriculum.

Wood and related TTS research support comprehension *access* as compensation when decoding is hard.¹¹⁷ Compensation is not phonics. Headphones beside a print book belong in the access lane; tiles belong on the decoding page.

What \$0 cannot replace

A free audiobook stack without phonemic awareness with letters, systematic phonics, spelling, and guided decoding leaves the disability unaddressed. Structured literacy materials have costs. Tutoring has costs. Evaluations have costs. Scholarships, used markets, and LEA child-find services exist in the real world. This book does not invent a national free Tier-3 therapist.

Honest sentence: start library + Bookshare eligibility + OS text-to-speech for **access**, and choose a fit-based instructional program below for **learning to read**.

¹¹⁷Wood et al. 2018 — TTS compensation for comprehension access.

Orton–Gillingham as approach, not a single boxed kit

Many kitchen and clinic programs say they are Orton–Gillingham–informed. **Unbranded Orton–Gillingham–based strategies**, in the WWC Students with Learning Disabilities report (July 2010), had **no studies meet** evidence standards — WWC was unable to draw conclusions about effectiveness or ineffectiveness for that protocol.¹¹⁸ That does not ban OG-informed teaching. It bans the sentence “WWC proves OG works for LD.”

IDA’s Structured Literacy umbrella is the approach language this book already uses. Branded products below carry their own vendor claims and, where opened, their own WWC lines.

Kitchen / parent-tutorable options (vendor-labelled)

These are fit candidates when a parent or hired tutor can deliver one-to-one or small-home instruction with scripted support. None is crowned #1.

Barton Reading & Spelling System

Fit signal: high parent-training load upfront; strong scripted support; sustained weekly dose; good when a parent (or tutor) can be the instructor after screening.

Vendor locks (as the publisher describes): one-to-one tutoring for children, teens, or adults who struggle with reading, writing, or spelling due to dyslexia or learning disability; every student starts at **Level 1**; **levels are not based on grade or age**; students may begin as young as age 5; tutor need not be a professional educator if they pass the **Tutor Screening**; formal diagnosis **not required** to begin if dyslexia is suspected; completing all **10 levels** typically reaches about a **ninth-grade** reading level; recommend at least **two hours** one-on-one per week, year-round, sessions no longer than about an hour.

WWC (Students with Learning Disabilities, July 2010): no studies meet standards — unable to draw conclusions for students with learning disabilities under that protocol.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸WWC, Orton-Gillingham–based Strategies (Unbranded), Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): no studies meet.

¹¹⁹WWC, *Barton Reading & Spelling System*, Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010):

Homeschool testimonials on vendor pages are testimonials, not randomized trials. Placement and screening tools are vendor tools, not IDEA eligibility.

All About Reading / All About Spelling

Fit signal: parent-friendly scripting; separate reading and spelling tracks; lower daily-minutes claim — watch under-dosing if a severely impaired reader needs Tier-3 intensity beyond a short daily sit.

Vendor locks: programs described as based on Orton–Gillingham research; All About Reading covers phonics, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension across **four levels plus pre-reading**; All About Spelling is a **seven-level** encoding program; level **numbers do not correspond with grade levels**; most spelling students start Level 1 regardless of age; vendor claims include dyslexia-friendly language and a “about 20 minutes a day” pattern — those are **vendor claims**, not WWC ratings.

WWC: no intervention report for AAR/AAS was opened for this book’s research stream. Do not invent one.

Logic of English — Foundations and Essentials

Fit signal: choose by age/development first. A struggling eight-year-old more often belongs in Essentials than in repeating early-childhood games.

Vendor locks: **Foundations** designed for ages **4 through 7** (playful, reading emphasis, typically spanning levels across a few years); **Essentials** designed for ages **8 to adult** (deeper spelling, phonogram, and morphology application; application levels for differentiation). Foundations is **not** required before Essentials. Both teach a large set of basic phonograms. Homeschool / at-home is a named vendor path.

WWC: no intervention report for Logic of English was opened for this stream. Do not invent one.

no studies meet.

Spalding / Writing Road to Reading

Fit signal: classical and parent-taught Spalding communities; structured-literacy positioning on vendor materials.

WWC Beginning Reading (October 2012 Spalding report): no studies meet standards.¹²⁰ Do not crown as WWC-proven. Omit unverified kit prices.

Other kitchen-adjacent names

Recipe for Reading, Preventing Academic Failure (PAF), and various OG tutor manuals appear in dyslexia communities. Treat detailed 2026 kit claims as unverified unless you open current pages. Prefer comparing opened, named options (Barton, AAR/AAS, LoE, Wilson, SPIRE, Take Flight) when you write your own shopping notes.

Intensive / certified / school-suite options (vendor- and school-labelled)

These fit when the child needs Tier-3 intensity and you can access a trained instructor, therapist pipeline, or district suite. A weekly “Wilson-ish” worksheet packet is not Wilson Reading System. Ask for fidelity: minutes, group size, instructor credential.

Wilson Reading System (WRS)

Fit signal: school or clinic intensity with a certified instructor; not a casual parent flip-through.

Vendor locks: Tier 3 Structured Literacy; based on phonological-coding research and Orton–Gillingham principles; for students in **Grades 2–12** and adults with word-level deficits not making sufficient progress, or with language-based LD such as dyslexia; small group ideally up to about four, or one-to-one; lesson structure in Blocks (full lesson = multiple Blocks; vendor framing includes a minimum complete-lessons-per-week pattern); instructors: WRS Level I Certified Wilson

¹²⁰WWC, Spalding Method (Beginning Reading, October 2012): no studies meet.

Dyslexia Practitioner or Level II Certified Wilson Dyslexia Therapist. Related products (for example Foundations) are different programs — do not conflate.

WWC Beginning Reading (2 July 2007): one study of a **modified** WRS (fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary components eliminated at researchers’ request) met standards — **potentially positive effects on alphabetics; no discernible effects on fluency and comprehension**; extent of evidence **small**.¹²¹ That is the honest sentence. Do not upgrade it to “proven to fix dyslexia.”

WWC Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): **no studies meet** — unable to draw conclusions for the LD population protocol.¹²²

Take Flight (Luke Waites Center / Scottish Rite for Children)

Fit signal: therapy-level training; school or clinic dose; common reference in some Texas dyslexia-intervention networks; a parent cannot casually self-certify from a shopping cart alone.

Program locks (Center materials): curriculum written by Luke Waites Center staff; builds on Alphabetic Phonics and prior Scottish Rite literacy programs; designed for **dyslexia therapists** with children **ages 7 and older** who have **developmental dyslexia**; small group **two to six**; minimum **45 minutes/day, five days/week, or 60 minutes/day, four days/week**; **132** new-learning days + **98** application days = **230** days of direct instruction; content claims include the five National Reading Panel components, **44** English sounds, **96** letter–sound correspondence rules, **87** affixes, spelling rules, fluency practice, and comprehension/vocabulary strategies in oral reading context. Sibling Center programs (Bridges, Build, and others) are siblings — do not conflate.

WWC: no Take Flight intervention report was found in this book’s research stream.¹²³ Center research summaries are **developer research**, not WWC. Do not paste them as Clearinghouse ratings.

¹²¹WWC, *Wilson Reading System* (Beginning Reading, 2 July 2007): potentially positive alphabetics; no discernible fluency/comprehension; small extent; modified study. Do not upgrade to “proven to fix dyslexia.”

¹²²WWC, *Wilson Reading System*, Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): no studies meet.

¹²³Take Flight (Luke Waites Center / Scottish Rite for Children): no WWC intervention report found this stream — cite developer research as developer research, not Clearinghouse ratings. Vendor/center materials opened 6 September 2026.

S.P.I.R.E. / SPIRE

Fit signal: often purchased via schools and districts; homeschool is named among specialized audiences on vendor navigation — confirm the current homeschool SKU on order pages before you promise yourself a kitchen kit.

Vendor locks: explicit, teacher-led multisensory intervention; Grades **PreK–8+**; **Tiers 2 and 3**; print / digital / hybrid options; vendor language names beginning and striving readers and students with dyslexia. Suite pieces (Sounds Sensible and related foundations) appear beside the main intervention.

WWC: no SPIRE intervention report was opened for this stream.¹²⁴ Do not invent one. Omit unverified prices.

School-labelled WWC beginning-reading products (not kitchen crowns)

If a school conversation names these, know what WWC said — and keep them **school-labelled**. They are not a ranked shopping list for a kitchen dyslexia program.

- **Sound Partners** — positive effects reported for alphabetics, fluency, and comprehension (school beginning-reading protocol).
- **Reading Recovery** (updated July 2013 report pattern) — positive general reading achievement; potentially positive alphabetics, fluency, comprehension — grade 1 pull-out design.
- **Success for All** (March 2017 pattern) — positive alphabetics; potentially positive fluency; mixed comprehension / general reading — whole-school design.
- **Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)** (September 2017 pattern) — positive general reading achievement; potentially positive fluency; **no discernible alphabetics**.

¹²⁴SPIRE / EPS Learning: no WWC intervention report opened this stream — do not invent one. Vendor overview opened 6 September 2026.

LLI ratings are real and school-labelled. They are not, by themselves, a dyslexia-therapy substitute. A family may accept a school pull-out *and* seek OG-informed intensive intervention, or pursue IEP goals that specify structured literacy elements — local advocacy, **not legal advice**. Do not tell anyone WWC “proves LLI fixes dyslexia.”

How a program sits beside the English hour

A kit is not the hour. The hour is cumulative review, a short model, the student’s attempt, one good question, mixed practice, and an exit ticket — with intensity that is clearer and more frequent, not louder and more shaming.

When you adopt Barton, AAR/AAS, Logic of English, Wilson, Take Flight, SPIRE, Spalding, or an unbranded OG-informed sequence, you still protect that shape. The program supplies the planned scope, the scripted wording, the tile or card materials, and (when certified) the instructor credential. You supply the dated notebook, the error log, the refusal of picture-guessing as word reading, and the stranger-readable transcript title.

Two clocks can run in one week without confusing them:

- **Intervention clock** — decoding, encoding, morphology repair on today’s pattern. Unaided first. Tiles and dictation live here. A chatbot does not finish the word. Text-to-speech does not finish the decode page that is the lesson.
- **Content-access clock** — history, science, literature meaning by shared reading, Bookshare, Libby, or OS text-to-speech when print is the bottleneck. Knowledge and vocabulary grow while code is repaired. Access is labelled. It is not a substitute for the intervention sit.

If a vendor’s “twenty minutes a day” claim is all your calendar holds, ask whether the child’s profile needs Tier-3 dose instead. If a clinic’s 45×5 schedule is available, protect it — do not dilute it into a weekend worksheet packet and call the brand faithful.

Materials lists may name the program. Course descriptions may say “intensive structured literacy.” Credit lines say **Reading, Language Arts, or English**.

Unbranded OG-informed tutoring — without a crown

Some families hire an Orton–Gillingham tutor who is not tied to Barton, Wilson, or Take Flight by SKU. That can be a real fit when the tutor is trained, diagnostic, and systematic — and when dose is honest.

Keep the WWC line straight: unbranded OG-based strategies had **no studies meet** in the July 2010 LD protocol. That bans crowning. It does not ban hiring a careful tutor. Ask what sequence they follow, how they place by skill, how they handle encoding, how they fade picture cues, and how they document progress in ordinary English samples you can file under **Language Arts**.

Multisensory materials alone do not remediate dyslexia. Fidelity to explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic teaching does the work — whether the wrapper is branded or not.

How to choose without ranking

Compare on opened pages, then match dose to life.

- Parent can train and sustain **1:1 ≥ about two hours/week** and wants a dyslexia-specific tutoring system → Barton is a fit candidate to compare.
- Parent wants scripted shorter daily lessons and a separate spelling track → AAR + AAS is a fit candidate to compare — and honesty still asks whether twenty vendor minutes match a severe profile.
- Age **4–7** vs **8+** for a phonogram-heavy curriculum → Logic of English Foundations vs Essentials.
- Child needs certified Tier-3 intensity and you can access a WRS instructor → Wilson Reading System.
- CALT / therapist pipeline and **4–5 day/week** dose available → Take Flight is built for that lane.
- School already runs SPIRE → coordinate rather than stack conflicting

sequences.

- Spelling misery with relatively stronger oral reading → encoding-focused track (AAS or LoE Essentials spelling analysis) rather than assuming a reading kit alone fixes spelling.

Never put “#1 program for dyslexia” in your notes as if this book said it. **Never** invent a 2026 price table. **Never** title the transcript after the kit.

Placement tests place by skill. Start where they say. IDA evaluation guidance agrees: intervention begins at current skill, not chronological grade. Age does not retire decoding; a franchise level is not a birthday lock.

If the parent cannot sustain daily one-to-one

Fit shifts. Hire a Barton tutor. Seek clinic Take Flight or Wilson capacity. Negotiate school services if enrolled. Temporarily narrow other subjects so the English hour stays sharp. AAR’s short daily claim may still under-serve a severe profile — honesty beats optimism.

Teen still decoding at elementary skill: intensive certified intervention is the fit conversation, not another grade-level literature anthology alone. Use Bookshare / Libby / OS TTS for content credits (history, science) while intensive code repair runs. Transcript still says **English** or **Reading**, with a course description that can mention intensive structured literacy without branding the credit.

Early childhood risk (before fluent decoding measures work well): emphasize phonological awareness, naming, letter-sound links, and language. Preventive teaching now; formal identification may firm as word-reading measures become informative. Foundations-level and pre-reading tracks live here.

School offers only LLI or balanced-literacy pull-out: keep the WWC honesty above; structured literacy intensity may still need a parallel plan. Do not mash sequences that fight each other without noticing.

Evidence humility — short doctrine

“Science of reading,” “Orton–Gillingham,” and “Structured Literacy” on a box are professional-community or vendor labels until tied to a named source.

WWC “potentially positive / small extent” is a precise phrase. Copy it. Do not upgrade it.

This book’s teaching chapters rest on IDA Structured Literacy principles, National Reading Panel summaries, and IES practice-guide recommendations opened in the research behind the manual — not on a sales crown. Limit line, once more: **This is a useful study, not a promise that every home will see the same result.** Then teach.

Parent Centers, IDA fact sheets (testing and evaluation; accommodations; Structured Literacy), OCR’s 2016 Parent and Educator Resource Guide, and OSEP child-find materials are better legal-adjacent next stops than a chat window.¹²⁵ Chapter 9 already boxed **not legal advice**. This chapter does not reopen counsel.

For NCAA, AP, and CLEP handbook grain, point once to *English for Homeschooling*, then return to dyslexia-appropriate English.

A closing shopping order that respects dignity

1. Library card. Libby for content by ear when needed.
2. Bookshare eligibility if print disability fits — IEP/504 not required. Turn on OS text-to-speech and dictation; practice them.
3. Dated **Reading / Language Arts / English** notebook from Chapter 9.
4. Compare two or three fit candidates on current vendor pages and, where they exist, WWC PDFs — kitchen options vs certified intensity — without crowning.
5. Protect the dose you chose. Short sharp sprints beat rare marathons.
6. Keep brand names on the materials list. Keep the credit line stranger-readable.

You do not need every tool. You need access that opens knowledge, instruction that teaches the code, and a file that tells the truth without shame.

¹²⁵IDA fact sheets; OCR 2016 Section 504 Resource Guide; OSEP QA 21-05 — **not legal advice**. Chapter 9 owns the high-level map.

That is resources by fit. That is enough to choose without being sold a myth.

A Note on Sources

Studies named in the chapters are listed in Notes, in one series at the back. That is where the full citations live, so the teaching pages can stay a teaching voice.

Some items the research behind this book did not open stay out of the teaching voice. I did not invent a coefficient, a statute, a prevalence rate, or a product feature to fill a hole. If a study is in the chapter, it is in the notes. If we could not open it, it is not used as a finding here.

Program hours, credit claims, and product descriptions in the resources chapter are taken from the companies' own pages and labelled vendor. WWC ratings stay school-labelled and are copied honestly (including "no studies meet" and "potentially positive / small extent"). Access date 6 September 2026.