

English for Young Thinkers with Dyslexia

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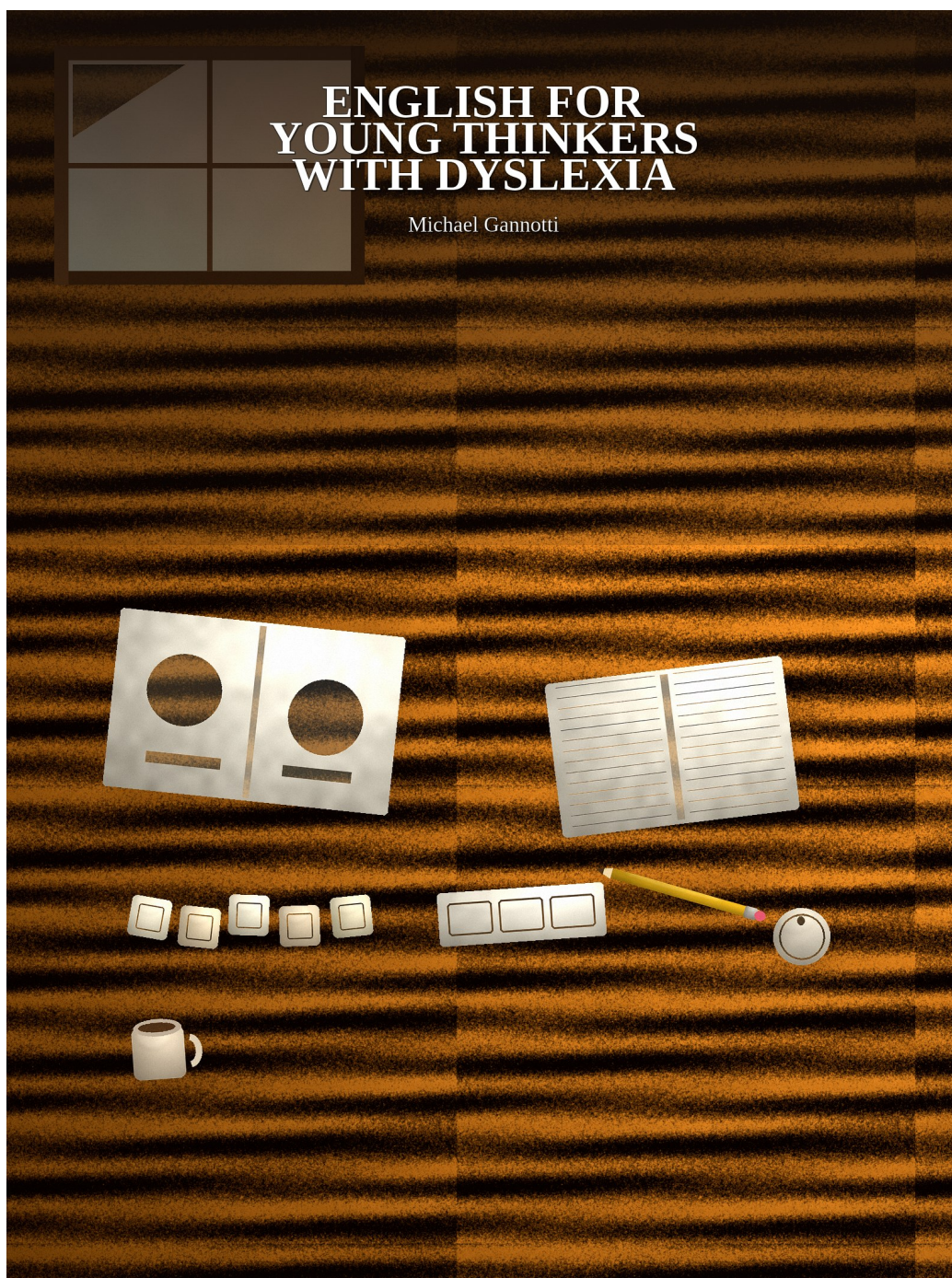


Figure 1: Cover

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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.

Contents

- Welcome
- How to Use This Book This Week
- If You Only Remember Five Things
- The English Hour (Structured Literacy for Ages 5–10)
- Chapter 1 — What dyslexia looks like at 5–10
- Chapter 2 — Phonemic awareness with letters
- Chapter 3 — Phonics and decoding
- Chapter 4 — Encoding and spelling
- Chapter 5 — Decodable connected reading and fluency after accuracy
- Chapter 6 — Vocabulary, morphology-light, and comprehension on accessible text
- Chapter 7 — Early writing with adaptations
- Chapter 8 — Short assessments and progress checks
- Chapter 9 — Records
- Chapter 10 — Resources
- A Note on Sources

Welcome

You are holding a teaching manual for English and language arts with a five- to ten-year-old who finds word reading and spelling unexpectedly hard — even when teaching that works for peers has already been tried, or is being tried right now.

That difficulty has a name when it fits the profile: **dyslexia**. The International Dyslexia Association’s October 2025 definition governs this book; the 2002 Lyon–Shaywitz wording remains the historical companion.¹ 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, ages **5–10 only**, 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.²

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.

¹International 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). Access date for URLs in these notes: 6 September 2026.

²International 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.

Why this book exists

Many families arrive here exhausted. Someone said *lazy*. Someone said *wait* — *they'll catch up*. Someone sold colored overlays as a cure.³ Someone said strengths mean phonics is optional. Someone handed a leveled ladder and called it decoding. Someone offered “just read more” as the only intervention. Someone counted Accelerated Reader points and called that comprehension.⁴

You needed a how-to for ages **5–10** that is denser on named activities and short skill checks than a typical-literacy manual for the same ages, and narrower than a grades **1–12** dyslexia overview. 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. Planning bands run **5–7** and **8–10**. An eight-year-old who cannot yet blend CVC sits in blending work with respectful materials — not a chapter-book novel study because “third grade.” Age does not retire decoding. A franchise “Level 1” 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, the hour is code-honest and short enough to finish with dignity — often about **twenty-five to forty minutes**. You open with a few minutes of

³American 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. Parallel eye care if needed; Structured Literacy is the instructional path this book teaches.

⁴What 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.

cumulative review of known sounds, shaky words, or meaningful word parts. If the probe shows need, you run a brief **phonemic awareness** crumb *with letters* — three to eight minutes, 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, comprehension, or writing crumb. You close with a tiny **exit ticket** and one explained error that seeds tomorrow's review.

Intensity is part of kindness: clearer teaching and more reps, not louder teaching and more shame. Frequent short sharp sits 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 for bands **5–7** and **8–10**, talk-box shape, in-home and out-of-home try-it shape, intensity honesty, and the AI rules for ages **5–10** 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 looks like at 5–10
2. Phonemic awareness with letters
3. Phonics and decoding
4. Encoding and spelling
5. Decodable connected reading and fluency after accuracy
6. Vocabulary, morphology-light, and comprehension on accessible text
7. Early writing with adaptations
8. Short assessments and progress checks

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

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.

Ample practical activities, short assessments, and resources are load-bearing here — materials, time, steps, error patterns, exit tickets, done-enough checklists — not slogans and not a one-hundred-eighty-day dump.

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 at the same ages. Typical phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and early writing are necessary but **insufficient intensity** for dyslexia risk.
- For dyslexia intensity across grades **1–12**, including adolescent morphology, high-school argument writing, and secondary access paperwork, see *English for the Dyslexic* — then return here for the early-years window. What is unfinished at age 10 lives there as a forward path, not as chapters in this book.
- For broad **1–12** literature and composition handbook grain, see *English for Homeschooling* — then return to dyslexia-appropriate Reading / Language Arts / English records for this age.
- For the wider AI and education stack, see *Autonomous AI and Education* — then return to this book's English-hour AI box for ages **5–10**.

One pointer. Then teach English for young thinkers with dyslexia 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 **Young Thinkers Dyslexia 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).⁵ 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 treat Accelerated Reader points as comprehension instruction.⁶ 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).⁷ Prevalence, when we name it, stays in ranges: stricter estimates often land near **5–10 percent**; broader symptom language near **15–20 percent**.⁸ It will not give medical or legal advice. It will not park a chatbot as the child’s reading or writing teacher. It will not use text-to-speech to finish today’s decoding lesson when that lesson is the code.

⁵American 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. Parallel eye care if needed; Structured Literacy is the instructional path this book teaches.

⁶What 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.

⁷Ellena 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.

⁸Prevalence 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 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 — sounds with letters, phonics, spelling, connected reading, vocabulary and meaning, early writing, or a short skill check — 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 — already relevant by ages **8–10** — say so without cruelty.⁹ Slow and accurate is the path.

This week you can learn what a Structured Literacy hour looks like and what this book refuses. Today the child can try one short accurate move with tiles or a controlled sentence — not a marathon.

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.

⁹Joseph K. Torgesen, "Avoiding the Devastating Downward Spiral," *American Educator* 28, no. 3 (2004), and related early-intervention pieces: fluency gap-closing honesty — rate gaps may linger even when accuracy grows; already relevant by 8–10. Say so without cruelty.

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: first sound linked to a letter; silent-*e* decode and spell; stretch-and-spell dictation; accuracy before a fluency reread; a light morphology chunk (*un-*, *re-*, *-ed*); gist-with-evidence on text heard by ear while code repair continues; one writing job with one revision target; a short letter-sound or word-reading check.
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 **5–7** and **8–10**. They are skill bands, not locks on a cake.

- A six-year-old with accurate early code and strong listening may still need brief phonemic work with letters and a careful phonics sequence.
- An eight-year-old with unfinished CVC blending sits in blending work with respectful materials, mature wording, and no baby talk — not a novel study because “third grade.”
- A nine- or ten-year-old may add syllable types, vowel teams, light morphology, and short paragraphs — and still need code repair without shame if skill shows need.

“Too young for phonics” is not a rule in this house when letter–sound work can begin. Neither is “they’re gifted, so we can skip the code.” Strengths are assets. They do not make Structured Literacy optional. Call advanced phonemic work for an older-in-band learner “ear training for English spelling,” not “baby sounds.”

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 **5–7 / 8–10**, 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. Chapter 8 deepens the kitchen skill checks — letter–sound inventory, word reading, spelling dictation, oral reading sample. Life-of-the-habit tips live in the English hour, in Chapters 7 and 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, 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, a blank page arrived with no plan, or the new chunk was too big. 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, stories, and curiosity 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.¹⁰ Keep the lanes labelled. Mash them and the house

¹⁰Sarah 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.

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 always — COPPA’s under-13 bright line applies to the whole **5–10** band; 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.¹¹ 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**. Never a brand. Never **Young Thinkers Dyslexia I**.¹² 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 early-band programs by **fit** — who teaches, dose, age/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.¹³ Kitchen options and intensive edge options sit on fit cards. Activity materials (tiles, sound boxes, sticky notes, controlled pages, error log, headphones) are listed beside them. When What Works Clearinghouse ratings

IDA assistive-technology advocacy: tools are bridges; access $\neq$ substitute for decoding/encoding when those are the lesson.

¹¹Children’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. The 22 April 2026 compliance date has passed. Access date 6 September 2026.

¹²Transcript titles in this book are Reading, Language Arts, or English — never a curriculum brand, never “Young Thinkers Dyslexia I.” Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113: no national home-school diploma.

¹³Bookshare, “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.

exist, this book copies them honestly and labels school or vendor origin.¹⁴ It does not crown one kit.

Teach now; evaluate when it matters

Suspicion of unexpected, persistent word-level difficulty is enough to begin Structured Literacy tomorrow.¹⁵ Ages 5–10 are the early-years window the October 2025 definition names as particularly effective. Formal evaluation informs differential diagnosis, documentation, and school 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 plus named activity types — not a one-hundred-eighty-day dump. **Assessment** means exit ticket, diagnostic wrong, done-enough checklist, the kitchen skill objects deepened in Chapter 8, 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.

¹⁴WWC 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 and related reports.

¹⁵IDA, “Testing and Evaluation” fact sheet; IDA 2025 Definition Explanation: anti-wait-to-fail; early years particularly effective; teach on risk; screening ≠ 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.¹⁶ 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. Ages 5–10 are the early-years window the definition names as particularly effective.

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.¹⁷ 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.

¹⁶International 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).

¹⁷AAP–AAO–AAPOS–AACO joint statement (Welcome n. 16): 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.¹⁸ Intensity — clearer teaching and more reps, short, sharp, and frequent — 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 learners keep a rate gap even when accuracy grows — already relevant by **8–10** — say so without cruelty.¹⁹ 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. Head-

¹⁸Refuse 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).

¹⁹Torgesen, "Avoiding the Devastating Downward Spiral," *American Educator* (2004) and related: rate gaps may linger; fluency after accuracy; already relevant by 8–10.

phones beside a print book can be both civil and instructional. They are not a substitute for teaching the code when the code *is* the lesson.²⁰ Two clocks in one week — intervention and content — beat one clock that only shames.

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

“We’ll wait until third grade / until it gets worse” wastes years that could have held short sharp sits. Persistence language in the definition is not a licence to wait. “They’re so creative we can skip phonics” refuses the work this book exists to do. Accelerated Reader points are not comprehension instruction.²¹ “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 **Young Thinkers Dyslexia I**. Prevalence, when named, stays in ranges (stricter about **5–10 percent**; broader symptom language about **15–20 percent**).²² The national homeschool enrollment share (**about 3.4 percent** in recent NCES figures) is a different pond — do not mash it as dyslexia prevalence.²³ 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.

²⁰Wood et al., *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 51, no. 1 (2018): TTS $\approx$ compensation/access ($\bar{d} \approx 0.35$), not phonics. IDA AT: access $\neq$ substitute for decoding/encoding when those are the lesson.

²¹WWC, *Accelerated Reader* (Adolescent Literacy, August 2010): no discernible effects in rated domains — school/vendor labelled. Points $\neq$ comprehension instruction.

²²IDA Basics/FAQ ~15–20% symptom language; stricter ~5–10% named in definition-revisiting literature (Catts et al. 2024 summarizing Fletcher et al.). Ranges only.

²³Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113: 3.4% / ~1.765M homeschooled — pond only, not prevalence.

The English hour (Structured Literacy for ages 5–10)



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 for ages **5–10**: explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic.²⁴ 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 — Band 5–7 (code-heavy)

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

Block	Minutes	Object
Cumulative review	3–5	Known sounds, shaky words, 2–3 heart parts
PA crumb (if needed)	3–6	With letters; one/two manipulations; today’s words
Phonics + encoding sit	10–15	New or repair pattern; decode + dictate
Connected accuracy reading	6–10	Decodable / pattern-controlled text
Fluency reread <i>or</i> vocab/comp crumb <i>or</i> shared writing	4–8	Fluency only after accuracy; rotate language/writing
Exit ticket	2–4	2–4 items + one explained error

Say at the open: “Before new, three knowns. Ready?” Bridge mouth to tile to print in the PA crumb. Teach one map both ways in the phonics sit — decode and

²⁴IDA, 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. Explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic; mastery to automaticity. Approach ≠ franchise.

spell what you teach. Heart parts or irregulars are mapped honestly — not fifty mystery words on Friday with no study. Finger under the word on connected text. Look through the letters. Blend. Meaning talk after the word is true — not instead of the word.

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

Session shape — Band 8–10 (still skill-first)

Older-in-band learners still place by skill. An eight-year-old with unfinished blending does not skip to novel study. Most weekdays still aim for about **twenty-five to forty minutes**.

Block	Minutes	Object
Cumulative review	3–5	Syllable types, vowel teams, early morph, shaky list
Code/morphology sit	10–15	Multisyllabic procedures + encode; light morph
Connected accuracy → fluency	8–12	Controlled then reread; or assisted oral reading
Vocab crumb + comprehension talk	5–8	One deep word; one strategy/structure question
Writing try (adapted)	5–10	Sentence → short paragraph; scribe option for ideas
Exit ticket	2–4	Decode/encode/morph probe or short oral retell

Mature materials. Respectful wording. Call advanced phonemic repair “ear training for English spelling,” not “baby sounds.” Light morphology means *un-*, *re-*, *-s/-ed/-ing/-er* — not adolescent Latin seminars. Scribe ideas when transcription blocks thinking; still teach today’s spellings on purpose. Fluency only after accuracy. Rate gaps may linger even when accuracy grows — say so without cruelty.²⁵

²⁵Joseph K. Torgesen, “Avoiding the Devastating Downward Spiral,” *American Educator* 28, no.

If the day only holds twenty minutes: keep the phonics+encoding sit or connected accuracy or a shared sentence — one named move done well beats a rushed medley.

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.²⁶ School design cues sometimes land near twenty to forty-five minutes, four or five days a week — useful as a picture of dose, not a parent statute you must copy minute-for-minute.²⁷

Kitchen levers that raise intensity without raising shame:

- Higher response rate — the child blends, encodes, and answers more than you lecture.
- Daily cumulative review of shaky items.
- Immediate, specific feedback (“that letter says /sh/ as one sound”).
- Smaller new chunk when yesterday’s win disappeared overnight.
- Connected accuracy reading every day you teach.
- Stop before melt.

Frequent short sharp sits beat a rare marathon. Harder for this brain means clearer teaching and more successful reps — not louder teaching. You are the home coach. A certified specialist, clinic, or school service stays on the table when probes stall,

3 (2004); related early-intervention pieces: fluency gap-closing honesty — rate gaps may linger even when accuracy grows; already relevant by 8–10.

²⁶Barbara 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.

²⁷Joseph 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.

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.

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 gist; job of the piece and the plan; what you can show two ways. Not “did you have fun.” Not a vocabulary quiz recitation.

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. Write it. Does it match?”
- Chapter 5: “Look through the word — then where should we slow down for a smooth reread?”
- Chapter 6: “What does this word (or part) mean here — and what is this mostly about?”
- Chapter 7: “What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, or thank — and what’s the plan?”
- Chapter 8: “What can you show me two ways today — and what still needs practice?”

Three to five follow-ups. One for meaning. One for representation (“show me with tiles / finger under the word / stretch the sounds / 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.²⁸ 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; the word sits outside today’s code; shame from old speed contests flooded the room; a blank page arrived with no plan; the new chunk was too big; they need a scribe 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. Clarify the question. Cover the picture. Shrink the chunk. Offer a scribe for ideas. Do not answer for them.

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**, and — for this title — **error patterns**.

Common kitchen types you will see again:

- **Fridge Letter Hunt** (5–7, 5–8 min) — letter–sound and initial sound on fridge magnets; watch letter name offered as sound.
- **Tile Build** (both, 8–10 min) — sound boxes or letter tiles for today’s pattern; build, blend, change one sound; watch untaught patterns slipping

²⁸Robert 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.

in.

- **Recipe / Label Decode** (both, 5–8 min) — sound through today’s grapheme on a package or step; watch picture or brand guessing.
- **Dictation Note** (both, 5–8 min) — short list of taught patterns; stretch and spell; race yesterday’s self, not a sibling’s speed.
- **Error Hospital Evening** (both, 6–8 min) — two or three misses from this week; reteach; re-try; date the win; keep curious, not shaming.
- **Scribe-and-Spell** (both, 10–12 min) — you scribe the idea once so thinking starts; student encodes taught focus words on purpose; watch the adult filling the focus blanks.
- **Accuracy-Then-Reread Couch** (both, 6–10 min) — first pass for true words; second pass for ease on the same text; never time cold undecodable text.
- **Morphology Fridge Build** (8–10, 5–8 min) — *un-*, *re-*, *-ful* and *kin*; watch invented affixes.
- **Word-of-Day Dinner** (both, 2–3 min) — one deep word reused; watch exact copy of the adult sentence with no ownership.

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 Sound-Out** (5–7, 2–4 min) — taught patterns on real print;

soft voice; sidewalk safety; within code reach.

- **Package Grapheme Hunt** (both, 3–5 min) — find today’s digraph or suffix; aisle courtesy; no lecture to a stranger’s child.
- **Library Craft Question** (both, 5–8 min) — open a book you can decode or hear; ask the chapter’s talk opening about meaning or word parts; a leveled ladder is not phonics proof.
- **Menu Shared Read** (both, 4–6 min) — connected text with a purpose; adult reads hard lines when needed.
- **Museum / Park Placard** (8–10, 5–8 min) — through the word then meaning; skip or adult-read if far beyond code.
- **Postcard / Thank-You** (both, 10–15 min) — writing ladder with an audience; scribe option; child keeps focus spellings.

Ordinary safety: roads, parking lots, aisle courtesy, no photographing strangers, no lecture to a cashier, no shaming the student in public, no tasting unknown things, no shoplifting a “test.” 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.²⁹

Hour hygiene — speaking turn and motivation choice

SL-1 Add-One Turn. Once in the hour, invite a full oral sentence — whose turn, one added idea, then stop. Speaking and listening grow inside the English hour. This is not a separate speaking franchise chapter.

MOT-1 Choice of Two Equivalents. Offer a choice between two tasks that teach the same skill (these eight tiles or those eight; this controlled page or that one). Choice of equivalent work is kindness. Choice to skip the code is not.

²⁹Session 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.

Hour-level debug

Symptom	Likely cause	Move
Hour is only worksheets	Missing connected text / talk	Put one decodable page and one oral question back
Hour is only cozy read-aloud	Missing code practice	Add 10–15 min phonics+encoding sit
Child guesses from pictures	Three-cueing habit	Cover picture; decodable crumb; “look through the word”
Child freezes	Wait-time zero / unclear question	One clear question; count three (Rowe/Stahl labelled)
Yesterday’s “got it” gone	No cumulative review	Rebuild review stack; shaky items daily
Writing never happens	Transcription load crushing ideas	Scribe ideas; child spells today’s 3–5 focus words
Tears / melt	Dose too long or new chunk too big	Shorten sit; shrink new; keep review + success reps
Sibling over-talk	No turn-taking norm	Post-response wait; “whose turn?”

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 paragraph. The habit is cumulative review plus diagnostic reteach plus dignity. Records will carry the file you keep. Chapters 7 and 8’s done-enough will carry writing-habit and progress tips. Do not invent a ninth teaching chapter titled “life of the habit.”

Two lanes — intervention and access

Lane	What it is	Tech role
Intervention / instruction	Teaching the code: decode, encode, morphology-light, connected text the child must map	Child unaided first; SCRIPT after try; model prepares parent, not the child's mouth or pencil
Accommodation / access	Getting rich content in while decoding is still being built on other text	TTS, audio books, dictation — labelled help; parent in the room; not a substitute for today's decoding try

Keep the lanes labelled. Headphones beside a print book can be both civil and instructional. They do not finish the decode page that was today's lesson.³⁰

AI at the English hour (ages 5–10) — 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 always. COPPA's under-13 bright line applies to the whole 5–10 band: parent-held account; no child-facing open chat as the partner; no child account as a secret friend.³¹ The 22 April 2026 compliance date has passed. Dyslexia is not a chatbot licence.

³⁰Sarah 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. IDA assistive-technology advocacy materials: tools are bridges; access $\neq$ substitute for decoding/encoding when those are the lesson.

³¹COPPA / FTC Rule (under-13): parent-held accounts; no unsupervised child open-chat partner for instructional work. Whole 5–10 band. The 22 April 2026 compliance date has passed. Access date 6 September 2026.

Ages 5–7: no live open chat as the child’s partner; SCRIPT after try for the adult to voice; no child account. **Ages 8–10:** still parent in the room; hint after attempt; unaided first; SCRIPT after try.

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). 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 at 5, not at 10. 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 story 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.³²
8. Detector-grade the child’s writing and call the score honesty — dyslexic writing is high-risk for false positives.³³
9. Hand the child an agent as a reading or writing partner, or a voice-clone toy as the “reading teacher.”

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).³⁴ **That is not a 5–10 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 story when those are the lesson.

One accommodation sentence: text-to-speech and dictation can open content access for a student with a reading disability.³⁵ That is not a licence to skip Structured

³²William 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.

³³Weixin 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.

³⁴Hamsa 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.

³⁵Sarah G. Wood, Jerad H. Moxley, Elizabeth L. Tighe, and Richard K. Wagner, “Does Use

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-light, early writing, handwriting, and spelling.³⁶ 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: Hermes 4 is not Hermes Agent. Grok is not Grok Bot and is not El Salvador Grok-as-tutor. There is no Grok Bot education SKU in this manual’s promises. Game artist makes pictures, not an ELA course. 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.
- 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.

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. IDA assistive-technology advocacy materials: tools are bridges; access $\neq$ substitute for decoding/encoding when those are the lesson.

³⁶NICHD, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* — Summary (NIH Pub. No. 00-4769, 2000); Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008; Steve Graham et al., elementary writers NCEE 2012-4058; IDA Structured Literacy. They do not name a chatbot as the reading teacher. NRP phonics average effect often summarized near $d \approx 0.41$; early intervention near ≈ 0.55 — useful studies, not a promise that every home will see the same result.

- The sit ended with dignity.

Done-enough on a skill, for later chapters: accurate on a short set; showable two ways when possible (read *and* spell; or retell *and* point to evidence); holds after a night. Not a national percentile. Not a color forever. Not “ready for birthday promotion to chapter books.”

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 looks like at 5–10

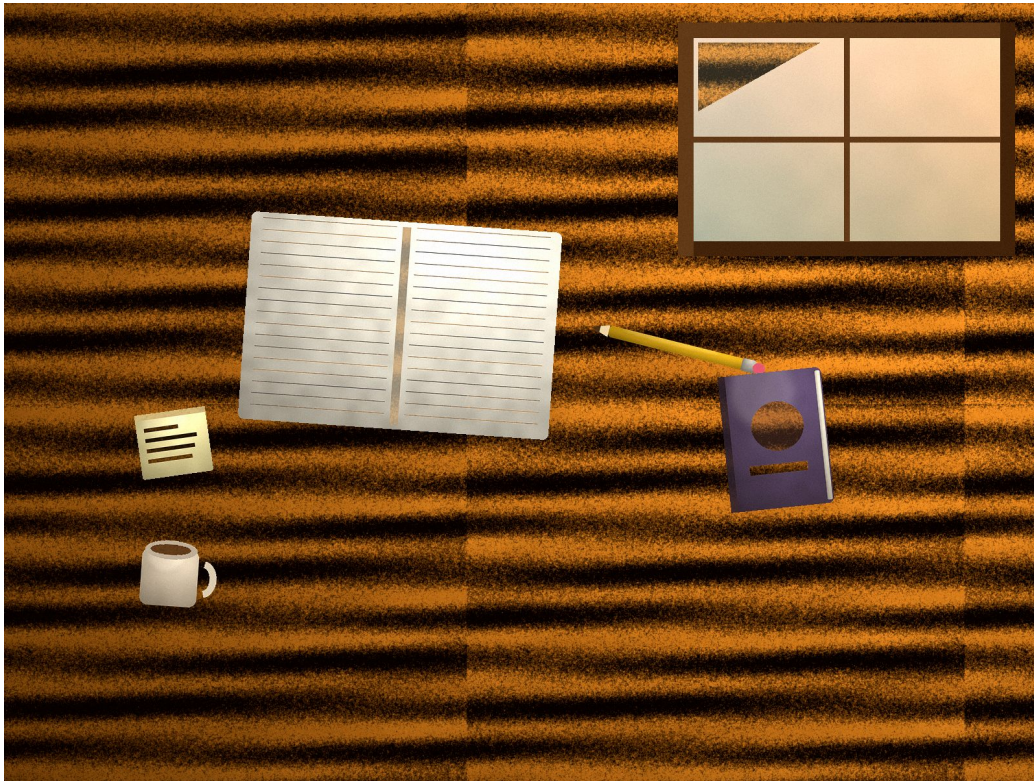


Figure 3: A hard/working sticky pair and letter tiles beside an open notebook — still-life, no people, no logos.

Why this matters

You are sitting with a five- to ten-year-old who is bright in conversation, curious about how things work, and somehow stuck on print. Homework takes forever. Spelling looks random. Reading aloud turns into tears or clowning. Someone said wait. Someone said overlays. Someone whispered “lazy.” Someone else said the child’s strengths mean phonics is optional.

This chapter names the problem correctly so you can teach tomorrow.

The International Dyslexia Association’s October 2025 definition puts word reading and spelling at the center — accuracy, speed, or both — and says language and literacy support before and during the early years of education is particularly effective.³⁷ That sentence is load-bearing for this book. Ages 5–10 *are* those early years. Naming dyslexia risk at this age is not a life sentence and not a wait-to-fail ticket. It is a reason to start Structured Literacy now: short, sharp, frequent teaching of sounds, letters, decoding, and encoding, with dignity.

The 2002 Lyon–Shaywitz consensus still appears in many statutes and older team documents: unexpected difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word recognition, poor spelling and decoding, often linked to the phonological component of language.³⁸ Use 2025 language for what you teach; keep 2002 visible when an IEP team still quotes it. Neither definition asks you to wait for a perfect label before you teach sounds and letters.

What unlocks for your child this week is simpler than a diagnosis theater: a parent who can hear a picture guess, refuse a laziness story, skip the overlay detour, and open tomorrow’s English hour without shame. Strengths stay. Instruction starts. Access tools (audio, text-to-speech later) open content doors while the code sits still happens. You do not need to be a reading specialist. You do need a clear picture of what is hard, what is already working, and what teaching looks like at the kitchen table.

Why the struggle is worth it: early, clear naming protects the child from years of “try harder” and “wait.” It points you to the English hour shape already in

³⁷International Dyslexia Association, Definition of Dyslexia (adopted by IDA Board 22 October 2025); IDA, “2025 Dyslexia Definition Explanation” (early years particularly effective; anti-wait-to-fail). Access date for URLs in these notes: 6 September 2026.

³⁸G. Reid Lyon, Sally E. Shaywitz, and Bennett A. Shaywitz, “A Definition of Dyslexia,” *Annals of Dyslexia* 53 (2003) — 2002 IDA consensus formal publication; historical companion to 2025.

this book — cumulative review, phonemic awareness with letters, phonics and encoding, connected accuracy, then fluency after accuracy. It also protects dignity. Secondary costs to confidence and print volume can begin early; refusing myths is kindness, not drama.

This chapter is parent-heavy on purpose. It still includes a student-facing talk box and named try-its in and out of the home. Chapters 2–4 put tiles, blending, and dictation on the table. You start here so those sits land on solid ground.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Everyday picture

It is Tuesday night. The packet asks your seven-year-old to “read the story and answer the questions.” The picture shows a dog. The letters say *pup*. Your child says *dog*, looks proud for half a second, then melts when you ask them to look at the letters. Or it is an eight-year-old who can talk for ten minutes about dinosaurs and cannot spell *said* two days in a row after studying it. Or a five-year-old who loves being read to and freezes when asked to push sounds with tiles. The room fills with advice: wait until spring; try harder; buy the colored lenses; guess from the picture — “good readers do that”; “they’re so smart, dyslexia can’t be it.”

None of those lines is the path this book takes.

Another Tuesday: the child reads a short controlled sentence accurately, slowly, with a finger under each word. A relative says, “But they’re so slow — shouldn’t we time them?” You hear the category error. Accuracy first. Smoothness later. Timing cold hard text trains guessing and shame. Keep that hearing sharp; Chapters 3 and 5 will use it every week.

Precise picture

For ages 5–10, dyslexia (or dyslexia risk) means unexpected, persistent difficulty with accurate and/or fluent English word reading and/or spelling despite instruction that works for peers. It usually links to phonological processing — and, increasingly as children grow, morphological processing — though those difficulties are common, not universal. Early oral language weaknesses often foreshadow literacy challenges. Severity sits on a continuum. Secondary consequences — thinner comprehension growth when print volume collapses, fragile confidence,

avoidance of reading turns — can already show by early elementary years. They are foreseeable effects of chronic print failure, not proof that the child is lazy or “a behavior problem.”

English’s deep orthography makes the load heavier: many vowel patterns, digraphs, silent letters, and spellings that protect meaning. Typical learners take time. Learners with dyslexia risk need clearer teaching and more reps — not louder teaching and more shame. Foorman and Torgesen describe instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and more supportive than typical classroom fare.³⁹ Home translation: short, sharp, frequent sprints. Intensity is kindness. Tears are not a badge.

Prevalence uses named ranges only. Many researchers describe a stricter band around about 5–10% for a more severe condition.⁴⁰ Broader awareness language (IDA Basics and FAQ) notes that as many as about 15–20% may show some symptoms of dyslexia; not all qualify for special education. Do not invent a single rate. The NCES figure of about 3.4% (~1.765 million) is the U.S. homeschooled population pond — not dyslexia prevalence.⁴¹ Do not mash those numbers.

Preschool and kindergarten foreshadowing (without fatalism). Family history of reading or spelling struggle raises vigilance, not a crystal ball. Late talking, thin vocabulary growth, unclear speech, weak rhyme and alliteration play, and slow letter learning are risk flags that justify denser teaching. Many children score low at the start of school; quality instruction sorts many slow starters upward. Dyslexia-related word reading and spelling problems tend to persist without intensive ongoing intervention. Ambiguity at school entry means screening plus short-cycle intensive instruction — not waiting for a grade-3 high-stakes label before you teach sounds and letters.

What you may already see at 5–10. Trouble sounding out words; weak letter–sound links; poor spelling; slow reading even when some words are known; collapsing comprehension when word reading collapses; homework meltdowns;

³⁹Barbara 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).

⁴⁰Prevalence 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). Never invent a single proprietary rate.

⁴¹Ellena 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 — pond only, not dyslexia prevalence. Do not use 5.2% as the homeschooled figure.

clowning during oral reading; shrinking independent print volume. NICHD’s public symptom framing matches that early English classroom picture. The first four items dominate daily English time in this age band.

What is unfinished at 10 even with strong early help. Morphology deepens. Text density rises. Fluency gaps may linger even when accuracy grows (Torgesen honesty — already relevant by 8–10). Adolescent advocacy and postsecondary access belong to the grades 1–12 sister book as forward pointers — not as chapters here. One pointer, then teach 5–10.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. **“Just wait — they’ll catch up.”** Persistence language in the definition is not permission to postpone help. Difficulties can show in the first year of instruction. Short-cycle intensive teaching clarifies who responds and who needs more. Waiting for grade 3 high-stakes clarity wastes the early-years window IDA names as particularly effective.
2. **“They’re lazy / they don’t want to learn.”** Dyslexia is not caused by lack of intelligence or desire. Meltdowns, clowning, and refusal often conserve dignity under a task that is disproportionately hard. “Try harder” is not an intervention.
3. **“Buy the colored overlays first.”** Vision problems can interfere with learning, but they are not the cause of primary dyslexia. The joint AAP–AAO–AAPOS–AACO statement does not endorse tinted filters, lenses, or behavioral vision therapy as a long-term educational fix for these conditions.⁴² Seek eye care as parallel health care if something looks ocular. Do not pause phonics for an overlays program sold as a cure.
4. **“Bright kids can’t be dyslexic / the IQ discrepancy failed so it’s fine.”** Word-level difficulty occurs across cognitive profiles. Discrepancy gate-keeping is a poor predictor of who needs Structured Literacy. Unexpected struggle relative to other abilities matters; an IQ theater that denies help does not.

⁴²American 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): refuse lenses/filters/vision therapy as treatment for primary dyslexia; parallel eye care if needed.

5. **“Guess from the picture — good readers do that.”** Meaning and language matter for comprehension. Guessing the printed word from a picture or a first letter is not how we identify the word. That is three-cueing as word reading, and this book refuses it.⁴³
6. **“Strengths mean we can skip phonics.”** Oral comprehension, reasoning, sports, art, and humor are assets. They do not make Structured Literacy optional. Gift-only stories that skip the code sit are refused here.
7. **“NCES says 3.4%, so that’s how many kids have dyslexia.”** Wrong pond. Keep prevalence in named ranges; keep homeschool counts separate.
8. **“They read backwards — that’s the definition.”** The “reads backwards” myth is false. Spelling may look jumbled because of weak sound–symbol memory and incomplete orthographic mapping — not because the eyes flip print as a defining mechanism. Letter reversals are common in beginning readers and do not prove an oculomotor cause.
9. **“Just read more / silent reading alone will fix it.”** Wide reading motivates and builds knowledge when print is accessible. For code-limited readers, SSR alone is not the intervention. Structured Literacy sits remain the core.
10. **“A chatbot can diagnose / cure this.”** Tools may explain definition language *to the parent*. They do not diagnose your child, invent cure research, or finish today’s decode page.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Do this before you sit with the child, paper in hand, no audience.

Minute 1. Read the working lock aloud once:

Dyslexia at 5–10 is unexpected, persistent difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading and spelling despite instruction that works for peers. We teach the code early. We refuse wait-to-fail, lenses-as-cure, laziness stories, three-cueing, and gift-only skip.

Minute 2. Jot three myths you refuse this week on a sticky. Put it on the fridge.

⁴³Refuse 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.

Minute 3. List one foreshadowing flag you already see (late talking, weak rhyme play, slow letter learning, family history) and one strength you will protect (oral storytelling, curiosity, humor).

Minute 4. Practice the locked opening out loud: “What’s hard about reading or spelling today — and what’s already working?” Decide you will wait a slow three after you ask.

Minute 5. Sketch tomorrow’s light English hour: 3 minutes known letter–sounds; 5 minutes tiles on two easy words; stop on a win. Put the pencil down. You are ready.

How to teach it this week

This is a clarity week, not a code-dump week. You still run a light English hour if the child can manage it — review known letters, one friendly tile stretch, one success-heavy decode — but the *focus* of Chapter 1 is understanding and talking without shame. The English hour shape from the front of the book still governs: short, sharp, frequent; stop before melt.

Session shape (clarity week)

Parent study (10–15 minutes, adult alone or with a co-teacher): Reread the working lock. Skim the refusal list. Note one foreshadowing flag and one strength. If you share teaching with a partner, agree on three myths you both refuse so the child does not hear mixed messages.

Child talk box (5–10 minutes): Use the locked opening below. Two sticky notes: *Hard* and *Working*. Child names one item for each. You write their words. You do not diagnose them in the aisle of their own kitchen.

Optional light code crumb (5–10 minutes): Three known letter–sound cards and two easy words they can blend. End on a win. Stop before melt. If shame is high, do the crumb *before* the interview so the hour starts with success.

Walk notice (2–4 minutes later in the day): Outside, notice one piece of print as print — a street sign, a store label — without diagnosis theater and without public quizzes.

Friday micro-check (3 minutes): Child rereads the Hard/Working stickies. Add one note: “What got a little easier?” Log the date in the Reading / Language Arts notebook (never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I as a title).

Exact wording you can say

- “What’s hard about reading or spelling today — and what’s already working?”
- “You are not lazy. Some brains need clearer teaching for sounds and letters. That’s what we do.”
- “We start teaching now. We don’t wait for a perfect label to be kind.”
- “Pictures help meaning after we read the letters. They don’t tell us the word.”
- “I’m writing what’s hard and what’s working so tomorrow’s lesson is smarter.”
- “Wrong isn’t shame — wrong is information.”
- “Slow and accurate is the path.”
- “We stop when you’re melted, not because it’s hard.”

Band moves

Ages 5–7: Watch letter–sound learning pace, rhyme and alliteration play, blending and segmenting with tiles, and whether the child still needs picture crutches to “read.” Keep materials playful and short. Family history raises vigilance, not fatalism. Late talking, thin vocabulary growth, unclear speech, and slow letter learning are risk flags that justify denser teaching — not a crystal ball. Session default stays code-heavy once clarity week ends: PA crumb, phonics+encoding, connected accuracy.

Ages 8–10: Watch taught-pattern accuracy and spelling persistence. An eight-year-old who still cannot blend CVC sits in blending with respectful materials — not a novel study because “third grade.” Call repair work *ear training for English spelling* and *code practice*, not baby songs. Rate may still lag even when accuracy grows; say so without cruelty. Still under-13 for accounts; still parent in the room; still attempt first on the code that is the lesson.

How to fade help

After the child names one hard thing and one working thing, stop interviewing. Do not pile five follow-up diagnoses. Thank them. Move to a short success sit or a walk. The goal is agency and clarity, not a therapy session you are not licensed to run. Over the week, fade from you suggesting “working” examples to the child naming both sides without a prompt list.

When to stop talking

When the child has named both sides once. When eyes fill. When they start performing “I’m fine.” Stop. Tomorrow’s tiles will carry more dignity than ten more questions tonight.

First named try-it (student)

Hard / Working Stickies

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Two sticky notes; pencil; calm table.

Safety: Private kitchen voice — not a public quiz of the child’s struggle; no sibling roast.

The fun: Ownership — their language on the fridge.

The skill: Self-awareness without shame; parent hears the real bottleneck.

Steps: (1) Ask the locked opening. (2) Wait a slow three (or longer). (3) Child says one hard thing; you write it on *Hard*. (4) Child says one working thing; you write it on *Working*. (5) Read both back. (6) Ask, “Which one should we practice a little tomorrow?” (7) End.

Error patterns: Child only names hard things (prompt for one working strength: oral story, a letter they know, listening to read-alouds). Child only names “I’m dumb” (redirect: “What’s hard about the *letters* or *sounds* — not about you”). Adult over-explains dyslexia mid-turn (save the lecture; keep their words).

Exit crumb: Both stickies filled in the child’s words; one tomorrow focus chosen.

Hypothetical week sketch (labelled illustration, not a reported family)

Band 5–7 clarity week: - Monday: Parent warm-up; Hard/Working Stickies; three letter–sound wins. - Tuesday: Light tile stretch on two known words; fridge board

update. - Wednesday: Street-Sign as Print (2 minutes); home success crumb. - Thursday: Myth Sort with co-teacher (adult cards); child chooses one working strength for dinner talk. - Friday: Reread stickies; notebook date; decide Chapter 2 PA crumb starts Monday.

Band 8–10 clarity week: - Same talk box with respectful wording (“code practice,” not “baby sounds”). - Add Strengths Asset List and one honest note about rate: “Accurate and slower still counts.” - If blending is unfinished, schedule Blend-Board (Chapter 3) next week — not a chapter book because of birthday.

Practice that actually builds learning

Clarity practice is still practice. You are building a family habit of honest talk, print noticing without panic, and refusal of myths that stall teaching. Shared reading aloud and kitchen talk motivate. They do not replace the Structured Literacy sits that begin in Chapters 2–4.

In-home try-its

Fridge Hard / Working Board

Band: both. Time: 5 minutes tonight; 1 minute each school-day morning for a week.

Materials: Two sticky columns on the fridge; dry-erase optional.

Safety: No sibling roast. No “who’s more dyslexic.” Private family board.

The fun: Updating the board feels like a scoreboard for honesty, not for shame.

The skill: Naming hard/working; choosing tomorrow’s focus.

Steps: Move tonight’s stickies to the fridge. Each morning, child may add one tiny note (“*sh* still tricky”; “I blended *cat*”). Friday, circle one hard item that got a little easier and one working item to celebrate.

Error patterns: Board becomes a complaint wall — insist on at least one working note daily. Adult writes over the child’s words — keep their phrasing.

Strengths Asset List

Band: both. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Index card; pencil.

The fun: Being known for more than struggle.

The skill: Naming assets that will fuel knowledge by ear while code is repaired.

Steps: List three non-print strengths. Star one that will fuel knowledge by ear

this week (dinosaur podcast, building project talk, science video) while tiles still happen. Say out loud: “Strengths motivate. They do not cancel the code sit.”

Error patterns: Gift-only drift (“so we can skip phonics”). Move: keep the star *and* keep tomorrow’s sit on the calendar.

Myth Sort (parent + optional 8–10 helper)

Band: adult primary; 8–10 may help sort. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Six cards — wait-to-fail; lazy; overlays-as-cure; three-cueing; gift-only skip; mash 3.4% as prevalence. Two trays: *Refuse* and *Ask a professional later*.

The fun: Detective sorting.

The skill: Parent fluency in refusals; older child hears dignity language.

Steps: Sort cards. Adult explains each *Refuse* card in one sentence. Move any medical/legal card to “ask a professional” without turning the kitchen into a clinic.

Error patterns: Shame lecture mid-sort. Move: one sentence each; stop.

Family History Vigilance Note (parent only)

Band: adult. Time: 3 minutes.

Materials: Private notebook page (not the child’s public fridge board).

The skill: Vigilance without fatalism.

Steps: If a parent or sibling struggled with reading/spelling, write “earlier intensity” and schedule denser PA/phonics sits. Many family-risk children become strong readers with good teaching; many still need more explicit, intensive support.

Error patterns: Fatalism (“then they’ll never...”). Move: teach now; document response.

Success-First Crumb Before Talk

Band: both, especially shame-flooded. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Three known letter-sound cards; two blendable words.

The fun: Winning before the interview.

The skill: Regulate, then reflect.

Steps: Run three easy wins. Then ask the locked opening for sixty seconds only.

Error patterns: Skipping wins and diving into hard talk when tears are near.

Error Log Seed (curiosity, not shame)

Band: both. Time: 4 minutes.

Materials: Sticky stack labelled “misses — information.”

Steps: When a picture guess or melt happens this week, jot the *type* (picture guess; wait myth from an adult; shame flood) — not a character judgment. Chapter 8 deepens diagnostic wrongs; this week you only plant the habit.

Error patterns: Using the log to scold. Move: “Wrong is information.”

Out-of-home try-its

Street-Sign as Print (no diagnosis theater)

Band: 5–7 primary; 8–10 if word within reach. Time: 2–4 minutes.

Materials: One reachable sign with a short word inside the child’s code reach if possible (*STOP*, *BUS*, store name chunk).

Safety: Sidewalk awareness; no stopping in traffic; no lecturing a stranger’s child; no photographing strangers; no public “Show them you have dyslexia” speech.

The fun: Treasure hunt for letters you know.

The skill: Print is everywhere; sounding is allowed; pictures/logos are not the word.

Steps: (1) Point to one word. (2) “Look through the letters — what sounds do you know?” (3) If the word is outside today’s code, you sound it and they echo one familiar letter. (4) “That’s print. Tomorrow we practice more of those sounds at home.” (5) Stop. Do not diagnose in the parking lot.

Error patterns: First-letter + invent from the logo. Move: cover the logo with your hand; look at letters. Adult turns the moment into a sermon about the city — refuse; keep it a letter moment.

Package Grapheme Notice

Band: both. Time: 3–5 minutes in a store or at the car with a bag.

Materials: One package; sticky for a letter the child knows.

Safety: Don’t lecture other children; don’t shoplift a “test.”

The fun: Finding a letter you own.

The skill: Grapheme recognition in the wild — transfer later to home tiles.

Error patterns: Hunting brand mascots instead of letters. Move: point inside a word.

Library Shelf Dignity Walk

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Library card; one picture book for *listening* language.

Safety: Ordinary library manners.

The fun: Being a reader among shelves.

The skill: Separate lanes out loud — “This book is for listening; our decode page is at home.” Refuse treating a leveled sticker as phonics proof.

Error patterns: Shame if the child picks a “baby” looking decode book. Move: “Tools match skill, not birthday.”

Menu Shared Read (roles)

Band: both. Time: 4–6 minutes.

Materials: Menu or flyer.

The fun: Choosing food with print.

The skill: Adult reads hard lines; child reads a taught-pattern word if present; purpose is inform, not fluency scoring.

Error patterns: Timing the menu; public pressure. Move: whisper; shared roles.

Postcard Seed (purpose without pressure)

Band: both. Time: 10 minutes at home after a trip, or at a museum shop postcard rack.

Materials: Blank postcard; stamp later.

The fun: Real audience.

The skill: Talk first; adult may scribe ideas; child contributes one known spelling (Chapter 7 deepens). This week: one word they can spell on the card counts.

Error patterns: Demanding a full independent paragraph. Move: one true word + draw.

Talk box**Exact opening question:**

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

Follow-ups (pick three to five; one at a time):

1. Meaning: “When you say it’s hard, do you mean the sounds, the letters, the spelling, or reading a whole page?”
2. Representation: “Show me with tiles / a finger under a word / a stretch of sounds / a sketch of the hard part.”
3. Type or evidence: “Is that hard every day, or mainly when the words are new?”
4. Check: “Does that match what we saw on yesterday’s page?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind. Want to add something to the working side?”

How to wait: After you ask, count a slow three silently (classroom think-time habit — Stahl labelled; not a literacy RCT)⁴⁴. After they stop talking, wait again.

⁴⁴Robert J. Stahl, “Using ‘Think-Time’ and ‘Wait-Time’ Skillfully in the Classroom,” ERIC Digest ED370885 (1994); Mary Budd Rowe, “Wait-Time and Rewards as Instructional Variables”

If they are mid-sentence, do not cut them off. Look at the sticky notes, not at the child's face, if the silence is hard. For dyslexic learners, wait is often longer than a parent's anxiety wants — protect the try. Do not cite Rowe 1972 as a literacy RCT; it is science-class origin. Do not mash Rowe and Stahl as a literacy experiment.

What a stuck silence usually means: The question felt like a trap; wait-time was zero; shame flooded; they only hear “hard” at school and have no practice naming “working”; the adult's face already looks worried; vague question; picture cue habit ready to rescue. Pose again more small: “Name one letter or sound that felt okay today.” Then wait. Do not fill the silence with “You're dyslexic because...”

Blocked practice for a new move. When Hard/Working talk is new, practice only naming one hard and one working thing — no myth lecture in the same sit.

Mixed practice when ready. Alternate: sixty seconds of talk box, then three letter–sound wins, then a walk notice. Mix last week's working sticky into Friday's celebration so “got it” becomes visible.

One incorrect example to diagnose. In a grocery aisle (hypothetical), an adult says loudly, “Say the word — your sister could read at your age — maybe we need those special glasses.” The child freezes. The cashier looks over. What went wrong: public shame; sibling comparison; lenses-as-cure detour; diagnosis theater. Next move: apologize briefly later in private. Return to Hard/Working stickies at home. Tomorrow: three known letter–sounds and one win. Eye care only if an ocular concern is real — parallel, not instead of teaching.

This week's clarity checklist (copy to a sticky)

- ☐ Working lock said aloud once.
- ☐ Three myths on the fridge.
- ☐ Hard/Working stickies completed privately.
- ☐ One success crumb (three letter–sounds or two easy blends).
- ☐ One out-of-home print notice as print.
- ☐ Strengths asset card starred — and code sit still scheduled.
- ☐ Notebook dated under Reading / Language Arts / English.
- ☐ Partner/co-teacher (if any) agrees on the same three refusals.

(NARST / ERIC ED061103, 1972) — classroom-origin; do not mash as a literacy RCT.

What “looks like” by band — observation, not diagnosis

Use these as kitchen observation prompts. They are not a checklist that “proves” dyslexia. They help you choose tomorrow’s sit.

5–7 observation prompts - Does letter–sound learning stick after a night, or vanish by morning? - Can the child blend three sounds with tiles when letters are visible? - Do they lean on pictures to name words before looking through letters? - Is rhyme/alliteration play weak compared with conversation skill? - Does spelling of simple taught words stay unstable across two days?

8–10 observation prompts - On taught patterns, is accuracy still shaky after systematic review? - Does spelling of taught patterns lag far behind oral vocabulary? - Is rate slow even when yesterday’s controlled page was accurate? - Do they avoid reading turns, clown, or melt when print densifies? - Are they being pushed into chapter books by birthday while CVC/digraphs still break?

If several prompts light up, intensify Structured Literacy now. Seek evaluation when persistence and documentation needs stack — while you teach.

Composite kitchen scene (hypothetical, labelled)

Jordan, age 6 (hypothetical), talks in full stories about soccer, knows many letter names, and guesses *dog* from every pet picture. Adult advice around the table: wait; buy overlays; “he’s just not trying.” Jordan’s parent runs Hard/Working stickies: Hard = “middle sounds”; Working = “I know *m* and *s* and I can tell soccer stories.” Next day: Sound-Tile Stretch on *map*, *sip*, *sat* (Chapter 2). Eye exam booked as parallel care because an uncle worried about squinting — phonics does not pause. Two weeks later, Jordan still needs digraph work; the parent does not wait for spring. That is clarity plus teaching — not a diagnosis of a fictional child.

Sam, age 9 (hypothetical), reads slowly but accurately on controlled text and cannot spell *when* consistently. A relative says, “Skip phonics — he’s gifted in science.” Parent keeps science podcasts by ear *and* schedules Teach-One New Link plus Dictation Relay (Chapters 3–4). Sam’s Hard sticky says “spelling”; Working says “I understand the science video.” Respectful materials; no baby-talk. Rate gap named without cruelty. That is gift-as-asset without gift-only skip.

Bridge into Chapter 2

When clarity week’s done-enough boxes are checked, your next focus is phonemic awareness *with letters* — brief, fused to today’s words. Keep the Hard/Working board. Add tiles. The locked opening changes to: “What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”

For the student

You are not lazy.

Reading words and spelling words can be harder for some brains — even when talking, building, joking, and thinking are strong. That does not mean you are broken. It means we teach sounds and letters in a clear way, with lots of short practice, and we do not guess the word from the picture.

Today’s job is honest and small.

What this idea is: Something can be hard *and* something can already be working. Both are true at once.

Tiny worked example: Maya (hypothetical) says, “Hard: the middle sound in *ship*. Working: I know *s*, *m*, and *t*, and I love when Dad reads about sharks.” Her adult writes both. Tomorrow they practice /sh/ with tiles. They still listen to the shark book.

Try 1: Tell one thing that is hard about reading or spelling today. Use a real detail — a sound, a letter, a word, a page — not “I’m dumb.”

Try 2: Tell one thing that is already working — a letter you know, a word you can blend, listening to stories, asking good questions.

Explain it back: In your own words, why do we look at the letters instead of only the picture when we read a word?

Challenge: On a walk, find one word on a sign. Name one letter you know in it. You do not have to finish the whole word if it is too hard yet. That still counts.

Band note for 8–10: If you still need early code practice, that is skill placement, not a baby label. We call it ear training and code practice. Slow and accurate is allowed. Changing your mind is allowed. Asking for a break before you melt is allowed.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Parent still believes wait-to-fail

What you hear: “Let’s see in spring.” “The teacher said not to worry until third grade.” “They’ll bloom.”

Next move: Reread the refusal list and the early-years sentence. Start a short Structured Literacy sit this week anyway — review, one new or shaky link, tiles, one sentence. Document what you taught. Evaluation can proceed *with* teaching, not instead of it. Persistence language is not a licence to wait years.

Diagnostic 2 — Parent chasing overlays / vision cure first

What you hear: “Maybe it’s their eyes.” “The video said colored lenses fix dyslexia.”

Next move: Book ordinary eye care if something looks wrong with vision — that is parallel health care. Keep teaching sounds and letters. One plain line: scientific evidence does not support tinted filters or behavioral vision therapy as the treatment for primary dyslexia. Do not pause the code sit for a product marketed as a cure.

Diagnostic 3 — Child shame-flooded by the hard/working talk

What you see: Tears, shutdown, “I hate reading,” only self-insults on the Hard sticky.

Next move: Shorten the talk to sixty seconds. You name one working thing you observed (“You blended *map* yesterday”). Tomorrow start with a success-heavy tile sit before any interview. Protect dignity in public. Save hard conversations for private. If oral language seems severely delayed alongside print struggle, seek a human speech-language or educational evaluation while you keep teaching.

Extra branch — Adult gift-only skip

What you hear: “They’re so creative — phonics would crush them.”

Next move: Keep the strength list. Put a 15-minute code sit on the calendar three days this week. Strengths are assets for knowledge by ear; they are not a licence

to skip Structured Literacy.

When to seek evaluation (high-level — not legal advice)

Seek professional evaluation when word reading or spelling stays unexpectedly hard despite instruction that works for peers; when family history and early speech/language delay stack with current struggle; when screening risk does not resolve after short-cycle intensive teaching; or when you need documentation for school supports. Teach now on suspicion. Screening is not diagnosis. Kitchen checks are not percentiles. This book does not diagnose fictional children and does not draft due-process strategy. IDEA/504 maps appear at high level in records with **not legal advice**.

Comorbidity care (one careful paragraph): ADHD and developmental language disorder can co-occur with reading disability; co-occurrence is not identity; combined profiles often mean more planning (attention supports, broader language goals), not a reason to skip the code. Reviews often cite substantial RD–ADHD overlap; DLD/SLI population estimates sit near about 5–10% with meaningful overlap with reading disability in research summaries. Anxiety and avoidance at reading time can already appear at 5–10 as foreseeable responses to repeated print failure — label carefully, do not armchair-diagnose. Co-planning with specialists is wise; replacing phonics with behavior-only stories is not.

Tools, including AI

Point back to the English-hour AI box: parent holds the account always (COPPA under-13 for the whole 5–10 band)⁴⁵; parent in the room; unaided first on decoding/encoding that *is* the lesson; SCRIPT after the try; TTS/dictation = accommodation $\neq$ substitute.

For this chapter, you may (on your account): Ask a tool to explain the IDA definition language *to you* in plain words; ask for a parent-side checklist of myths to refuse; ask for a schedule that separates tomorrow’s code sit from a read-aloud content time; ask for isomorphic practice lists later in Chapters 2–4 with the answer key held by you.

⁴⁵Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act / FTC COPPA Rule (including 2025 amendments materials opened for this stream): under-13 bright line — parent-held accounts; whole 5–10 band. Access date 6 September 2026.

You may not: Ask a chatbot to diagnose your child; invent “research shows AI cures dyslexia”; let an unsupervised window become the child’s only partner; photo-to-key a worksheet; write the child’s hard/working answers for them and call it their voice; detector-grade a child’s writing; hand the child an agent as a reading teacher.

One cautionary mechanism sentence, labelled off-age: 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 et al., 2025)⁴⁶. That is not a 5–10 literacy RCT and not a dyslexia RCT. The kitchen rule it supports: the model may prepare the adult; it may not do the child’s decoding, encoding, or story when those are the lesson.

Text-to-speech and audio books are access tools for content (Wood and related access research)⁴⁷. They do not replace teaching the code when the lesson is the code.

Parent script card (print or copy)

Keep this card in the English-hour folder:

1. Opening: “What’s hard about reading or spelling today — and what’s already working?”
2. Wait. Write their words.
3. “You are not lazy. We teach sounds and letters clearly.”
4. Three easy wins (letter-sounds or blends).
5. “Tomorrow we practice one hard thing with tiles.”
6. Stop before melt.

If another adult says “just wait,” answer: “We’re teaching now. Early years are particularly effective. Waiting is not the plan.”

If another adult pushes overlays as the fix, answer: “Eye care if needed. Code teaching continues. Lenses are not the dyslexia treatment.”

⁴⁶Hamsa Bastani et al., “Generative AI without Guardrails Can Harm Learning: Evidence from High School Mathematics,” *PNAS* 122, no. 26 (2025): e2422633122 — Turkish HS math. **OFF-AGE for literacy; not a dyslexia RCT.**

⁴⁷Sarah 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): $\bar{d} \approx 0.35$ often summarized — compensation/access, not phonics.

If another adult says “guess from the picture,” answer: “Pictures help meaning after we read the letters.”

Records crumb for this chapter

In the dated notebook under **Reading / Language Arts / English**: - Date - “Clarity week — Hard/Working talk” - Child’s two phrases (quoted) - One success crumb result (e.g., 3/3 letter–sounds) - Myths refused this week (three words) - Next focus: PA with letters (ch02) or continue light review

Do not title the page Young Thinkers Dyslexia I. Do not put a vendor level as the subject name. Private evaluation notes stay in a private family file — high-level only; not legal advice.

How this chapter connects to the English hour

Clarity week still respects the hour hygiene from the front of the book: cumulative review when you touch code; stop before melt; motivation choice (MOT-1) — child picks which of two equivalent easy sets to review; speaking/listening crumb (SL-1) — one full oral sentence about what’s working. Life-of-the-habit here means: honest talk, dated notes, cumulative review next Tuesday, refuse the same myths again without shame. It is not a ninth teaching chapter.

Access tools remain labelled: headphones beside a print book means content access, not “we skipped decoding.” When Chapter 5 and 6 arrive, ears grow while eyes train — on a separate lane from today’s code sit.

Limit line (say once, then teach)

This is a useful study base for how to name and refuse myths — not a promise that every home will see the same timeline of progress. Response to instruction varies. Teach, document, adjust dose, seek human specialists when stuck after real systematic work.

Exit ticket shape for clarity week (2–4 minutes)

Not a percentile. Not NAEP. Not AR points.

1. Child names one hard thing and one working thing (oral).

2. Child shows one known letter–sound two ways: say the sound; point to the letter (or write it).
3. Parent notes one myth refused today in the notebook.
4. Optional: child points to tomorrow’s focus sticky.

Done-enough micro-bar: both talk sides completed without public shame; one showable letter–sound; sit scheduled for tomorrow. If the talk floods shame, count the success crumb alone as today’s exit and retry a sixty-second talk tomorrow after wins.

What “done enough” looks like

Check these before you stop living in Chapter 1 as the *focus* and move your week into phonemic awareness and phonics sits:

- ☐ You can say the working one-sentence lock in ordinary words without reading it.
- ☐ You can name at least three myths you refuse (wait-to-fail; lenses-as-cure; laziness; three-cueing; gift-only skip; mash 3.4% as prevalence; “reads backwards” — pick three).
- ☐ You can start a Structured Literacy sit tomorrow without waiting for a perfect label.
- ☐ The child completed a hard/working talk (or a shortened success version) without public shame.
- ☐ One out-of-home print notice happened as print, not as diagnosis theater.
- ☐ Strengths are listed as assets *and* the code sit is still on the calendar.
- ☐ You know evaluation is a door when documentation or stuckness after real teaching requires it — not a reason to freeze teaching now.
- ☐ Hard/Working board exists; Friday note dated under Reading / Language Arts / English.
- ☐ You can hear a picture guess and a wait-to-fail suggestion and answer with one calm sentence each.

Placement is by skill, not birthday. A publisher’s “Level 1” is not a legal grade and not a transcript line. Title the work **Reading, Language Arts, or English** — never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I, never a franchise brand as the subject name.

Parent-learns-this-week: Dyslexia at 5–10 is a word-reading/spelling problem that needs early Structured Literacy — not a vision cure and not a wait.

Child-tries-today: Say what’s hard and what’s working in one turn each.

Done enough here is clarity plus courage to teach. Chapter 2 puts Sound-Tile Stretch on the table. ### Why refuse wait-to-fail in one kitchen paragraph

IDA’s persistence language means the difficulty tends to continue without the right intensity — not that adults should wait years to see if it “is really dyslexia.” Torgesen’s prevention framing treats early identification of phonological risk and intensive preventive instruction in kindergarten and first grade as both practical and moral. A large share of children who are poor readers in third grade remain poor readers later — IDA FAQ states a familiar 74% figure for that pattern; report it as FAQ-stated, not recalculated here.⁴⁸ Ages 5–10 are exactly the years that sentence is about. Teach now. Document. Adjust. Evaluate when needed. Do not wait for a perfect label to be kind.

Illustrations for this chapter (still-lives): two sticky notes labelled Hard and Working; a dated notebook with Reading / Language Arts on the header; headphones beside a print book labelled access lane; a generic street sign as print; no child portraits; no brand logos; no colored-lens product still-lives.

Hold the thesis: the child attempts; you ask one good question and wait; shame is refused.

Next step on the calendar: Chapter 2 — phonemic awareness with letters, brief and fused to today’s words.

⁴⁸IDA FAQ / related early-intervention framing (Torgesen prevention line): familiar **74%** figure for poor third-grade readers remaining poor later — report as FAQ-stated, not recalculated here. Teach now in the early-years window.

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

Alphabetic reading asks the ear and the eye to work together. The child must hear the smallest sounds in spoken words — phonemes — and connect them to letters and letter teams (graphemes). For a learner with dyslexia risk, that hinge is often where the door sticks.

Phonemic awareness teaching is highly effective when it is brief, focused, and linked to letters. The National Reading Panel found that PA instruction improved phonemic awareness, reading, and spelling; effects on reading lasted beyond training; small-group work and letters were associated with stronger outcomes in the panel's synthesis.⁴⁹ Spelling effects for students with reading disabilities were weaker in some PA-only contrasts — another reason this book twins PA with encoding (Chapter 4) instead of running a year of clap-the-syllables as the whole program.

The IES Foorman foundational-skills guide rates Recommendation 2 **strong**⁵⁰: teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound *and* link those sounds to letters. Keep PA short — about **3–8 minutes** — fused to today's words. One or two manipulation types per day if the child is shaky. Oral-only forever is not enough. A year of syllable clapping that never reaches phonemes with tiles delays the code.

For ages **5–7**, daily serious PA minutes with letters are normal kitchen work. For ages **8–10** who still need segmentation repair, call it **ear training for English spelling** — respectful materials, no baby-talk. Place by skill, not birthday. An nine-year-old who cannot yet hold three phonemes with tiles sits in Sound-Tile Stretch with dignity, not in a novel study because “third grade.”

What unlocks this week: the child stretches a word, pushes one tile per sound, blends it back, and points to the letter that makes the first sound. You hear digraph splits, dropped finals, letter-name answers, and mouth-watching — and you have a named move for each. Shame is refused. Gift-only skip is refused. PA is not a complete reading program; it is the hinge that makes phonics and spelling stick.

⁴⁹NICHD, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* — Summary (NIH Pub. No. 00-4769, 2000): phonemic awareness instruction effective, especially with letters and focused manipulations.

⁵⁰Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008 (2016; rev. 2019), Recommendation 2 **strong**: develop awareness of segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters.

How this feels in a good week: Monday's five words are stretched with tiles. Tuesday the same words are robot-blended with letters showing. Wednesday a fridge hunt finds the first sound's letter in the wild. Thursday a swap game changes only the first sound. Friday Sound Hospital compares *sip* and *ship*, and the child can say what differed. None of those sits needed to be long. All of them needed to be clear. That is the dyslexia-intensity version of phonemic awareness for ages 5–10 — denser review, clearer teaching, letters on the table, dignity intact.

If you came from *English for Little Thinkers*, keep the joyful short sits and raise the intensity: more cumulative review, more diagnostic wrongs, more encoding twins, less assumption that one exposure sticks. If you came from the grades 1–12 *English for the Dyslexic* overview, put away adolescent morphology seminars for now — ear training and early code repair are the load here.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Everyday picture

Your child can clap the syllables in *alligator* all afternoon. Ask them to blend /sh/ /i/ /p/ with letter tiles in view, and the room stalls. Or they say the letter name *ess* when you ask for the first *sound* in *sun*. Or they watch your mouth instead of listening, then guess a word that fits the picture you forgot to cover. Or a nine-year-old rolls their eyes at “sound games” because last year's kindergarten songs felt babyish — while still guessing at printed words.

Syllable play is fine as a warm crumb. It is not the destination.

Precise picture

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate phonemes — the smallest sound units that make a difference in words. Blending (/k/ /a/ /t/ → *cat*) and segmenting (*ship* → /sh/ /i/ /p/) are high-leverage for reading and spelling. Manipulation (swap first sound *map* → *tap*) comes after identity, blending, and segmenting are stable. Grain-size trajectory: large-unit play (words, syllables) → onset–rime → phoneme blending/segmentation → light manipulation — **with letters early**.

IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards expect teachers to understand PA and to

link it to print.⁵¹ Torgesen’s task-difficulty notes remind us that some PA tasks are harder than others; match the task to the child; keep success dense.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *Letter name instead of sound.* You ask for the first sound in *map*; child says “em.” Hear the category error. “Sound, not letter name. /m/.”
2. *Year of clap-the-syllables as the whole PA program.* Hear the grain-size stall. Move to phonemes with tiles this week.
3. *Oral-only forever with no letters.* Hear the NRP/Foorman miss. Show the letter for /m/ in the same sit.
4. *Too many manipulation types at once.* Child is asked to delete, substitute, reverse, and count in one game. Hear cognitive overload. Pick one manipulation type today (NRP).
5. *Abandoning PA because the child “aged out” of kindergarten songs while still guessing at words.* Hear birthday placement against skill. Rename: ear training for English spelling.
6. *Shame framing at 8–10.* “This is baby stuff.” Hear dignity failure. Change materials and wording; keep the phoneme work.
7. *TTS saying the PA answers during the try.* Hear the substitute. Access tools open content elsewhere; they do not finish today’s stretch.
8. *Chatbot blending for the child.* Hear the partner-during-attempt ban. Parent may use a SCRIPT after the try.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Privately segment three words with tiles: *ship*, *map*, *clap* (or simpler if that is tomorrow’s set). One tile per sound; digraph *sh* as one tile.

Minute 2. Practice the locked opening: “What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”

Minute 3. Decide today’s one manipulation type (identity + segment, or blend only, or first-sound swap only).

⁵¹International Dyslexia Association, *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*, 2nd ed. (2018): phonemic awareness brief, practical, connected to reading and spelling.

Minute 4. Write five target words from this week's phonics pattern on a sticky. Those are today's PA words — fused, not random.

Minute 5. Put a blank paper over any picture cues. Pencil down. Ready.

How to teach it this week

Place the PA crumb after cumulative review, before or fused to the phonics sit. Keep it 3–8 minutes. Intensity means clearer teaching and more reps — not a longer oral circus. Stop before melt.

Band 5–7 session shape (PA focus week, inside the English hour)

- Cumulative review 3–5 minutes: known letter-sounds.
- **PA crumb 5–7 minutes:** PA-1 Sound-Tile Stretch most days; PA-3 Robot Talk one day; PA-2 First-Last Swap when segmenting is stable.
- Phonics + encoding sit 10–15 minutes (Chapter 3–4).
- Connected accuracy crumb 6–10 minutes.
- Exit ticket 2–4 minutes: segment 3 words with tiles; or blend 3 robot words.

Band 8–10 session shape (repair / advanced PA)

- Cumulative review 3–5 minutes.
- **PA crumb 5–8 minutes:** PA-5 Count-and-Write; PA-4 Sound Hospital on week errors; PA-1 if segmentation still weak — respectful framing.
- Code sit (syllable types / vowel teams as skill allows).
- Connected accuracy → fluency after accuracy.
- Exit: 4/5 phoneme counts match spellings, or one contrast explained.

Exact wording you can say

- “What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”
- “Stretch it. One sound, one tile.”
- “Sound, not letter name.”
- “Ears first — then letters.”
- “This is ear training for English spelling.” (8–10)
- “Push the final tile — don't drop the last sound.”
- “/sh/ is one sound — one digraph tile.”
- “Slow and accurate is the path.”

Age-band moves

5–7: Identity, blend, segment with tiles daily as needed. Playful tiles OK; talk stays clear. Digraph cards as single units early when taught. Keep one manipulation type if shaky.

8–10: Count-and-Write; multisyllabic or blend counts (*crash, plant, sunset*); Sound Hospital on real errors. Never baby-talk. If blending is unfinished, stay here with mature wording and materials (plain tiles, notebook), not kindergarten songs.

Fade help. First you stretch with them. Then they stretch; you only point to the empty final slot. Then they push tiles without you mouthing. Then they write graphemes after counting on fingers (PA-5). Stop talking when the hand is on the tiles and the mouth is working.

When to stop. At eight minutes of PA, or at melt — whichever comes first. A clean 5-minute stretch beats a 20-minute argument.

Hypothetical week sketch (labelled illustration)

Band 5–7 focus: short vowels + *sh* arriving midweek. - Mon: PA-1 on *sat, sip, map, ship* (if *sh* taught) — 6 minutes. - Tue: PA-3 Robot Talk → Smooth Talk with letters visible. - Wed: PA-1 + Fridge Letter Hunt transfer. - Thu: PA-2 First-Last Swap (*map*→*tap*→*tam* light). - Fri: PA-4 Sound Hospital on two week misses; exit 3/4 segment.

Band 8–10 repair: - Mon/Wed: PA-5 Count-and-Write on blend words. - Tue: PA-1 respectful on shaky CCVC. - Fri: PA-4 on *sip/ship* contrast; child explains in a sentence.

In-hour named activities (map: PA-1...PA-5)

PA-1 — Sound-Tile Stretch

Band: 5–7 (8–10 repair if segmentation still weak). Time: 5–7 minutes.

Materials: Letter tiles or sticky notes (known letters only); 5–8 target words from today's phonics sit; blank table space; digraph cards as single tiles when taught.

Steps: (1) Adult says a word (*ship*). (2) Child repeats. (3) Child stretches orally: /sh/ /i/ /p/. (4) Child pushes one tile per sound, then checks left-to-right. (5) Child blends tiles to say the word fast. (6) Repeat 5–8 words; end with one the child encodes on paper.

Error patterns: Merges digraph into two sounds (*s-h-i-p* as four when /sh/ is one);

drops final sound; tiles out of order; looks at adult mouth instead of listening. Move: model one stretch with hand under chin; “one sound, one tile”; point to the empty final tile slot; digraph as one card.

Exit crumb: Segment 3/4 words with tiles correctly.

PA-2 — First-Last Swap

Band: 5–7. Time: 4–6 minutes.

Materials: 6 picture-free word cards (CVC or known digraphs); letter tiles.

Steps: (1) Child reads or hears *map*. (2) “What’s the first sound? Last sound?” (3) Swap first sound to make *tap*; swap last to make *mat*. (4) Build each with tiles. Keep to **one** manipulation type per day if shaky.

Error patterns: Names letter name instead of sound; changes middle when asked for first; guesses a new word from meaning. Move: “Sound, not letter name. Point to the first tile only.”

Exit crumb: Correct first-sound swap on 3/4 trials.

PA-3 — Robot Talk → Smooth Talk

Band: 5–7. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: None required (optional 3 target words on a card); letters visible for at least half the trials.

Steps: (1) Adult says robot version: /k/.../a/.../t/. (2) Child blends to *cat*. (3) Reverse: child robots a word; adult blends; then roles reverse. (4) Always show letters for at least half the trials.

Error patterns: Inserts extra vowel (*cuh-a-tuh*); blends only first two sounds; needs picture. Move: continuous blending (slide) instead of chopped; cover any picture; letters visible.

Exit crumb: Blends 4/5 robot words with letters visible.

PA-4 — Sound Hospital (diagnostic PA)

Band: both (repair). Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Error log from the week; tiles; 4 misspoken or misread words.

Steps: (1) Pick one error (*sip* read as *ship*). (2) Child segments both words with tiles. (3) Compare tiles: which sound/letter differs? (4) Child says the rule in own words (“I added /sh/”). (5) Re-blend correct word 3 times.

Error patterns: Can’t explain difference; treats digraph/single as same. Move: adult models contrast pair; child only points to the differing tile first.

Exit crumb: Explains one contrast in a sentence.

PA-5 — Count-and-Write (8–10 light)

Band: 8–10 (or advanced 5–7). Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Paper; 5 multisyllabic or blend words within reach (*crash, plant, sunset*).

Steps: (1) Adult says word. (2) Child counts phonemes on fingers, then writes graphemes. (3) Check: does each sound have a letter or digraph? (4) Mark any “heart” irregular part if present.

Error patterns: Counts letters not sounds (*ship* = 4); misses blends (/p/ /l/). Move: return to tiles for one hard word; digraph card as single unit.

Exit crumb: 4/5 phoneme counts match spellings.

Practice that actually builds learning

Library, walk, store, and kitchen *are* transfer practice. They do not replace the 3–8 minute PA crumb in the Structured Literacy sit. Name the try-it. Watch the error pattern.

In-home try-its

Fridge Letter Hunt

Band: 5–7. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Magnet letters or sticky letters on the fridge; 5 target first sounds from today’s list.

Safety: Ordinary kitchen — no climbing on counters for a letter.

The fun: Treasure hunt on a familiar door.

The skill: Letter–sound; initial sound hunt fused to today’s words.

Error patterns: Letter name $\neq$ sound. Move: “Say /m/, then find the letter that makes /m/.”

Tile Build Photo

Band: both. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Tiles; phone camera (parent holds).

The fun: Building a gallery of today’s words.

The skill: Segment → build → photo list for cumulative review tomorrow.

Error patterns: Untaught patterns sneak in. Move: only known tiles; adult curates the five words.

Sound Boxes on the Table

Band: both. Time: 5–7 minutes.

Materials: Paper with 3–4 boxes drawn; tokens or tiles.

The fun: Pushing chips into boxes feels like a game board.

The skill: One sound per box; then replace tokens with letters.

Error patterns: Two sounds in one box; digraph split. Move: model *ship* with three boxes only.

Mailbox Letter Sort (parent selects mail)

Band: 5–7. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: Junk mail letters parent selects (privacy).

The fun: Real print from the real world.

The skill: Letter–sound sort into “letters I know” / “not yet.”

Error patterns: Privacy breach — parent selects; child does not open others’ mail.

Caption Stretch

Band: 5–7 labels; 8–10 short. Time: 6–8 minutes.

Materials: Family photo; paper; one word to stretch and write.

The fun: Real life on the page.

The skill: Stretch → write one focus word under a drawing.

Error patterns: Blank-page freeze. Move: adult scribes the rest; child stretches the focus word.

Error Hospital Evening (PA misses)

Band: both. Time: 6–8 minutes.

Materials: Week miss list; tiles.

The fun: Detective, not defendant.

The skill: Diagnose digraph split vs dropped final vs letter-name answer.

Error patterns: Shame flood. Move: “Wrong isn’t shame — wrong is information.”

Out-of-home try-its

Mailbox / Curb Letter Sort Walk

Band: 5–7. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: Parent-selected junk-mail scrap or curb flyer with large print.

Safety: Sidewalk awareness; privacy — parent selects.

The fun: Letters in the wild.

The skill: Find today’s letter; say its sound.

Error patterns: Public quiz pressure. Move: whisper; one letter only.

Package First-Sound Hunt

Band: both. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: Store package; sticky with today's target sound.

Safety: Don't lecture strangers' kids; don't shoplift a "test."

The fun: Finding /sh/ or /m/ on a box.

The skill: Sound → letter in real print; then home PA-1 on matching words.

Error patterns: Logo guessing. Move: point inside the word.

Street-Sign Sound Notice

Band: 5–7. Time: 2–4 minutes.

Materials: One reachable sign.

Safety: Traffic awareness; only words within code reach.

The fun: The world is print.

The skill: First sound + letter on a known chunk; adult finishes hard names.

Error patterns: First-letter invent of whole word. Move: "What sound first — which letter?"

Library Letter Craft (after home PA)

Band: both. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Letter stamp or pencil in craft area if available; or just a sticky in a picture book margin (parent copy).

The fun: Being among books.

The skill: One letter–sound named; book remains for listening language — not a claim that the sticker taught PA.

Error patterns: Skipping home PA because "we went to the library." Move: separate lanes.

Park Placard Echo (8–10)

Band: 8–10. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: One short word on a placard.

Safety: Skip if text far beyond; no public shame.

The fun: Visitor who can stretch a word.

The skill: Whisper segment; adult helps map letters.

Error patterns: Meltdown in public. Move: adult models; child echoes one sound.

Talk box

Exact opening question:

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

Follow-ups (pick three to five; one at a time):

1. Meaning: “If we change that first sound, does the word still mean the same thing?”
2. Representation: “Show me with tiles — one sound, one tile — or stretch it on your fingers.”
3. Type / evidence: “Is that a single letter or a letter team (digraph)?”
4. Check: “Does that match the letters we pushed? Read it back.”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind. Try the final sound again.”

How to wait: After you ask, a slow three (Stahl labelled classroom-origin; not a literacy RCT)⁵². After they stop, wait again. If mid-stretch, do not cut them off. Look at the tiles, not the child’s face, if silence is hard. Protect the try — wait is often longer than anxiety wants.

What a stuck silence usually means: Vague question; wait-time zero; picture cue; letter-name habit; word outside today’s sounds; shame flood; digraph not unitized; adult mouth-watching dependency; new chunk too big. Pose, wait, point to tiles — do not fill silence with the right phoneme.

Blocked practice for a new move. When digraph-as-one-tile is new, practice only *sh* words with a single digraph card before any swap games.

Mixed practice when ready. Alternate: stretch with tiles, robot blend, encode one word. Mix yesterday’s words into today’s five.

One incorrect example to diagnose. A child (hypothetical) looks only at the adult’s mouth, ignores tiles, and says *dog* because a dog picture peeked from under a paper. Move: cover picture; “ears first, then letters”; hand under child’s own chin for one model stretch; tiles mandatory for next three words.

More exact parent wording (keep on a card)

- “Listen first. Don’t watch my mouth for this one.”
- “How many sounds? Push that many tiles.”
- “What’s the last sound? Don’t leave the last box empty.”
- “We only change the first sound today.”
- “Show me /sh/ as one tile.”
- “Blend smooth — slide, don’t chop with extra uh sounds.”
- “You may change your mind when we look at the tiles.”
- “I’m writing this miss so tomorrow’s review is smarter.”

⁵²Stahl, ERIC ED370885 (1994) — classroom-origin think-time; not a literacy RCT.

- “We stop at eight minutes or when you’re melted.”

Cumulative review links (PA ↔ phonics)

PA does not live alone. After Sound-Tile Stretch, the same words appear in Teach-One New Link or Word-Chain Ladder (Chapter 3). After Count-and-Write, the same words appear in Dictation Relay (Chapter 4). Friday Sound Hospital feeds the shaky review stack for Monday. If yesterday’s PA exit crumb failed, shrink today’s new phonics link — clarity before novelty.

Shaky stack rule: Any digraph split, dropped final, or letter-name error goes on a sticky. Next day’s cumulative review starts with those three stickies before any new game.

Band contrast table (skill first)

Move	5–7	8–10
Primary PA activity	PA-1, PA-3, PA-2	PA-5, PA-4, PA-1 if needed
Framing	Clear, playful materials OK	“Ear training for English spelling”
Word set	CVC → digraph CVC	Blends, light multisyllabic
Manipulation	One type if shaky	Count + light contrast
Shame watch	Melts → shorten	Baby-talk → rename + mature tools
Exit	3/4 segment or 4/5 blend	4/5 counts or one explained contrast

Additional in-hour micro-drills (2–3 minutes)

Final-Sound Only Drill. Adult says four words; child only pushes the final tile, then the rest. Use when finals drop.

Digraph vs Singles Contrast. *sip/ship, sop/shop, sell/shell* (if patterns taught). Child builds both; points to the differing tile; says one sentence: “I needed *sh*, not *s*.”

Eyes Away Listen. Adult turns aside; says three words; child stretches without lip-reading; then letters go down. Breaks mouth-watching.

Heart Mark Crumb. If a word has an irregular part (*said*), count mappable sounds; mark heart on the unexpected part (ties to Chapter 3 Heart-Part Map). Do not pretend every word is fully regular.

Expanded incorrect examples (hypothetical, labelled)

Example A. A seven-year-old claps *ba-na-na*, then is asked to delete the second phoneme in *splash* on day one of PA. Overload. Move: return to three-sound stretch with tiles; one manipulation type later.

Example B. An adult runs twenty oral games with no letters for three months because “PA first, phonics later.” Child still cannot link /m/ to *m*. Move: fuse letters tomorrow; Foorman Rec 2; keep PA under eight minutes.

Example C. A nine-year-old is given glitter ABC songs on a tablet while peers read chapter books. Shame + mismatch. Move: Count-and-Write on *crash*, *plant*; notebook; “ear training”; still schedule decode sit.

Example D. Parent finishes every stretch in under one second of silence. Child learns not to try. Move: slow three; look at tiles; protect the try.

This-week planning card (copy)

Focus skill: Phoneme segment/blend with letters (name the pattern words).

Hours: Four or five short sits.

Bank activities: PA-1 three days; PA-3 one day; PA-4 Friday (5–7). Or PA-5 + PA-4 (8–10).

In-home try-it: Fridge Letter Hunt or Tile Build Photo.

Out-of-home try-it: Package First-Sound Hunt or Street-Sign Sound Notice.

Friday diagnostic: One miss explained (digraph / final / letter-name).

Done-enough: Exit crumb + holds after a night + showable two ways.

Connection to secondary consequences

When PA and early decoding stay hard, children may avoid sound games, clown during stretches, or refuse tiles. Label those as foreseeable responses to repeated

failure — not laziness. Shorten the sit. Add success reps. Keep dignity. Do not cancel PA because avoidance appeared; change dose and framing.

Materials list for this chapter

Letter tiles or sticky notes; digraph cards; sound boxes drawn on paper; fridge magnets; error-log stickies; notebook titled Reading / Language Arts / English; blank paper for Count-and-Write; optional tokens for boxes. No colored lenses required. No brand franchise required.⁵³

What not to dump this week

Do not run a 180-day oral-only PA curriculum that delays phonics. Do not crown a sand-tray franchise as magic. Do not invent effect sizes. Do not shame an 8–10 learner with baby talk. Do not treat PA as the whole reading program. NRP and Foorman support brief PA with letters — then teach the code.

Practice that actually builds learning — continued depth

Ample activities are required for this title. Below are fuller step cards for transfer sits you can rotate across two weeks without inventing new games from scratch.

In-home deep card — Sound-Tile Stretch Dinner Table

Band: both. Time: 6 minutes before dinner or after.

Materials: Zip bag of today's five tiles only; list of five words on a sticky.

Safety: Food stays off the tiles; wipe table.

Steps: (1) Child draws one word from the sticky (adult reads it if needed). (2) Stretch. (3) Build. (4) Blend. (5) Sweep tiles back. (6) Next word. End with child writing one word.

Error patterns: Rushing to dinner; skipping final sound. Move: "Last tile before we eat the next word."

⁵³AAP-AAO joint statement: refuse lenses as cure. Structured Literacy principles over franchise crowns (IDA KPS / Effective Reading Instruction).

Fun: Fast rounds feel like a relay. Skill: Automatic segment/blend on known set.
Exit: 4/5 built correctly.

In-home deep card — First-Last Swap Board

Band: 5–7. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Whiteboard; three CVC words; markers.

Steps: Write *map*. Child reads or hears it. Erase first letter only; write *t* → *tap*.

Read. Erase last; write *n* → *tan* if taught. Stay inside taught code.

Error patterns: Child changes vowel when asked for first. Move: Finger on the position that will change before erasing.

Exit: 3/4 correct swaps.

In-home deep card — Count-and-Write Notebook (8–10)

Band: 8–10. Time: 5–6 minutes.

Materials: Dated notebook page; five words.

Steps: Columns — Word (adult says) | Finger count | Letters written | Match? Y/N.

Child fills. Heart-mark irregular parts.

Error patterns: Counting letters (*ship*=4). Move: “Sounds, not letters — *sh* is one.”

Exit: 4/5 Y matches; one N explained.

Out-of-home deep card — Cereal Box Digraph Transfer

Band: both when digraph taught. Time: 4 minutes in kitchen after store.

Materials: One box with *sh*, *th*, or *ch* in a word.

Steps: Find the team. Say the sound. Build the store word’s digraph on tiles at home. Then run PA-1 on three decodable mates (*ship*, *shop*, *shut*).

Error patterns: Reading the brand mascot. Move: Thumb over mascot.

Safety: Ordinary food package; no tasting unknown samples as a “test.”

Out-of-home deep card — Bus Stop / Shelter Letter

Band: 5–7. Time: 2 minutes.

Materials: One large printed letter on a schedule poster (parent points).

Steps: “What sound can that letter make?” If multiple sounds, accept the taught

one. Echo. Home: find that letter in today's tile bag.

Safety: Stay with adult; no wandering toward curb.

Error patterns: Public performance pressure. Move: whisper.

Talk box — extended follow-up bank (rotate)

Use only one follow-up per silence. Extra prompts for later in the week:

- “Point to the tile that shows the middle sound.”
- “If I cover the first tile, what's left?”
- “Say it robot — now say it smooth.”
- “Did your mouth add an extra *uh*? Try a slide.”
- “Which word was hardest — first sound, last sound, or digraph?”
- “Show me another way: fingers, then tiles.”
- “Does your spelling match your stretch?”

Stuck silence add-ons: the word had a blend the child has not secured; the adult asked two questions at once; the child fears being wrong in front of a sibling. Send sibling on a job; ask one question; wait.

Sample two-week rotation (hypothetical sketch)

Week A (5–7): Mon PA-1; Tue PA-3; Wed PA-1 + Fridge Hunt; Thu PA-2; Fri PA-4.

Week B (5–7): Mon PA-1; Tue Eyes-Away Listen + PA-3; Wed Digraph Contrast; Thu Package Hunt + PA-1; Fri exit hold-check on Week A words.

Week A (8–10 repair): Mon PA-5; Tue PA-1; Wed PA-4; Thu Count-and-Write on *sunset* light; Fri explain two contrasts.

Week B (8–10): Keep PA crumb only 5 minutes; shift weight to Chapter 3 syllable sort if segmentation holds after a night.

Parent self-check after each PA crumb

- Did I stay under eight minutes?
- Were letters visible for at least half the trials?
- Did I fuse words to today's phonics list?
- Did I wait after the opening question?
- Did I log one error type without shame?

- Did we end on a success rep?

If you answered no three times, shrink tomorrow's plan. Intensity is clearer teaching — not a longer sit.

Linking PA errors to later chapters

PA error	Later chapter move
Digraph split	PH-2 contrast stack; digraph tile in decode
Dropped final	Dictation Relay finals focus (ch04)
First-letter only blend	PH-4 Blend-Board reveal one grapheme at a time
Letter name habit	Cumulative review identity trials
Mouth-watching	Cover adult mouth; tiles mandatory
Counts letters not sounds	PA-5 reteach; heart vs digraph lesson

Student challenge cards (cut apart)

Card 1: Stretch *cat*. Three tiles. Blend.

Card 2: First sound in *sun*? Which letter?

Card 3: Robot /m/ /a/ /p/ → ?

Card 4: Build *ship* with a digraph tile.

Card 5 (8–10): How many sounds in *crash*? Write it.

Card 6: Fix the hospital word: I said *sip* for *ship*. What tile changes?

Child picks two cards after the sit. Adult does not negotiate away the pattern.

Why brief beats marathon

Foorman and Torgesen intensity language is about explicitness, support, and dose distributed well — not about tears as proof of work.⁵⁴ A melted twenty-minute PA session teaches avoidance. A crisp six-minute stretch with letters teaches the map. Stop before melt. Return tomorrow. Short, sharp, frequent.

⁵⁴Foorman and Torgesen, *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice* 16, no. 4 (2001): more explicit, intensive, supportive — short, sharp, frequent home translation.

Refuse list specific to this chapter (post beside Chapter 1 myths)

- Oral-only forever
- Syllable clapping as the whole program
- Too many manipulation types in one day
- Baby-shame for 8–10 repair
- PA as complete reading program
- TTS finishing the stretch
- Skipping letters because “we’ll do phonics later for months”
- Birthday placement out of PA while segmentation still fails

For the student

Sounds are the ear’s job. Letters show sounds.

You stretch a word into little sounds, push one tile for each sound, then blend it smooth. If two letters make one sound — like *sh* — they share one tile.

Tiny worked example: Adult says *ship*. You say *ship*. You stretch /sh/ /i/ /p/. You push three tiles: *sh · i · p*. You blend: *ship*. You point to the first tile and say /sh/.

Try 1: Stretch *map* with tiles. How many sounds? Which letter makes the first sound?

Try 2: Robot talk: adult says /s/ /u/ /n/. You blend to *sun*. Then you robot a word; adult blends.

Explain it back: Why is *sh* one tile, not two, in *ship*?

Challenge (5–7): Fridge Letter Hunt — find the letter for /m/.

Challenge (8–10): Count-and-Write — how many sounds in *plant*? Write the letters. Check: does each sound have a letter or team?

You are not lazy. Ear training is real work. Slow and accurate is allowed.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Digraph split (*s-h* as two sounds)

What you see: *ship* gets four tiles; child says /s/ /h/ /i/ /p/.

Next move: Digraph card as one unit. Contrast *sip* (three) vs *ship* (three). PA-4 Sound Hospital. Re-stretch three times. Keep digraph card in the daily review stack.

Diagnostic 2 — Drops final sounds

What you see: *map* → /m/ /a/; final tile empty.

Next move: Point to the empty final slot every time. Exaggerate final sound once. Dictate finals only for four words. PA-1 with “last sound hospital” rule: no blending until final tile is placed.

Diagnostic 3 — Age 9 shame / “baby sounds”

What you see: Refusal, eye-roll, “this is for little kids,” while segmentation still weak.

Next move: Rename *ear training for English spelling*. Use plain notebook, no cartoon tiles if those trigger shame. PA-5 Count-and-Write. Keep success dense. Still do the work — skill placement, not birthday.

Extra branches

- *Letter name instead of sound:* Forced choice — “Is it /m/ or the name em?” Practice three identity trials before any stretch.
- *Inserts schwa* (cuh-a-tuh): Continuous slide blend (PA-3); shorter chop.
- *Mouth-watching only:* Adult turns aside; letters stay visible; “ears first.”
- *Severe oral-language concerns with PA failure after systematic tries:* Seek speech-language or educational evaluation while you keep teaching. Screening ≠ diagnosis.

Tools, including AI

Point back to the English-hour AI box. Parent holds the account always. Unaided first on the stretch that is the lesson.

You may: Ask for a SCRIPT after the try (spoken sequence for *you* to say); isomorphic word lists with PARENT KEY; parent-side explanation of digraph vs blend.

You may not: Let TTS say the PA answers during the try; let a chatbot blend for the child; photo-to-key a PA worksheet; park an unsupervised chat as the only partner.

Access audio is fine for a science story on another hour. It is not today's Sound-Tile Stretch.

Progress without percentile identity

Compare the child to yesterday's tiles on the same five words — not to a sibling's birthday, not to a national percentile, not to AR points. A chart can show: date; words stretched; 3/4 or 4/5 exit; notes (digraph card helped). Chapter 8 deepens kitchen assessment objects; this week you only need the exit crumb and the night-after hold check.

Siblings and co-teachers

If a sibling over-talks during stretches, post “whose turn?” and protect wait-time. If a co-teacher still runs syllable-only months, share the precise picture paragraph once, then invite them to watch one PA-1 sit. Same myths refused as Chapter 1: wait-to-fail, gift-only skip, lenses-as-cure — plus the new ones: oral-only forever; too many manipulations; baby-shame at 8–10.

Bridge to Chapter 3

When done-enough boxes for PA are checking out on short sets, the same tiles become Word-Chain Ladder and Blend-Board work. Keep a PA crumb whenever segmentation wobbles. The locked opening shifts toward: “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.” Eyes on letters. Cover the picture. One new link at a time.

What “done enough” looks like

- ☐ PA crumb stays 3–8 minutes, with letters, fused to today’s words.
- ☐ Exit crumbs met on the activity cards you ran (e.g., PA-1 segment 3/4; PA-3 blend 4/5; PA-5 count 4/5).
- ☐ Showable two ways: orally *and* with tiles (or fingers + letters).
- ☐ Holds after a night — recheck two words next day.
- ☐ Digraph-as-one-tile habit started when digraphs are taught.
- ☐ 8–10 repair uses respectful “ear training” framing.
- ☐ Error patterns logged without shame (digraph split; dropped final; letter name).
- ☐ One in-home and one out-of-home try-it completed this week.
- ☐ PA is not delaying phonics — code sit still happens the same week.

Classroom-to-kitchen translation (without becoming a school)

You may hear school language: “phonological awareness block,” “Heggerty-style,” “PA warm-up.” Take the principle — brief, sequenced, with letters for struggling readers — and keep your kitchen cards (PA-1...5). You do not need to recreate a full school program at home. You do need daily minutes that match skill. If school already runs a strong PA+letters routine, ask what patterns they used today and fuse your home crumb to the same words. If school is syllable-only or picture-guess heavy, your home sit is the repair lane — calm, not a war with the teacher at the dinner table.

Oral language foreshadowing meets PA

Chapter 1 named early oral language weaknesses as foreshadowing. In the PA sit, that can look like unclear speech making segmenting harder, or thin vocabulary making “does it still mean the same?” follow-ups tough. Keep PA tasks concrete with tiles. Grow language on the read-aloud/audio lane (Chapter 6). Do not cancel code work because language is also a need — co-plan; twin goals.

Encoding twin reminder

NRP noted weaker spelling effects for some students with reading disabilities in PA-only contrasts.⁵⁵ That is why tomorrow's dictation (Chapter 4) uses the same words you stretched today. Stretch → decode → encode is one map. If you only stretch and never write, orthographic mapping stays thin for many dyslexic learners.

Done-enough expanded checklist (print)

- ☐ Five days this week included a 3–8 min PA crumb with letters (or four if illness — restart, don't shame).
- ☐ PA-1 or PA-5 exit crumb met at least twice.
- ☐ One Friday Sound Hospital explanation in the child's words.
- ☐ Digraph card used as one tile when digraphs are in the set.
- ☐ Hold-after-night check: 2/2 or 3/4 on recheck words.
- ☐ In-home Fridge Hunt or Tile Photo done once.
- ☐ Out-of-home Package or Street-Sign sound notice once.
- ☐ Talk box opening used at least three days.
- ☐ Error log has types, not insults.
- ☐ Phonics/encoding sit still occurred — PA did not eat the hour.

When most boxes are checked, you are done enough with *this chapter as focus*. Keep PA as a crumb whenever the ear wobbles. Move primary focus to Chapter 3 decoding.

Final student pep (read aloud if helpful)

“Your ears are learning the sounds of English. Your eyes are learning which letters show those sounds. We practice a few minutes at a time. We use tiles. We do not guess from pictures. We do not call ourselves lazy. If you are nine and still practicing stretches, you are training your ear for spelling — that is serious work. Ready? What sound do you hear first — and which letter makes it?”

Parent-learns-this-week: PA is brief, with letters, fused to today's words.

Child-tries-today: Sound-Tile Stretch on 5 words.

⁵⁵NRP summary (2000): PA-only contrasts showed weaker spelling effects for some students with reading disabilities — reason to twin PA with letters and with encoding (Chapters 3–4).

Placement by skill, not birthday. Title the work Reading / Language Arts / English. This is a useful study base — not a promise every home sees the same pace. Then teach. Chapter 3 takes the same map into phonics and left-to-right decoding.

Illustration still-lives for this chapter

Sound boxes drawn as three or four squares; letter tiles in a row for *ship* with di-graph card; fridge magnets; sticky error log; notebook header Reading / Language Arts; no child portraits; no brand logos.

Limit line

This is a useful study base (NRP; Foorman Rec 2 strong; IDA KPS)⁵⁶, not a promise that every home will see the same result on the same week. Teach, check exit crumbs, adjust dose, seek specialists when oral-language severity or non-response after real systematic work requires it.

One more composite (hypothetical)

Ava, age 8 (hypothetical), hates “baby sound games,” still reads *ship* as *sip*, and melts when asked to clap. Adult renames the work ear training, pulls glitter tiles out of the bag, uses a plain notebook, runs PA-5 on *crash* and *plant*, then PA-4 on *sip/ship*. Ava explains: “I needed the *sh* tile.” Next day hold-check: *ship* segmented correctly. Decode sit still happens. Dignity held. That is Chapter 2 done right.

Exit ticket shapes (copy into planner)

PA exit A: Segment 3 words with tiles (target 3/4 across two rounds if needed).

PA exit B: Blend 3 robot words with letters visible (target 4/5 across the week).

PA exit C (8–10): Count-and-Write 5 words (target 4/5).

PA exit D: Explain one Sound Hospital contrast in a sentence.

Pair any exit with: “Show me another way” (fingers or write). Holds after a night = redo two words tomorrow before new work. Chapter 8 will deepen inventories; these exits are enough to steer tomorrow’s crumb.

⁵⁶Limit line: useful study base (NRP; Foorman Rec 2 strong; IDA KPS), not a promise every home matches clinic timelines.

Keep the Hard/Working board from Chapter 1 beside the tiles. Honesty plus ear training is the culture of the hour.

Daily PA crumb scripts (read and run)

Script A — Identity + letter (2 minutes). “What sound do you hear first in *sun*? Which letter makes /s/? Find it. Push it.” Repeat with *map*, *top*.

Script B — Stretch (5 minutes). Run PA-1 on five phonics-list words. End: child writes one.

Script C — Robot (4 minutes). PA-3 with letters showing. Continuous slide if schwa creeps in.

Script D — Hospital (6 minutes). PA-4 on two real misses. Child explains one contrast.

Script E — Count-and-Write (5 minutes). PA-5 for 8–10. Match column Y/N.

Rotate A–D across the week for 5–7; C–E for 8–10 repair. Never run all scripts in one sit.

Home–school communication crumb (optional)

If the child attends school, send one calm sentence: “We’re practicing phoneme segmenting with letters for 5 minutes on the same pattern words. Happy to align lists.” Do not wage curriculum war over dinner. Your kitchen sit remains Structured Literacy intensity regardless.

Motivation hygiene (MOT-1 inside PA)

Offer two equivalent sets: Set A five *a* words; Set B five *i* words — both review. Child chooses. Autonomy without abandoning the skill. Cap sit length. End on a win.

Speaking turn (SL-1)

Once per sit: child answers the talk-box opening in a full oral sentence. Adult waits. Whose turn is posted if siblings hover.

Chapter 3 — Phonics and decoding



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

Why this matters

Early systematic phonics is one of the strongest average levers we have for young word readers. The National Reading Panel reported phonics effects around $d \approx 0.41$ overall and about $d \approx 0.55$ ⁵⁷ in the early window (kindergarten–first grade territory) — this book’s home ground. That is a useful study base, not a promise every kitchen will see the same number. The IES Foorman guide rates Recommendation 3 **strong**⁵⁸: teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words. IDA Structured Literacy asks for explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic teaching with mastery toward automaticity.

For a child with dyslexia risk, guessing from pictures or first letters is not a reading strategy — it is a bypass. Three-cueing as word identification is refused here.⁵⁹ Meaning still matters for comprehension; the printed word is identified by looking through the letters, saying the sounds, and blending. Cover the picture until after the read when you are training the code.

What unlocks this week: one new link at a time (Teach-One New Link), eyes left to right (Blend-Board), attention to the changing position (Word-Chain Ladder), honesty about irregulars (Heart-Part Map), light syllable sorts at 8–10, and Friday Error Hospital so misses become tomorrow’s review — not shame. Connected crumb every day — even one sentence using the new link. Place by skill, not birthday. An eight-year-old still blending CVC sits in blending with respectful materials.

If you came from typical literacy manuals, raise intensity: more cumulative review, more diagnostic reteach, more encoding twins, slower franchise pacing when last week’s pattern is shaky. Programs are chosen by fit later (Chapter 10) — not crowned here. Unbranded OG / many named programs lack kitchen RCTs that “prove” a brand; WWC honesty stays school-labelled when we mention it. Teach the principles.

⁵⁷NRP 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 . Useful study results — not a promise every home sees the same result.

⁵⁸Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008: Recommendation 3 **strong** (decode words, analyze word parts, write and recognize words); Rec 4 **moderate**; Rec 1 academic language **minimal**.

⁵⁹Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Rec 3 guidance: discourage guessing from beginning letters or pictures to identify unfamiliar words.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Everyday picture

Your child looks at a page. The picture shows a puppy. The letters say *pup*. They say *dog* and wait for praise. Or they see *ship*, grab *sh*, invent *shop*, and keep going. Or a leveled book sticker says they are “on Level M,” so someone declares phonics finished while digraphs still break. Or heart words are drilled as pure shapes with no mapping of the parts that *do* follow the code. Or a stopwatch starts before accuracy arrives.

Precise picture

Phonics teaching links graphemes (letters and letter teams) to phonemes in a planned sequence. Decoding is looking through the word left to right, producing sounds, and blending to a pronunciation that is checked against meaning afterward. Cumulative review keeps yesterday’s links alive. Encoding (Chapter 4) is the other half of the same map. High-frequency words include fully decodable items and true irregulars — map known sounds; mark unexpected “heart” parts; never pure shape flash as the only method.

English’s deep orthography means vowel patterns, digraphs, silent letters, and morphology-preserving spellings must be taught over years — not inferred from “lots of books.” Seymour and related orthography work (as summarized in development sources) helps explain why English accuracy and rate demands run high. Teach explicitly.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *Three-cueing / picture as word ID*. “What would make sense? Look at the picture.” Hear the refusal. Cover the picture. “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”
2. *First-letter invent*. Sees *ship*, says *shop* or invents from scene. Hear incomplete looking-through. Point to the middle. Stretch.
3. *Leveled ladder as phonics proof*. “We’re on Level M, so the code is done.” Hear the mash. WWC LLI honesty: no discernible alphabetic effects in the reviewed study set — a difficulty ladder is not alphabetic evidence.⁶⁰

⁶⁰WWC, *Leveled Literacy Intervention* (September 2017 reporting): positive general reading

Keep controlled text for shaky patterns.

4. *Franchise pace with shaky prior.* New vowel team while short vowels still collapse. Hear cumulative failure. Shrink to one link; rebuild review stack.
5. *Whole-word-only flash without mapping.* *Said* as a hieroglyph only. Hear missed map. Heart-Part Map: map s and d; heart the unexpected middle.
6. *Birthday chapter-book placement against skill inventory.* Eight years old $\neq$ ready for dense novel print. Hear skill-vs-birthday. Stay in Blend-Board with respectful tools.
7. *Chatbot or TTS finishing today's decode page.* Hear substitute. Access elsewhere; unaided first on today's lesson.
8. *"Just read more" alone.* Wide reading motivates when accessible; it does not replace systematic decoding for code-limited readers.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Decode five words aloud slowly left to right (*ship, shop, shut, fish, wish* or tomorrow's set). Finger under each grapheme.

Minute 2. Practice the locked opening: "Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend."

Minute 3. Write the new link on a card (*sh* = /sh/). Plan three contrast pairs (*sip/ship*).

Minute 4. Decide two heart words for the week if needed (*the, said*). Mark map-pable vs heart parts.

Minute 5. Cover the illustration on a sample page with a sticky. Pencil down. Ready.

How to teach it this week

Keep the English hour shape. Phonics+encoding is the core sit (10–15 minutes). PA crumb if needed. Connected accuracy daily. Intensity: clearer teaching, more reps, stop before melt.

achievement; potentially positive fluency; **no discernible alphabetics** — school/vendor labelled; a difficulty ladder is not alphabetics proof.

Band 5–7 session shape

- Cumulative review 3–5 min: known sounds, shaky words, two heart parts.
- PA crumb 3–6 min if needed (Chapter 2).
- **Phonics sit 10–15 min:** default **PH-2 Teach-One New Link**; midweek **PH-1 Word-Chain**; **PH-4 Blend-Board** when first-letter guessing appears; **PH-3 Heart-Part** for 2–3 irregulars across the week.
- Connected accuracy 6–10 min (Chapter 5).
- Exit 2–4 min: read 3–4 pattern words; spell 2.

Band 8–10 session shape

- Cumulative review 3–5 min: syllable types, vowel teams, early morph, shaky list.
- **Code sit 10–15 min:** still Teach-One when new; **PH-6 Syllable Sort Light** for closed vs silent-e (or closed vs open); contrast encode; reteach early patterns without shame if skill shows need.
- Connected accuracy → fluency after accuracy.
- **PH-7 Error Hospital** Friday.
- Exit ticket.

Exact wording

- “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”
- “Eyes on the letters.”
- “Cover the picture until after you read.”
- “Finger under. Left to right.”
- “This part we learn by heart — these parts we sound.”
- “Change the middle sound — what word now?”
- “You said _____. Check the vowel letter. Blend again.”
- “Slow and accurate is the path.”
- “We don’t race.”

Age-band moves

5–7: CVC → digraphs → blends. Playful cards OK. Blend-Board fights first-letter grabs. Word-Chain trains position attention. One new link per sit when shaky.

8–10: Syllable Sort Light; still reteach CVC/digraphs with mature framing if needed. Bridge toward less-controlled text only after controlled accuracy holds (Chapter 5). No baby-talk through early patterns.

Fade help. Model the new link → child echoes/traces → child decodes mix with prompts → child self-corrects before you speak → child teaches the card back to you. Stop talking when the finger is under the word and the mouth is working.

When to stop. At melt or when new link exit fails badly — shorten, keep review wins, park the new link for tomorrow rather than push through tears.

Hypothetical week sketch (labelled)

Band 5–7 focus: *sh* - Mon: PH-2 Teach-One *sh*; exit decode 3 / encode 2. - Tue: PH-1 Word-Chain (*ship*→*shop*→*shot*...); CT crumb. - Wed: PH-4 Blend-Board; contrast *sip/ship*. - Thu: Package Grapheme Hunt *sh*; PH-3 on *the* if needed. - Fri: PH-7 Error Hospital; decide hold or add *th*.

Band 8–10 focus: closed vs silent-e - Mon–Tue: PH-6 sort + encode contrasts (*cap/cape*). - Wed: PH-1 chain on vowel changes; connected paragraph. - Thu: Bridge activity if accuracy holds (ch05). - Fri: PH-7; self-to-self note — no sibling chart.

In-hour named activities (map: PH-1...PH-4, PH-6, PH-7)

PH-1 — Word-Chain Ladder

Band: 5–7 (8–10 adaptable). Time: 8–12 minutes.

Materials: Whiteboard or paper; marker; chain list changing one sound at a time (*cat* → *cot* → *cop* → *cup* → *cap*).

Steps: (1) Child reads *cat*. (2) Adult: “Change /a/ to /o/.” Child rewrites only the changed letter if possible, then reads new word. (3) Continue 6–10 steps. (4) End with dictation of 3 chain words from memory of the ladder.

Error patterns: Changes wrong position; reads old word from memory without looking; invents untaught patterns. Move: finger under changing letter; “eyes on the letters”; stay inside taught code.

Exit crumb: Reads final chain word and spells 2/3 dictation words.

PH-2 — Teach-One New Link

Band: both. Time: 10–15 minutes (core sit).

Materials: Grapheme card; 8–10 practice words; 4 dictation words; one controlled sentence.

Steps: (1) Cumulative review 5 knowns (1–2 min). (2) Explicit model of new link (*sh* = /sh/; mouth + card). (3) Child echoes, traces/writes grapheme 3× while

saying sound. (4) Decode 8 words with new link mixed with knowns. (5) Dictate 4 words. (6) Read one sentence using 2+ new-link words. (7) Exit 3 words.

Error patterns: Confuses *sh/th/ch*; reads *shop* as *sop*; encodes /sh/ as s. Move: contrast stack (*sip/ship*, *sop/shop*); finger under digraph as one unit.

Exit crumb: Decode 3/3 and encode 2/3 of new-link words.

PH-3 — Heart-Part Map (irregular)

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: 3 high-frequency irregulars (*said*, *the*, *was*); heart stickers or red pencil.

Steps: (1) Read word. (2) Map known sounds (*s*, *d* in *said*). (3) Mark unexpected part with heart; say “this part we learn by heart.” (4) Write word 2× saying phonemes for mappable parts. (5) Use in one oral sentence. **Never** teach as pure shape flash without mapping.

Error patterns: Whole-word guessing later in text; ignores mappable parts. Move: cover heart part; child still says known sounds; uncover and name heart.

Exit crumb: Spells 2/3 heart words with self-check.

PH-4 — Blend-Board Left to Right

Band: 5–7. Time: 6–10 minutes.

Materials: Pocket chart or paper columns for onset/vowel/coda; letter cards.

Steps: (1) Build CVC or CCVC with cards. (2) Child taps each grapheme left to right, then scoops to blend. (3) Remove cards; child writes the word. (4) Mix 2 “trap” words with digraphs taught.

Error patterns: Looks at picture/context; guesses after first letter; vowel confusion.

Move: cover all but first grapheme, reveal one at a time; continuous blend.

Exit crumb: Blends 5/6 built words accurately untimed.

PH-6 — Syllable Sort Light (8–10)

Band: 8–10. Time: 10–12 minutes.

Materials: Cards of closed vs silent-e (or closed vs open) one-syllable words; later two-syllable closed compounds (*sunset*, *napkin*).

Steps: (1) Review syllable type rule in one sentence. (2) Child sorts 10 cards. (3) Reads each. (4) Encodes 4 from oral dictation into the correct column. (5) Optional: scoop syllables in two-syllable words.

Error patterns: Sorts by meaning not pattern; misses silent-e; wrong division (*napkin* vs *na-pkin*). Move: “Look at the vowel letters — what’s after the vowel?”; model one division.

Exit crumb: Sort 8/10 + spell 3/4.

PH-7 — Error Hospital (phonics)

Band: both. Time: 6–8 minutes Friday or mid-week.

Materials: Week's miss list; tiles; fresh paper.

Steps: (1) Choose 3 errors. (2) For each: child diagnoses ("I used /a/ instead of /i/"). (3) Rebuild correctly. (4) Add to shaky review stack. (5) Quick retest next day.

Error patterns: Vague "I forgot"; shame shutdown. Move: adult offers two forced-choice diagnoses; praise accurate diagnosis over speed.

Exit crumb: Clear hypothesis for 2/3 errors.

Practice that actually builds learning

Street signs, packages, and menus transfer the hour's moves. They do not replace Teach-One or Word-Chain at the table.

In-home try-its**Word-Chain on Whiteboard**

Band: 5–7. Time: 8–12 minutes.

Materials: Whiteboard; chain list.

Safety: Ordinary — markers capped after.

Fun: Watching the ladder grow. Skill: Position attention; decode+encode.

Error patterns: Memory-reading old word. Move: erase fully; rewrite; eyes on letters.

Teach-One Card Wall

Band: both. Time: built into sit + 2 min review next day.

Materials: Grapheme cards on fridge.

Fun: Growing a wall of links you own. Skill: Cumulative review.

Error patterns: Cards never reviewed. Move: start every sit with three old cards.

Heart-Part Sticky Kit

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Red hearts; three irregulars.

Fun: Hearts make honesty visible. Skill: Map + heart.

Error patterns: Pure memorization theater. Move: always map known sounds first.

Recipe / Label Decode

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Food package with today's grapheme.

Safety: No tasting unknown contents.

Fun: Print that feeds you. Skill: Look through the word.

Error patterns: Brand guessing. Move: thumb over logo.

Tile Build → Sentence Read

Band: both. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Tiles; one controlled sentence.

Fun: Hands build what mouth reads. Skill: Orthographic map to connected reading.

Error patterns: Untaught patterns. Move: only taught tiles.

Error Hospital Evening

Band: both. Time: 6–8 minutes.

Materials: Week miss list.

Fun: Detective. Skill: Diagnose vowel / digraph / guess-picture.

Error patterns: Shame. Move: curious voice.

Out-of-home try-its

Street-Sign Sound-Out

Band: 5–7. Time: 2–4 minutes.

Materials: One reachable sign within code.

Safety: Sidewalk; no public quiz of strangers; no photographing strangers.

Fun: World is print. Skill: Decode through; no first-letter guess.

Error patterns: Word outside code. Move: adult picks sign; whisper prompts.

Package Grapheme Hunt

Band: both. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: Package; today's digraph sticky.

Safety: Don't lecture other kids; don't shoplift tests.

Fun: Treasure hunt for *sh*. Skill: Grapheme in the wild → home list.

Error patterns: Logo hunt. Move: point inside word.

Menu Shared Read

Band: both. Time: 4–6 minutes.

Materials: Menu.

Fun: Choosing food. Skill: Adult hard lines; child taught patterns.

Error patterns: Timing menu. Move: shared roles; never time.

Library Craft Question (after home decode)

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Picture book for language.

Fun: Shelves. Skill: One craft question after adult read — not leveled-as-phonics claim.

Error patterns: Sticker as done-enough for code. Move: separate lanes aloud.

Museum / Park Placard

Band: 8–10. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: One sentence.

Safety: Skip if far beyond without adult read.

Fun: Visitor who sounds a line. Skill: Look through; then meaning.

Error patterns: Public shame. Move: whisper blend; adult finishes hard names.

Talk box**Exact opening question:**

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

Follow-ups (pick 3–5; one at a time):

1. Meaning: “After you blend, does that word make sense in this sentence?”
2. Representation: “Finger under each grapheme — show me left to right — or build it with tiles.”
3. Type / evidence: “Is this a digraph, a silent-e vowel, or a heart part?”
4. Check: “Does that match all the letters — including the middle?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind. Try it another way.”

How to wait: Slow three (Stahl labelled; not literacy RCT)⁶¹. Wait again after they stop. Mid-blend — do not cut off. Look at letters, not face. Protect the try.

Stuck silence usually means: Vague question; wait-time zero; picture cue; first-letter grab; word outside today’s code; shame flood; too many new links; need reveal-one-grapheme. Pose, wait, point at print — do not supply the word.

Blocked practice: When Blend-Board is new, only reveal-one-grapheme on CVC before digraph traps. When Heart-Part is new, only three words — map then heart — before text reading.

⁶¹Stahl 1994 classroom-origin think-time — not a literacy RCT.

Mixed practice: Alternate decode mix, one chain step, one dictate word. Mix last week's digraph into Wednesday review.

Incorrect example: Nine-year-old (hypothetical) races a leveled page, glances at picture, says *dog* for *pup*, asks about words-per-minute. Category errors: fluency before accuracy, picture as word ID, speed as identity. Move: cover picture; controlled Accuracy Pass; drop timer; locked opening on clean page tomorrow.

For the student

Look through the whole word. Say the sounds. Blend. Pictures wait until after.

Some parts follow the code. Some parts we mark with a heart and learn by heart — after we sound the parts that work.

Tiny worked example: Letters *s h i p*. Digraph *sh* says /sh/. Then /i/ /p/. Blend: *ship*. Cover any picture until after.

Try 1: Read three words with this week's new link. Finger under.

Try 2: Word-Chain — change one sound when asked; read the new word.

Explain it back: What do we do with a heart part — and what do we still sound?

Challenge: Street sign or package — find this week's letter team; say its sound; read a home list word with that team.

Slow and accurate is allowed. You are not lazy.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Wrong vowel / vowel chaos

Contrast stack same coda (*hat/hit/hot*); more encoding; Word-Chain on vowels only. Keep shaky vowels on daily review.

Diagnostic 2 — Picture peek / first-letter grab

Cover illustration (CT-5 habit). Blend-Board reveal one grapheme at a time. "Eyes on the letters."

Diagnostic 3 — Too many new links

Shrink to one. Rebuild cumulative review. Franchise pace yields to mastery. Friday Error Hospital names the pattern to reteach.

Extra

- Digraph split → digraph one tile + contrast.
- Silent-e miss → PH-6.
- Yesterday correct, today gone → daily review + PH-7.
- Stuck weeks after real systematic work → evaluation pointer (not legal advice); keep teaching.
- “I hate phonics” → MOT-1 choice of two equivalent sets; 12-minute cap; success density.

Tools, including AI

Point back to English-hour AI box. Parent account always. Unaided first on today’s decode.

You may: Isomorphic word lists with PARENT KEY; SCRIPT after try; explain a phonics pattern *to you*; diagnose work already produced (crop to paper, no face).

You may not: Photo-to-key; rewrite passage to avoid decoding; chatbot as only partner; TTS finishing today’s decode page; invent “AI cures dyslexia.”

What “done enough” looks like

- ☐ Teach-One exit: decode 3/3 and encode 2/3 of new-link words (or clear reteach note).
- ☐ Chain final word + dictation crumb met when PH-1 run.
- ☐ Automaticity growing on knowns; shaky items on daily review stack.
- ☐ Connected sentence using new link read accurately.
- ☐ Pictures covered during decode practice.

- ☐ Heart words mapped, not only flashed.
- ☐ 8–10: syllable sort exit when that was the focus (8/10 + 3/4).
- ☐ One in-home and one out-of-home try-it this week.
- ☐ Friday diagnostic wrong explained without shame.
- ☐ Placement by skill, not birthday; title Reading / Language Arts / English.

Parent-learns-this-week: One new link, eyes on letters, cover the picture.

Child-tries-today: Word-Chain Ladder or Teach-One New Link.

Limit line: useful studies (NRP; Foorman Rec 3), not a guarantee of identical home results. Then teach. Chapter 4 twins the same patterns into stretch–write–read–back spelling.

Planned sequence honesty (without a 180-day dump)

A planned sequence usually moves from consonants and short vowels into digraphs, blends, longer vowels, and syllable types — exact order varies by program. Your job this week is not to photocopy a year-long scope. Your job is: know what is already taught; teach one new link; review shaky links daily; do not add a second new link while the first fails the exit crumb. If you use a published early program (fit cards in Chapter 10), treat its sequence as a map you can slow down — never as a franchise identity on the transcript.

Cumulative review stack — how to run it

Keep a small deck or sticky pile: last five graphemes; ten shaky words; three heart words. Every sit opens with 3–5 minutes from that deck. When a word is correct three days in a row, move it to “weekly check.” When it fails, it returns to daily. This is diagnostic teaching — IDA language — without turning the kitchen into a percentile factory.⁶²

Contrast stacks (phonics repair tools)

Build pairs that differ by one element: - Digraph vs single: *sip/ship*, *sop/shop*, *tin/thin* (when *th* taught) - Short vowels: *hat/hit/hot/hut* with same consonants

⁶²IDA Effective Reading Instruction / KPS: explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic; mastery to automaticity. Approach $\neq$ franchise; percentile $\neq$ identity.

when possible - Silent-e: *cap/cape, kit/kite, hop/hope* - Blend vs not: *ip/slip* only after blend instruction began

Child reads both, builds both, spells both. Say: “What’s the same? What changed?”

Connected crumb every day (even one sentence)

After Teach-One, read one controlled sentence with two new-link words. Finger under. Cover picture. One “what happened?” That crumb is the bridge into Chapter 5’s Accuracy Pass — do not skip it because “we only had time for the word list.” Lists without connected reading leave the skill half-built.

Parent wording bank — corrections without crushing

- “You said *sop*. Digraph is *sh*. Try /sh/.”
- “Eyes on the middle letter.”
- “Blend all the way through — don’t stop after the first sound.”
- “That was a picture guess. Letters say ____.”
- “Wrong isn’t shame — wrong is information. I’m logging the vowel.”
- “Show me another way: tiles, then the word on the board.”

Band 5–7 materials personality vs 8–10

5–7 may use colorful tiles and game voices if they help engagement — the talk stays precise. 8–10 use plain cards, notebook columns, and “code practice / syllable sort” language. Same cognitive work can wear different clothes. Never use age to skip the work; never use baby aesthetics to shame an older learner who still needs it.

This-week planning card

Focus: One new link or one syllable contrast.

Sits: 4–5 × 25–40 min English hours.

Bank: PH-2 default; PH-1 midweek; PH-3 for 2–3 hearts; PH-7 Friday; PH-4 or PH-6 as needed.

In: Word-Chain whiteboard or Label Decode.

Out: Street-Sign or Package Hunt within code.

Exit: 3 decode + 2 encode pattern words.

Done-enough: Exit met twice; hold after night; shaky on stack.

WWC honesty (one calm paragraph)

When someone claims a brand is “WWC proven for your kitchen,” slow down. Copy ratings honestly and label school/vendor contexts. Unbranded Orton–Gillingham, Barton, and some Wilson-LD reviews have had periods with no studies meeting WWC standards; Wilson Reading System / Foundations-type reports vary by product and outcome (alphabetics vs fluency vs comprehension)⁶³. Sound Partners has shown positive alphabetics/fluency/comprehension in school reviews — still not a sales pitch for your living room.⁶⁴ Fit beats crown. Principles beat logos.

Secondary consequences in the decode sit

Avoidance, clowning, or racing can appear when decode work is hard. Shorten. Add success reps. Offer MOT-1 choice between two equivalent word sets. Do not cancel phonics because avoidance appeared. Do not shame. Do not race.

Records crumb

Notebook: date; new link; exit scores; two error types; heart words practiced; title Reading / Language Arts / English. Never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I. Never “Barton Level 1” as the subject line.

Student challenge cards

1. Teach me the new card — sound and three words.
2. Chain: change the vowel in *ship* to make a real taught word.

⁶³WWC July 2010 Students with Learning Disabilities protocols: unbranded Orton–Gillingham–based strategies, Barton, and Wilson Reading System (LD) — **no studies meet** evidence standards (unable to draw conclusions). Principles still stand; vendor crowns do not.

⁶⁴WWC Beginning Reading reporting on Sound Partners: positive alphabetics, fluency, and comprehension — **school tutoring design**, not a kitchen sales pitch.

3. Cover the picture; read the sentence.
4. Map *said*: which parts sound? which part is heart?
5. (8–10) Sort *cap/cape* and explain using vowel letters.

Bridge to Chapter 4

Decoding without encoding leaves the map thin. Tomorrow dictate the same pattern words: say, stretch, write, read back. Locked opening becomes: “Say the word. Stretch it. Write it. Does it match?”

Teach-One New Link — full worked sit (hypothetical, labelled)

Adult and child, age 6, focus *sh*.

1. Review (2 min): *s, m, a, t, p, i* cards — say sound, write once.
2. Model: show *sh* card. “This team says /sh/. Watch my mouth. Your turn.” Child says /sh/ three times while tracing.
3. Decode mix: *ship, shop, shut, fish, wish, mash, sip, top* — sip/top are known traps without *sh*.
4. Child misses *shop* as *sop*. Adult: “Digraph. Finger under both letters. /sh/.” Retry.
5. Dictate: *ship, shut, fish, wish*. Child stretches then writes.
6. Sentence: *The ship is big*. Cover picture. Read.
7. Exit: *ship, fish, wish* — 3/3 decode; encode check 2/3.
8. Log: contrast *sip/ship* on shaky stack for tomorrow.

That is one core sit. Not a worksheet dump. Not a franchise crown.

Word-Chain Ladder — sample chains (stay inside taught code)

Short-a/i: *mat* → *mit* → *sit* → *sat* → *sap* → *sip*

Digraph sh: *ship* → *shop* → *shot* → *shut* → *shun* (if *u, n* taught)

Silent-e preview only after taught: *cap* → *cape* as a two-step lesson, not a surprise.

Adult says the sound change, not the letter name, when the goal is phoneme attention: “Change /a/ to /i/.” If the goal is grapheme attention: “Change the letter *a* to *i*.” Know which goal you chose.

Blend-Board — reveal protocol

Cover all graphemes with sticky tabs. Reveal first — child says sound. Reveal second — sound. Reveal third — sound. Scoop blend. Then pull tabs and write from memory. Trap: include one digraph word so first-letter grab fails visibly — then teach.

Heart-Part — sample maps

- *the*: /th/ mapped if taught; heart on *e* unexpected quality — adjust to what you’ve taught
- *said*: *s* /s/, *d* /d/, heart on *ai*
- *was*: *w* /w/, heart on *a*, *s* as /z/ discussion when ready

Keep lists short. Three words mastered deeply beat twenty flashed weakly.

Syllable Sort Light — rule sentences (one each)

Closed: “One vowel letter, ended by consonant — vowel usually short.”

Silent-e: “Vowel, consonant, final *e* — first vowel usually long; *e* silent.”

Open (when introduced): “Vowel at the end of the syllable — often long.”

Child sorts with eyes on vowel letters, not on word meaning. Then encode into columns.

Error Hospital codes for phonics Friday

Code	Example	Next week
Sound	/i/ for /e/	Contrast + encode
Position	Dropped final	Final PA + dictate finals
Digraph unit	<i>s-h</i> split	One-tile digraph
Guess-picture	<i>dog</i> for <i>pup</i>	Cover; Blend-Board
Vowel team / silent-e	<i>cap</i> for <i>cape</i>	PH-6
Memory without looking	Reads old chain word	Erase; rewrite; eyes

Expanded out-of-home safety script

Before Street-Sign Sound-Out: “We pick one word. We whisper. We watch for cars. We do not quiz other families. If the word is too hard, I sound it and you echo one letter team you know.” After: “Home list time — three matching words.”

Fluency boundary (point to Chapter 5)

Do not time cold decode lists as “fluency.” Automaticity on known graphemes grows through cumulative review and accurate rereads of controlled text after accuracy. Stopwatch-first on hard text is refused.

AI SCRIPT example (parent voice, after child tried)

“You looked through the letters. The team is *sh*. Say /sh/. Blend again. Check the middle vowel. Write it once while you say the sounds.” Child never copies a chatbot paragraph as their decode work.

Done-enough expanded

Add: hold-after-night on three new-link words; contrast stack completed once; heart maps for two words; connected sentence accurate; review stack updated; no picture-guess unmarked in the log.

Composite 8–10 (hypothetical)

Noah, 9, still confuses *cap/cape*. Adult skips novel study, runs PH-6 three days, encodes four words into columns, reads a short contrast paragraph, logs silent-e misses. Noah’s Working sticky from ch01 still says “science videos.” Science continues by ear. Code sit continues on paper. Birthday did not decide the curriculum.

More practice cards — in-home

Shaky Stack Breakfast (3 minutes). Three stickies beside cereal. Child reads each once, spells one on a napkin. Digraph finger check. Safety: food vs paper separation.

Two-Color Trace. New grapheme in green; known letters in pencil. Trace green 3× saying sound; decode four words; encode two.

Sentence Strip Mini. One Teach-One sentence cut into words; rebuild; reread; change one new-link word to another taught word.

Partner Echo Light. Adult reads controlled sentence; child echoes with finger; child solos. Bridge toward Chapter 5 CT-2.

Photo of Board Chain. Snap the finished Word-Chain; tomorrow start by reading the photo before new steps.

More practice cards — out-of-home

Parking-Lot Letter Team (2 minutes). On a storefront, find today's digraph inside a word. Whisper sound. No lectures to passersby.

Flyer Shared Decode. Take-home flyer: adult reads hard lines; child decodes two taught-pattern words with finger.

Postcard Address Chunk (with adult). Child sounds a short taught chunk of an address label; adult handles the rest. Purpose: print has jobs.

Nature Center Placard (8–10). One sentence; pre-teach one sticky word; look through; meaning question after.

Talk box — extra prompts bank

- “What does this letter team say?”
- “Cover the picture — what's your first move?”
- “Point to the heart part.”
- “Did you look through the middle?”
- “Blend again — scoop smoothly.”
- “Which word on this page uses today's link?”
- “Show tiles, then the printed word.”

If franchise pacing and home skill disagree

Believe the exit crumb. If Teach-One fails two days, do not “catch up” by doubling new links. Catch up by reviewing. Programs by fit (ch10) still require diagnostic slowing. Mastery toward automaticity beats coverage theater.

Orthographic mapping in one plain paragraph

When a child successfully decodes a word a few times and encodes it, the word begins to get stored so it can be recognized more automatically later. Heart-part mapping respects irregular remnants without abandoning sounding. Pure shape flash skips the map. Share/self-teaching ideas in the research base support why accurate decoding practice builds the sight word vocabulary — “sight” here means mapped, not memorized as empty outlines.

Parent warm-up variants by band

5–7: Decode five CVC/digraph words slowly; practice covering a picture; say locked opening.

8–10: Sort five closed vs silent-e cards yourself; encode two; practice saying the rule in one sentence; say locked opening.

Student page — band notes

5–7: Games and colorful tiles are fine. Still say sounds, not only letter names.

8–10: If you need Blend-Board, we use grown-up words for the same skill: “left-to-right blending.” You are not behind as a person. Your skill inventory decides the sit.

Intensity without tears

Foorman and Torgesen: more explicit, intensive, supportive.⁶⁵ Home: short sharp frequent. Twelve clean minutes of Teach-One beat thirty melted minutes. Stop. Note what failed. Return tomorrow with a smaller new chunk and a denser review.

Final refuse list for this chapter

Three-cueing; leveled-as-phonics-proof; franchise pace over mastery; whole-word-only flash; birthday novel placement; stopwatch before accuracy; TTS finishing decode lesson; vendor crown as identity; Young Thinkers Dyslexia I as transcript title.

⁶⁵Foorman and Torgesen 2001 — intensity as clearer teaching and more reps, short-sharp-frequent.

Illustration still-lives

Word-chain ladder on whiteboard; digraph sticky cards; heart stickers on *said*; blend-board columns; covered picture book page; street sign as print; error-log stickies; dated Reading notebook.

Limit line

NRP phonics **d** $\approx$ **0.41** / early $\approx$ **0.55** and Foorman Rec 3 **strong** are useful guides — not a promise of identical kitchen timelines. Teach, check exits, adjust, seek evaluation when persistence after real work requires documentation.

Daily decode scripts (copy onto cards)

Script Teach-One (12-15 min). Review 5 knowns; model new link; echo/trace 3x; decode 8 mix; dictate 4; one sentence; exit 3. Use PH-2 card.

Script Chain (10 min). Build 8-step ladder inside taught code; dictate 3 from ladder; exit final word plus 2/3 spell.

Script Blend-Board (8 min). Reveal-one grapheme protocol on 6 words; write 3 from memory; exit 5/6 blend.

Script Heart (6 min). Three irregulars: map, heart, write 2x, oral sentence; exit 2/3 spell.

Script Sort (10-12 min, 8-10). Rule sentence; sort 10; read; encode 4 into columns; exit 8/10 + 3/4.

Script Hospital (7 min). Three misses; forced-choice diagnosis; rebuild; shaky stack; exit 2/3 hypotheses.

Run one primary script per day; Hospital on Friday; Heart twice weekly as needed.

Parent correction bank — longer

When child says *sop* for *shop*: “Look through the whole word. Digraph *sh*. /sh/ /o/ /p/. Blend.” Wait. Praise the corrected try.

When child picture-guesses: Cover. “Letters first. Picture after.” No scolding speech about laziness.

When child races: “Slow and accurate is the path. Finger under. We don’t race.”

When child says “I can’t”: “What’s your first move — first sound or first letter team? I’ll wait.”

When sibling interrupts: “Whose turn? Your job is wait.”

Cumulative review games that still teach (not hide the code)

Three-Card Dash: Child turns three review cards, says sounds, blends one built word — still accurate, not timed shame.

Stack Sort: Known solid / shaky / heart. Child sorts yesterday’s words. Shaky returns tomorrow.

Teach-Me-Back: Child teaches the new link to a stuffed animal or adult in one minute. Adult listens for correct sound.

Cute wrapping is fine. Hiding the code inside pure guessing games is not.

Connecting to Chapter 1 myths inside the decode sit

If a visiting adult says “just guess from the picture,” you already have the sentence. If they say “buy overlays,” eye care parallel — decode continues. If they say “skip — they’re gifted,” keep strengths by ear and keep Teach-One. Chapter 1 clarity shows up as calm refusal mid-lesson.

Two-week sample (5-7) with *sh* then *th*

Week 1: Teach-One *sh*; Chain; Blend-Board; Package Hunt; Hospital. Week 2: Hold *sh* review daily; Teach-One *th*; contrast *s/sh/th* carefully; Chain; Hospital. Do not add *ch* until exits hold after a night.

Two-week sample (8-10) closed vs silent-e

Week 1: Sort + encode; contrast sentences; controlled paragraph Accuracy Pass (ch05); Hospital. Week 2: Bridge one day if clean; still review closed short vowels if shaky; heart words mapped; personal smooth only on accurate text later.

Student self-check card

Before I finish: Did I look through the middle? Did I blend all sounds? Did I keep the picture covered? Can I spell two of these words? If no — fix one word now.

Why left-to-right is non-negotiable

English print encodes order. First-letter grabbing plus inventing from context trains a habit that collapses when pictures go away and words lengthen. Blend-Board and reveal-one-grapheme rebuild the habit. Be kind. Be stubborn about eyes on letters.

More in-home depth cards

Whiteboard Relay: Adult writes a taught word; child changes one letter per turn for five turns; read each; dictate the third and fifth.

Cover-Reveal Race Against Nobody: Reveal graphemes on a beat the child chooses — slow is allowed. No timer score. Accuracy only.

Heart Envelope: Three heart words in an envelope on the fridge; pull one at breakfast; map; write; put back.

Error Sticky Tower: Each miss becomes a sticky in a tower; Friday Hospital knocks three off by rebuilding.

More out-of-home depth cards

Hardware Aisle Digraph: Find *sh* or *th* on a tool label; whisper; home dictate three mates. Aisle courtesy; no lectures.

Cafe Specials Board: Adult reads specials; child finds one taught pattern word and sounds it; no performance for the room.

Transit Map Letter Team (8-10): One station name chunk within reach; adult handles the rest; dignity first.

Final composite (hypothetical)

Priya, age 5, learns *m, a, t, s, p, i*. Teach-One on *s*. Chain *sat* to *sip* to *sap*. Blend-Board. Dictation twin three words. Street sign: finds *S* on STOP, echoes /s/, adult

finishes the word. Hard sticky still says “middle sounds.” Working sticky says “I know s.” Done enough for the week’s new link: exit 3/3 decode twice; hold after night; picture covered. That is Chapter 3 at the kitchen table.

Orthographic mapping reminder

Accurate decoding plus encoding helps words become recognized more automatically later. Heart-part mapping respects irregular remnants. Pure shape flash skips the map. Keep cumulative review so yesterday’s win does not evaporate.

Done-enough gate before shifting focus

When Teach-One exits hold after a night twice, shaky stack is short, pictures stay covered, and heart words are mapped, you may emphasize connected reading (Chapter 5) while keeping a phonics crumb and encoding twin. Decoding does not disappear at age 8 — skill decides.

Practice week checklist (parent)

Monday: Teach-One new link; exit decode/encode; cover pictures. Tuesday: Word-Chain Ladder; dictate 3; Package or Fridge transfer. Wednesday: Blend-Board or contrast stack; connected sentence crumb. Thursday: Heart-Part Map two words; Street-Sign within code. Friday: Error Hospital three misses; hold-check yesterday’s exits; update shaky stack; decide hold or advance.

If any exit fails two days, do not advance. Review is progress.

What “planned sequence” looks like without dumping 180 days

Start where the skill inventory says: letter-sounds secure enough to blend; then CVC; then digraphs one at a time; then blends; then longer vowels and silent-e; then light syllable work at 8-10. Your published program (if any) may name levels — remember levels are not transcript titles and not birthdays. Slow the sequence when exits fail. Speed up only when hold-after-night is clean.

Hearing wrong turns in real time — rehearsal

Rehearse aloud: 1. Picture guess -> “Cover. Look through the word.” 2. First-letter invent -> “Middle letters. Blend all the way.” 3. Digraph split -> “One team, one sound.” 4. Vowel chaos -> “Contrast these two. Encode both.” 5. Heart ignored -> “Map what we can. Heart the unexpected.” 6. Racing -> “Slow and accurate.” 7. Shame spiral -> “Wrong is information. Let’s rebuild.”

If you can say these without anger, you are ready to teach.

Tools box — short for this chapter

Parent account; isomorphic lists with parent key; SCRIPT after try; no photo-to-key; no TTS on the decode lesson page; point back to English-hour AI box; COPPA under-13 whole band.⁶⁶

Student challenge week

Day 1: Teach me the new card. Day 2: Change one sound in a chain. Day 3: Cover the picture; read the sentence. Day 4: Map a heart word. Day 5: Explain one hospital miss in your own words.

Bridge sentence to encoding

Every decode sit ends with pencil: at least two dictated words. Chapter 4 deepens the relay; do not wait for Chapter 4 to begin twinning — start the twin tomorrow morning.

Exit ticket shapes for phonics week

Read 3-4 words with today’s pattern; spell 2. Or: blend 5/6 Blend-Board words. Or: sort 8/10 and spell 3/4. Or: Hospital hypothesis for 2/3 errors. Pair with showable second way (tiles or write). Hold after night before crowning the link “done.” Chapter 8 deepens inventories; these exits steer tomorrow.

⁶⁶COPPA under-13 bright line — parent-held account for the whole 5–10 band. Access date 6 September 2026.

One more refuse — AR and points

Do not trade phonics mastery for points apps. Points are not decoding. Keep the pencil, the tiles, and the covered picture.

Closing parent pep for Chapter 3

You do not need a franchise badge to teach one new link. You need eyes on letters, a covered picture, cumulative review, and a Friday hospital that treats wrong answers as information. Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend. Tomorrow twin the same words into dictation. Slow and accurate is the path.

Parent-learns-this-week (restate): one new link, eyes on letters, cover the picture. **Child-tries-today (restate):** Word-Chain Ladder or Teach-One New Link. Keep the review stack alive. Keep dignity loud and shame quiet.

Illustrations: word-chain ladder; digraph cards; heart on *said*; blend-board; covered picture; street sign as print; error-log stickies; Reading / Language Arts notebook. No child portraits. No brand logos. No colored-lens still-lives.

Short, sharp, frequent. Stop before melt. Eyes on the letters.

This chapter's kitchen deliverable is named activity: Teach-One, Word-Chain, Blend-Board, Heart-Part, Syllable Sort Light, Error Hospital — each with materials, time, steps, and error patterns. Session shape alone is not enough. Run the cards.

Chapter 4 — Encoding and spelling



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

Why this matters

Spelling sits inside the IDA definitions of dyslexia — word reading *and/or* spelling, accuracy and/or speed.⁶⁷ Encoding is not optional garnish after “real reading.” It is the other half of the code map. When a child stretches a word, writes the graphemes, and reads back what they wrote, you see whether phonemes were truly secured. Dictation is diagnostic teaching with a pencil.

Louisa Moats’s line of work emphasizes that English spelling is more predictable than folklore claims when phonology and morphology are taught — without promising 100% regularity.⁶⁸ About half of English words can be spelled from sound–symbol alone in classic analyses; a large majority are mostly predictable when patterns are included; a remainder needs heart-part honesty. Spell-check is a later accommodation helper. It is not the spelling curriculum.⁶⁹

NRP noted weaker spelling effects for some students with reading disabilities in PA-only contrasts — another reason Chapter 2 twins PA with letters *and* this chapter twins every phonics pattern with dictation.⁷⁰ Decode and encode the same links in the same week.

What unlocks: say → repeat → stretch → write → read back → log position errors (begin/middle/end). Heart-part encoding for irregulars. Sentence dictation with focus blanks so transcription load does not crush thinking. Showable two ways: read the word *and* spell the word. Shame contests and invented-spelling-forever without taught-pattern dictation are refused.

⁶⁷IDA Definition of Dyslexia (Oct 2025): accurate and/or fluent word reading and/or spelling. Encoding is non-negotiable in Structured Literacy.

⁶⁸Louisa 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.

⁶⁹Moats, “How Spelling Supports Reading”: spell-check assistive, not a spelling curriculum for many LD misspellings.

⁷⁰NRP summary (2000): PA-only spelling effects weaker for some RD students — twin PA with letters and twin phonics with dictation.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Everyday picture

Your child “reads” *ship* in a book yesterday and cannot write it from dictation today. Or weekly spelling lists become a shame contest at the fridge. Or invented spelling continues for years with no taught-pattern dictation because “creativity.” Or the adult fills in all the hard words “to keep the story going” — including the focus pattern words that *were* the lesson. Or someone says spelling doesn’t matter if they can read. Or spell-check is treated as the only instruction.

Precise picture

Encoding maps phonemes to graphemes in writing. The kitchen routine: adult says the word once; child repeats; child stretches; child writes; child reads back; adult and child check match; errors get a position mark (beginning, middle, end) and a type (vowel, digraph, omitted nasal, blend order). Sentence dictation uses the same pattern with focus blanks: adult may scribe function words when melt risk is high — child still spells today’s focus pattern words.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *“Spelling doesn’t matter if they can read.”* IDA includes spelling. Encoding builds the orthographic map. Refuse.
2. *Weekly shame contest.* Timed public fail lists. Refuse. Private dictation; curious error log.
3. *Invented spelling forever with no taught-pattern dictation.* Invented spelling is a window early — not a destination for dyslexia risk. Tighten toward taught patterns.
4. *Spell-check as the only curriculum.* Accommodation helper later $\neq$ instruction now.
5. *Adult fills the focus-word blanks.* Scribe ideas and non-focus words when needed; protect today’s pattern spellings as the child’s job.
6. *“Looks right” without sound check.* Child writes, shrugs. Move: “Read what you wrote — does it match?”

7. *Dictation-via-AI producing the encoding target.* Ban. Parent key lists OK; machine-written “student spelling” is not.
8. *Skipping encoding because decode sit ran long.* Twin the map — even three dictated words beat zero.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Dictate five taught-pattern words to yourself. Stretch and write.

Minute 2. Practice locked opening: “Say the word. Stretch it. Write it. Does it match?”

Minute 3. Prepare sentence with two blanks for focus words.

Minute 4. Draw a tiny log grid: word | B/M/E error | type.

Minute 5. Decide melt rule: if tears, drop to three words + one blank — keep focus spellings.

How to teach it this week

Twin encoding to whatever Chapter 3 taught. Dictation Relay three days; heart-part encoding two days; sentence dictation twice. Keep English hour shape; encoding may live inside the phonics sit or as its second half.

Band 5–7: CVC and digraph dictation; short sentences; tiles allowed as scaffold then fade to paper.

Band 8–10: Multisyllabic encode into syllable columns; silent-e contrasts; still reteach early patterns without shame.

Exact wording

- “Say the word. Stretch it. Write it. Does it match?”
- “Repeat it back to me first.”
- “One sound, one letter or letter team.”
- “Read what you wrote.”
- “Where did it break — beginning, middle, or end?”
- “I’ll scribe the little words; you spell the *sh* words.”
- “Heart part here — map the parts that sound.”
- “Slow and accurate is the path.”

Fade help. Tiles → boxes on paper → plain paper. Adult stretch model → child solo stretch. Full sentence scribe → focus blanks only → more independent sentence when ready.

When to stop. Melt → fewer words; keep focus blanks. Never turn dictation into a tears marathon.

Hypothetical week sketch

Band 5–7 *sh* week twin: - Mon: After Teach-One, PH-5 Dictation Relay 5 words + 1 sentence. - Tue: Word-Chain end = dictate 3 chain words. - Wed: Heart-Part encode *the*, *said*. - Thu: Dictation Note to Family (*Ship is fun*. focus *ship*). - Fri: Error Hospital on spellings; hold-check 4 words.

Band 8–10 silent-e: - Mon–Wed: Encode *cap/cape* into columns after sort. - Thu: Sentence dictation with two silent-e blanks. - Fri: Postcard with two focus spellings; adult scribes the rest.

In-hour named activities

PH-5 — Dictation Relay (encoding focus)

Band: both. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Paper; 5 words + 1 sentence using today's pattern; error log.

Steps: (1) Adult says word once, child repeats. (2) Stretch → write → read back. (3) Tick correct; for errors, mark which position failed. (4) Sentence dictation: adult says full sentence; child writes; adult scribes only if melt risk — then child fills focus pattern words. (5) Log errors.

Error patterns: Vowel substitutions; omitted nasals (*sad* for *sand*); reversed letters in blends; “looks right” without sound check. Move: re-stretch with tiles; “read what you wrote — does it match?”

Exit crumb: 4/5 words + focus words in sentence correct, or explained errors logged.

Heart-Part Encoding

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: 3 irregulars; heart marks; paper.

Steps: Map known sounds; heart unexpected; write 2× saying mappable phonemes; oral sentence.

Error patterns: Pure visual copy without mapping. Move: cover model; write

from map + heart.

Exit: Spells 2/3 with self-check.

Encoding side of Teach-One / Word-Chain / Syllable Sort

Always end decode sits with 2–4 dictated words from the same set. Twin is non-negotiable for this title.

Sentence Dictation with Focus Blanks

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Paper with some words lightly penciled or blank lines for focus words.

Steps: Adult says sentence; child repeats; write; child must spell focus pattern words; adult may scribe *the, a, is* when load crushes.

Error patterns: Adult fills focus blanks. Move: protect those blanks as the lesson.

Position-Error Log Drill

Band: both. Time: 4 minutes Friday.

Materials: Week's misspellings.

Steps: For each, mark B/M/E; name type; rebuild correctly once.

Exit: 2/3 hypotheses clear.

Practice that actually builds learning

In-home try-its

Dictation Note to Family

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Notepad.

Fun: Real purpose (*Dog needs walk*). Skill: Encoding + audience.

Error patterns: Skip focus spellings. Move: star focus words before starting.

Dictation Relay at Table

Band: both. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: PH-5 materials.

Fun: Relay rounds. Skill: Full stretch–write–match.

Error patterns: Rushing without read-back. Move: no next word until read-back.

Scribe-and-Spell Story (encoding lane)

Band: both. Time: 10–12 minutes.

Materials: Paper.

Fun: Story gets told. Skill: Child fills 5 focus words; adult scribes ideas.
 Error patterns: Adult fills focus blanks. Move: highlight focus lines first.

Fridge Spell Check (human, not software)

Band: 5–7. Time: 4 minutes.

Materials: Three magnet words built by child.

Fun: Building. Skill: Read magnets — match to stretch.

Error patterns: Letter-name spelling without sounds. Move: stretch first.

Error Hospital Evening (spellings)

Band: both. Time: 6–8 minutes.

Materials: Miss list.

Fun: Detective. Skill: Position + type diagnosis.

Error patterns: Shame. Move: curious; forced-choice diagnoses.

Tile-Then-Write Fade

Band: both. Time: 6 minutes.

Materials: Tiles + paper.

Steps: Build with tiles; sweep; write from memory; compare.

Error patterns: Peeking at tiles while “writing from memory.” Move: physical sweep to a box.

Out-of-home try-its

Postcard / Thank-You

Band: both. Time: 10–15 minutes.

Materials: Card; stamp later.

Safety: Ordinary mail.

Fun: Real audience. Skill: Writing ladder + focus spellings.

Error patterns: Demanding full independent paragraph. Move: scribe option; child focus spellings only.

Package Grapheme → Home Dictate

Band: both. Time: 3 min out + 5 min home.

Find today’s team on a package; home dictate three matching words.

Error patterns: Stopping at hunt without encode twin.

Menu Focus Word

Band: both. Time: 4 minutes.

Child spells one taught-pattern food word on a napkin after shared read. Adult

helps with untaught parts.

Error patterns: Public pressure. Move: whisper; napkin private.

Library Caption Card

Band: 5–7 label; 8–10 sentence.

After listening to a picture book, child writes one focus word caption; adult scribes the rest.

Error patterns: Using library as only literacy — still need home Dictation Relay.

Park Placard Echo → Write (8–10)

Hear/read one short word; write it on a pocket notepad; check match.

Error patterns: Shame if miss. Move: private notepad; reteach later at home.

Talk box

Exact opening question:

“Say the word. Stretch it. Write it. Does it match?”

Follow-ups:

1. Meaning: “Does the word you wrote mean what you heard?”
2. Representation: “Show the stretch on your fingers — then on paper — or rebuild with tiles.”
3. Type / evidence: “Was the miss at the beginning, middle, or end? Vowel or digraph?”
4. Check: “Read what you wrote — does it match what you said?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind. Fix one letter team.”

How to wait: Slow three; wait again; do not snatch the pencil mid-stretch. Look at the paper, not the face.

Stuck silence: Vague word; wait-time zero; shame flood; word outside taught code; blank page with no plan; new chunk too big; need tiles scaffold; adult about to fill focus blank. Pose, wait, point to stretch — do not write the focus word for them.

Blocked practice: When Dictation Relay is new, five words only — no sentence until read-back habit sticks.

Mixed practice: Alternate dictate word, chain step, heart encode. Mix last week’s pattern into Friday hold-check.

Incorrect example: Child writes *ship* as *sep*, says “looks right,” adult shrugs and moves on. Move: “Read what you wrote.” Re-stretch. Mark middle vowel. Log. Rebuild.

For the student

Say the word. Stretch it into sounds. Write letters for those sounds. Read it back. Ask: does it match?

If a part is a heart part, mark it — still write the parts that sound.

Tiny worked example: Adult says *ship*. You say *ship*. Stretch /sh/ /i/ /p/. Write *ship*. Read *ship*. Match? Yes.

Try 1: Five Dictation Relay words for this week’s pattern.

Try 2: One sentence — you spell the focus words; adult may help with little words.

Explain it back: Why do we read it back after we write?

Challenge: Postcard — write two focus words for a real person.

You are not lazy. Spelling is part of reading’s map. Slow and accurate is allowed.

If it isn’t clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Position errors

Mark B/M/E slots on paper. Empty final box until final grapheme written. Dictate finals-only sets.

Diagnostic 2 — Vowel substitutions

Contrast stack + more encode of the same coda. Twin to PH-1 vowel chains. Keep vowels on shaky stack.

Diagnostic 3 — Melt / refusal

Fewer words; keep focus blanks; tiles scaffold; MOT-1 choice of two equivalent lists; stop before tears. Success density tomorrow.

Extra

- Omitted nasals (*sad/sand*) → feel nasal; tiles for /n/; exaggerate once.
- Blend reversals → left-to-right tap before write.
- Looks-right without sound check → mandatory read-back every word.
- Adult filling focus blanks → highlight focus words before sit.
- Spell-check-only habit → separate: instruction now; tools later labelled accommodation.

Tools, including AI

Point back to English-hour AI box.

You may: PARENT KEY dictation lists; isomorphic sentences; SCRIPT after try for *you* to say; schedule separating encoding lesson from content-access dictation later.

You may not: Let AI produce the spellings that were today's encoding target and call them the child's; unsupervised partner during the try; photo-to-key of spelling packet.

TTS/dictation as access for composition appears in Chapter 7 with boundaries — not as a substitute for today's stretch–write pattern words.

What “done enough” looks like

- ☐ 4/5 dictated words on taught patterns correct *or* explained in the log.
- ☐ Focus words in a sentence attempted (child-spelled).
- ☐ Showable two ways: read *and* spell the same words.
- ☐ Holds after a night — recheck 3–4 words next day.
- ☐ Position-error marks used at least once this week.
- ☐ Heart-part encoding for 2–3 irregulars if those were in play.
- ☐ One in-home Dictation Note or Relay and one out-of-home Post-card/Package twin.

- ☐ Talk box opening used; wait protected.
- ☐ No shame contest; title work Reading / Language Arts / English.

Parent-learns-this-week: Stretch–write–read–back is the encoding sit.

Child-tries-today: Dictation Relay of 5 words + 1 sentence.

Limit line: useful guidance from Moats/IDA/NRP twinning — not identical time-lines for every home.⁷¹ Then teach. Chapter 5 takes accurate words into connected text and fluency *after* accuracy.

Dictation Relay — full worked sit (hypothetical)

Focus: digraph *sh*; child age 7 (hypothetical).

1. Words ready: *ship, shop, shut, fish, wish*; sentence: *The ship is big.*
2. Adult: “*ship*.” Child repeats “*ship*.”
3. Stretch /sh/ /i/ /p/. Write. Read back. Tick.
4. *shop* — child writes *sop*. Adult: “Read what you wrote. Digraph?” Child fixes to *shop*. Log: middle digraph unit. Tick after fix counts as taught repair — still note for review.
5. Continue remaining words.
6. Sentence: adult scribes *The* and *is* if load high; child must write *ship* and *big* if *big* taught — adjust to focus. Here focus *ship*.
7. Exit: 4/5 + focus word in sentence.
8. Shaky stack gets *shop* for tomorrow cumulative review.

Position log template (copy)

Date: _____

Word heard: _____ Word written: _____

Position: B / M / E

Type: vowel / digraph / blend order / nasal / heart / other

Next move: _____

Child’s words: “I _____.”

⁷¹Limit line: useful Moats/IDA/NRP guidance — not identical timelines for every home.

Moats predictability honesty (parent paragraph)

English spelling looks wild if you only memorize weekly lists. It looks more orderly if you teach sound–symbol patterns, syllable types, and meaningful parts (-ed, -ing, un-). Even then, some high-frequency words keep heart parts. Teach patterns with courage; teach irregulars with honesty; skip the myth that “English can’t be taught.” Also skip the myth that every word is perfectly regular.

Encoding twin checklist after every phonics sit

- ☐ At least 2 dictated words from today’s decode set
- ☐ Read-back required
- ☐ One error logged with position
- ☐ Focus pattern protected in any sentence task

Band 8–10 multisyllabic encode

After PH-6 sort, dictate *sunset*, *napkin*, *cape*, *cap*. Child writes under Closed or Silent-e columns. Scoop syllables. Check vowel letters. This is encoding into structure — not a vocabulary list as spelling program.

Shame contest replacement

Old habit: Friday public timed list, red marks, sibling comparison.

New habit: Private Dictation Relay; Error Hospital detective; celebrate accurate diagnosis; chart self-to-self hold-after-night. Dignity is instructional.

Invented spelling — window vs destination

Early invented spelling can reveal phoneme awareness. Praise the sounds you hear in the attempt. Then teach today’s conventional pattern and dictate it. For dyslexia risk, do not wait years for invention to become convention without instruction.

Records crumb

Notebook: dictation date; list; score 4/5; sentence focus words; two error codes; Reading / Language Arts header. Never brand-as-title. Never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I.

MOT-1 / SL-1 hygiene

Choice of two equivalent dictation lists. One full oral sentence: “I stretched *ship* and it matched.” Wait for the sentence.

Connection to secondary consequences

Spelling humiliation drives avoidance fast. Keep logs private from sibling roast. Public postcards get adult support. Hard work stays; shame goes.

AI boundary restated

Parent may generate a new isomorphic list with answer key held by parent. Child attempts unaided. Model may not fill the dictation page. Bastani OFF-AGE caution still applies as mechanism: tools that do the practice can hollow out the learning — not a 5–10 literacy RCT; still a kitchen warning.⁷²

Illustration still-lives

Dictation paper with stretch marks; position log; postcard; heart marks on irregulars; tiles swept into a box before write-from-memory; dated notebook.

Expanded done-enough

Add: twin happened at least three days; read-back habit observed without prompt once; postcard or note had child-spelled focus words; hold-after-night passed on 3/4; parent can explain Moats predictability in one ordinary sentence without claiming 100% regularity.

Bridge to Chapter 5

When words are accurate in isolation and in dictation, put them in controlled sentences and pages. Accuracy Pass first. Fluency after accuracy. Never time cold undecodable text. Locked opening ahead: “Look through the word — then where should we slow down for a smooth reread?”

⁷²Bastani et al., *PNAS* 2025 — **OFF-AGE for literacy; not a dyslexia RCT**. Mechanism reminder: unguarded help can inflate practice and hurt closed-window learning.

Daily encoding scripts

Script Relay (8-10 min). Five words + one sentence; stretch-write-read-back; position log on misses; exit 4/5.

Script Heart Encode (6 min). Three irregulars mapped; write 2x; exit 2/3.

Script Twin Tail (4 min). End of any decode sit: dictate 3 pattern words; mandatory read-back.

Script Columns (10 min, 8-10). After syllable sort: dictate 4 into columns; scoop; check.

Script Note (5-8 min). Dictation Note to Family with 2-3 focus spellings starred.

Script Hospital Spell (7 min). Three misspellings; B/M/E; type; rebuild; exit hypotheses.

Stretch scaffolds by need

1. Adult models stretch once; child echoes; child writes.
2. Child stretches; adult points to boxes; child writes.
3. Child stretches into drawn sound boxes; then copies to line.
4. Child stretches on fingers; writes on blank line.
5. Child writes; self-checks by re-stretch without adult prompt.

Move up the scaffold when exit crumbs hold; move down when errors spike — without shame.

Sentence dictation patterns

Pattern A — Focus blanks: The ____ is big. Child spells *ship*. **Pattern B — Two focus words:** I ____ on the _____. **Pattern C — Full attempt with scribe backup:** Child tries whole sentence; adult rescues only non-focus words after one try. **Pattern D — 8-10 contrast:** I have a cap. I have a cape. Child writes both; explains.

Nasal and blend encoding clinics

Nasal clinic: Feel /n/ or /m/ buzz; tiles for *sad/sand*, *cap/camp*; dictate four; log omissions. **Blend clinic:** Tap /s/ /t/ before writing *stop*; left-to-right; refuse vowel

insertion; continuous blend then write.

Family communication without shame contests

Replace “spelling bee night” with “detective night”: three hospital words, one celebration of a hold-after-night win, postcard to grandma with two focus words. Relatives who want speed contests get a calm sentence: “We’re building accuracy first.”

Linking encoding errors to PA and phonics

Encoding digraph errors point back to digraph-as-one-tile PA and PH-2 contrast. Vowel chaos points to contrast encode and Word-Chain on vowels. Final dropped points to final-sound hospital and finals-only dictation. Looks-right points to mandatory read-back. Heart irregular wrong points to Heart-Part Map encode. *cap* for *cape* points to PH-6 plus encode columns.

Expanded student tries

Try 3: Build with tiles, sweep, write from memory, match. **Try 4:** Fix one logged miss and explain the position. **Challenge plus:** Say the stretch aloud before writing — listen once in your mind — then write.

Co-teacher alignment

If two adults teach, agree on: same focus pattern this week; same five dictation words on Mon/Wed; same rule that focus blanks are child’s; same refuse list (shame contest, spell-check-as-curriculum, adult fills focus). Split days, not philosophies, mid-week.

Access vs substitute in spelling

Dictation software may later help composition volume (Chapter 7). It must not produce today’s five pattern words and call that the encoding lesson. Label lanes: intervention spelling sit vs content writing with accommodations.

Progress chart without percentile

Columns: Date | Pattern | 5-word score | Sentence focus Y/N | Hold next day Y/N | Notes. Compare child to prior week on same pattern — not to national norms, not to sibling, not to AR.

Why showable two ways matters

Reading a word without spelling it can hide thin orthographic mapping. Spelling without being able to read it back can hide a copy habit. Done-enough asks for both on a short set. Chapter 8 will deepen inventories; this chapter's bar is enough to steer tomorrow.

More composites (hypothetical, labelled)

Leah, 6: Dictation *map, sat, sip, tip, tap*. Misses *sip* as *sep*. Logs middle vowel. Contrast *sip* with taught vowels only. Next day hold: *sip* correct. Working sticky: "I can stretch."

Omar, 10: Silent-e columns. Writes *hope* under closed by mistake. Rule sentence restated. Rebuilds. Postcard to uncle includes *hope* and *home* child-spelled; adult scribes the rest. No baby talk. Science podcast continues by ear.

Materials list

Lined paper; pencils; tiles; sound boxes; heart stickers or red pencil; error log stickies; postcards; fridge magnets; notebook titled Reading / Language Arts / English; parent key folder for isomorphic lists (child never sees key).

Refuse list — encoding chapter

Spelling doesn't matter; shame bee; invented-forever without dictation; spell-check as curriculum; adult fills focus blanks; AI writes the spellings; skipping encode when decode ran long; weekly list unrelated to taught phonics patterns as the only program.

Talk box practice for the adult

Alone, say the locked opening. Dictate yourself five words. Mark one fake error B/M/E. Practice the follow-up “Read what you wrote.” If you can run that privately, you can run it with the child.

Intensity reminder

Short sharp frequent dictation beats Sunday marathon lists. Five words done well four days outperform twenty words cried through once. Stop before melt. Return tomorrow.

Illustration note

Show stretch marks under attempted letters; a match checkmark; a postcard; headphones labelled on a different text for access — never on the dictation page as a substitute.

Done-enough final gate before leaving chapter focus

If 4/5 holds after a night on taught patterns twice in a week, sentence focus words attempted, and twin habit is alive, you may shift primary focus to connected reading (Chapter 5) while keeping Dictation Relay as a crumb 2-3 days weekly forever — encoding does not graduate away in ages 5-10.

Closing line for the student

“Say it. Stretch it. Write it. Read it. Match? If not, we fix it — and that’s learning, not failing.”

Dictation Relay — full worked sit (hypothetical)

Focus digraph *sh*; child age 7 (hypothetical).

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2. Adult says *ship*. Child repeats.
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This-week planning card (encoding)

Focus pattern twin to ch03. PH-5 three days. Heart encode two days. Sentence dictation twice. In-home Dictation Note once. Out-of-home Postcard once. Friday Hospital. Done-enough: 4/5 + hold after night + showable read and spell.

Full week narrative (hypothetical family, labelled illustration)

The Nguyen kitchen (hypothetical) runs a *sh* week. Monday after Teach-One, they run Dictation Relay: *ship, shop, shut, fish, wish* and the sentence *The ship is big*. Linh, age 7, misses *shop* as *sop*, reads it back, fixes the digraph, and the miss goes on a sticky. Tuesday Word-Chain ends with three dictated chain words — all match. Wednesday heart encode on *the* and *said* after dinner; Linh maps *s* and *d* in *said* and hearts the middle. Thursday they write a Dictation Note on the fridge: *Ship is fun* — Linh spells *ship* and *fun*; adult scribes nothing because load is light. Friday Hospital: Linh says, “I used *s* instead of *sh*.” Hold-check next morning: *shop* correct. Out-of-home: cereal box *sh* hunt transferred to three home dictation mates. No shame bee. Notebook titled Reading / Language Arts. That week is encoding done with dignity.

Meanwhile Sam, age 9 (hypothetical), still writing *cap* for *cape*, sorts ten cards, encodes four into columns, writes a postcard to a cousin with *hope* and *home* child-spelled, adult scribing the greeting. Rate of handwriting is slow; adult does not confuse handwriting speed with spelling knowledge. Separate handwriting crumb max five minutes fused to today’s letters (Chapter 7). Spelling sit stays about the map.

Extended talk box — encoding

Opening locked: “Say the word. Stretch it. Write it. Does it match?”

Extra follow-ups for later in the week: - “Say the digraph sound while you write both letters.” - “Check the last box — did you leave it empty?” - “Is this a heart part or a pattern we can sound?” - “Show me the stretch without looking at what you wrote — then compare.” - “Which word should go on the shaky stack?” - “Can you read your sentence as if you were the teacher?”

Wait rules same as other chapters. Stuck silence: often the child fears a red mark culture from past spelling bees. Name it: “This is detective work, not a contest.”

Then restart with three easier taught words for a win before the hard one.

Blocked vs mixed encoding practice

Blocked (new habit): Five words, all same pattern, tiles allowed, no sentence yet.

Mixed (when ready): Three today's pattern, one last week, one heart; then sentence with one focus blank. **Interleaved twin:** Decode two, encode two, decode one, encode one — keeps the map bidirectional.

Handwriting vs spelling — keep them distinct

If handwriting collapses the sit, shorten writing to boxes or tiles-to-copy, still requiring correct grapheme choice. Do not abandon spelling because pencil grip is immature. Do not abandon handwriting instruction forever either — crumb it (Chapter 7). Separate the problems in the log: transcription motor vs phoneme-grapheme choice.

Morphology-light foreshadow (do not dump seminars)

At 5-7, when ready: plural -s and simple -ing as ending switches that affect spelling (*run* vs *running* comes later with doubling rules — only when taught). At 8-10: light -ed sounds (/t/, /d/, /id/) as a spelling conversation after decoding allows. Full adolescent Latin root clubs wait. Point forward; teach light now when skill allows.

Spell-check and TTS — labelled lanes

Lane A — today's encoding lesson: unaided stretch-write-match on taught patterns. Lane B — later composition access: spell-check or dictation may help volume on a story whose goal is ideas (Chapter 7), with focus spellings still taught. Never mash Lane B into Lane A and call the week done.

Parent self-check after encoding sits

Did I require read-back? Did I protect focus blanks? Did I log position without shame? Did I twin to today's phonics? Did I stop before melt? Did I schedule hold-check?

Three nos means shrink tomorrow's list and restore the routine.

Out-of-home postcard deep card

Time 10-15 minutes at the table after a trip, or using a museum postcard. Child draws small picture. Adult and child oral plan one sentence. Adult scribes non-focus words as needed. Child spells two focus pattern words in the sentence. Address: adult writes; child may copy one taught chunk if appropriate. Mail together. Real audience beats fake worksheet shame.

In-home Dictation Note deep card

Notepad on fridge. Purpose examples: Dog needs walk. Ship is fun. I can stretch. Star focus words before writing. Child stretches each starred word. Read whole note aloud. Family member responds orally — motivation without editing the child's focus spellings into invisibility.

Error Hospital evening script

1. Pull three stickies.
2. "What's your hypothesis?"
3. If vague, offer two choices: "Vowel or digraph?"
4. Rebuild with tiles, then write.
5. Put sticky on "recheck tomorrow" pile.
6. Praise accurate diagnosis: "You found the middle digraph miss — that's the skill."

Why encoding reveals what decoding hides

A child may guess a word from context in a book and seem fine. Dictation removes the picture and the sentence context. The pencil tells the truth kindly if adults refuse shame. That truth drives tomorrow's PA crumb or contrast stack. Kitchen assessment objects in Chapter 8 formalize this; Dictation Relay is already assessment-as-teaching.

Limit line and closing

Useful guidance from IDA definitions, Moats predictability teaching, and NRP twinning of PA with literacy — not a promise of identical weekly scores.⁷³ Teach. Log. Hold-check. Seek evaluation when persistence after systematic work needs documentation — not legal advice. Then keep the pencil moving.

Student closing pep

Your pencil is part of reading. Stretching before writing is strength. Matching after writing is wisdom. Fixing a miss is courage. You are not lazy. Ready? Say the word. Stretch it. Write it. Does it match?

Extended How-to-teach details (encoding week)

Start the week by writing the twin pattern on the fridge: “This week’s spellings = this week’s decode link.” Then schedule PH-5 on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday; heart encoding Tuesday; Hospital Friday. Keep PA crumb only if stretch collapses — then return to tiles for one hard word and resume paper.

Band 5-7 exact sit (10 minutes encoding half): 1. Child repeats five words. 2. Stretch each with fingers or boxes. 3. Write on line. 4. Read back each before next. 5. One sentence with one focus blank. 6. Log up to two misses with B/M/E. 7. Exit crumb announced: “Four out of five matches, or we explain.”

Band 8-10 exact sit (12 minutes): 1. Quick syllable rule sentence. 2. Dictate four words into columns. 3. Scoop multisyllabic items. 4. Sentence with two focus blanks. 5. Self-check: child marks own match Y/N before adult confirms. 6. One hospital sticky prepared for Friday.

Fade adult voice: by Thursday, child should initiate “Does it match?” without prompt.

Additional practice — kitchen and beyond

Spell-and-Build Snack: Before snack, spell one focus word on a sticky; build with tiles; eat. Safety: wash hands; food off paper.

⁷³IDA Definition (Oct 2025); Moats 2005/06; NRP 2000 — useful guidance, not a weekly-score promise.

Car Park Notepad (parked car only): Adult says two taught words; child writes on notepad; check match before unbuckling rush. Never while driving.

Sibling Wait Job: Sibling draws while learner encodes — reduces over-talk. Praise sibling waiting as a real contribution.

Audio Stretch Preview (parent phone, deleted after): Child records stretch once, listens, writes, deletes. Privacy; parent-held device.

Sunday Soft Review: Three hold-check words from the week — not a marathon. Celebrate matches. Rest.

For the student — longer band notes

Ages 5-7: Use boxes if they help. Say sounds while you write. Ask for a digraph card if two letters make one sound. Take breaks before tears.

Ages 8-10: Columns and postcards are grown-up tools for the same careful work. If a relative calls it babyish, your adult will handle that. Your job is match-checking. Slow handwriting can still be strong spelling — we separate those skills.

Explain-it-back prompts: - Why read it back? - What is a focus blank? - What does a heart mark mean when we spell? - How do we use beginning/middle/end marks?

Challenge ladder: 1. Five matches in Relay. 2. Sentence focus word correct. 3. Hold after night. 4. Teach a younger sibling (or stuffed animal) the stretch-write-match steps. 5. Postcard mailed with two focus spellings.

If it still isn't clicking — escalation path

1. Shrink list to three words; tiles on.
2. Twin only to rock-solid patterns; pause new phonics links one week.
3. Increase Hospital; decrease shame risk (private, short).
4. Check hearing/vision as parallel health care — not as a lenses cure for dyslexia.⁷⁴

⁷⁴AAP-AAO joint statement: parallel eye care if needed; lenses/vision therapy are not the dyslexia reading treatment.

5. Seek educational evaluation if unexpected persistent struggle continues despite systematic twin sits — teach while you seek; not legal advice.
6. Keep Hard/Working stickies alive so identity is not only “bad speller.”

Tools deep pointer

Parent key folder labeled “ANSWER KEY — ADULT.” Child workspace never includes key. AI may refill isomorphic lists for the adult after the child’s attempt. SCRIPT example after a miss: “You wrote *sop*. Stretch *shop* again. Digraph *sh*. Write. Read. Match?” Adult says it; child does it.

Done-enough wall chart (copy)

Week of _____ Pattern _____ Mon Relay score /5 **Sentence focus Y/N**
Tue Heart /3 Wed Relay /5 **Thu Note/Postcard focus words correct** Fri Hospital
 hypotheses /3 **Hold-check** /4 Showable read+spell Y/N Myths refused this week:
 _____ Next week: hold / advance / reteach _____

When the chart shows two clean hold-checks and living twin habit, Chapter 5 can take primary focus. Keep encoding crumbs anyway.

Final parent pep

You do not need to be a spelling bee champion. You need to hear “looks right” without a sound check, protect focus blanks, twin to phonics, and refuse shame. The pencil tells the truth. You answer with a better question. Say the word. Stretch it. Write it. Does it match?

Practice bank — quick reference table

Activity	Band	Time	Core move	Exit crumb
PH-5 Dictation Relay	both	8-10	stretch-write- read-back	4/5 or explained
Heart-Part Encoding	both	5-8	map + heart + write	2/3

Activity	Band	Time	Core move	Exit crumb
Twin Tail	both	4	3 dictated after decode	2/3
Sentence focus blanks	both	5-8	protect focus spellings	focus words attempted
Columns encode	8-10	10	syllable columns	3/4
Dictation Note	both	5-8	purpose + focus	starred words correct
Postcard	both	10-15	real audience	2 focus spellings
Hospital spell	both	6-8	B/M/E diagnosis	2/3 hypotheses
Tile-Then- Write	both	6	fade tiles to memory	match after sweep
Package to dictate	both	3+5	wild grapheme to home	3 mates dictated

Why twinning beats list memorization

Random Friday lists unrelated to the week's phonics pattern ask memory to do what mapping should do. Twin lists build the orthographic lexicon through sound-to-print and print-to-sound in the same week. That is Structured Literacy intensity for ages 5-10 — clearer teaching, more reps, diagnostic logs — not louder teaching and more shame.

One last composite

A parent who felt rusty on spelling generalizations runs five-minute warm-ups, protects focus blanks, and refuses the family spelling bee. After three weeks of Relays twinning digraphs, the child's hold-after-night scores rise on taught patterns. Rate of writing is still slow. Accuracy is rising. Secondary avoidance shrinks because detective logs replaced red-mark theater. That is enough to keep going into connected reading — with encoding crumbs forever in the English hour.

Glossary crumb for encoding sits

Phoneme: speech sound. Grapheme: letter or letter team for a sound. Digraph: two letters, one sound. Heart part: unexpected spelling piece we mark and learn after mapping what we can. Focus blank: the pattern word the child must spell while an adult may scribe other words. Hold-after-night: recheck tomorrow to see if learning stuck. Position error: miss at beginning, middle, or end. Twin: encode the same patterns you decode this week.

Final done-enough whisper

If you can run stretch-write-read-back without a script in your hand, protect focus blanks, and log one miss curiously, you are done enough with this chapter as *focus*. Keep the Relay as a lifelong crumb of the English hour for ages 5-10. Spelling stays in the definition — and on the table.

Illustrations: dictation paper with stretch marks; position-error log; postcard; heart marks; tiles swept aside before write-from-memory; dated Reading notebook; headphones only on a separate access text. No child portraits. No brand logos. No colored-lens still-lives. Limit line once more: useful study base, not a promise every home sees the same weekly scores. Then teach.

Stretch. Write. Read back. Match — or fix. Twin every phonics pattern. Dignity first.

This chapter's kitchen deliverable is Dictation Relay and its twins: heart encoding, focus-blank sentences, position logs, family notes, and postcards — each with materials, time, steps, and error patterns. Spell-check is not the curriculum. The stretch-write-match loop is.

Parent-learns-this-week: stretch-write-read-back. Child-tries-today: Dictation Relay of five words plus one sentence.

Wrong is information. Match is the goal. Dignity holds either way.

Chapter 5

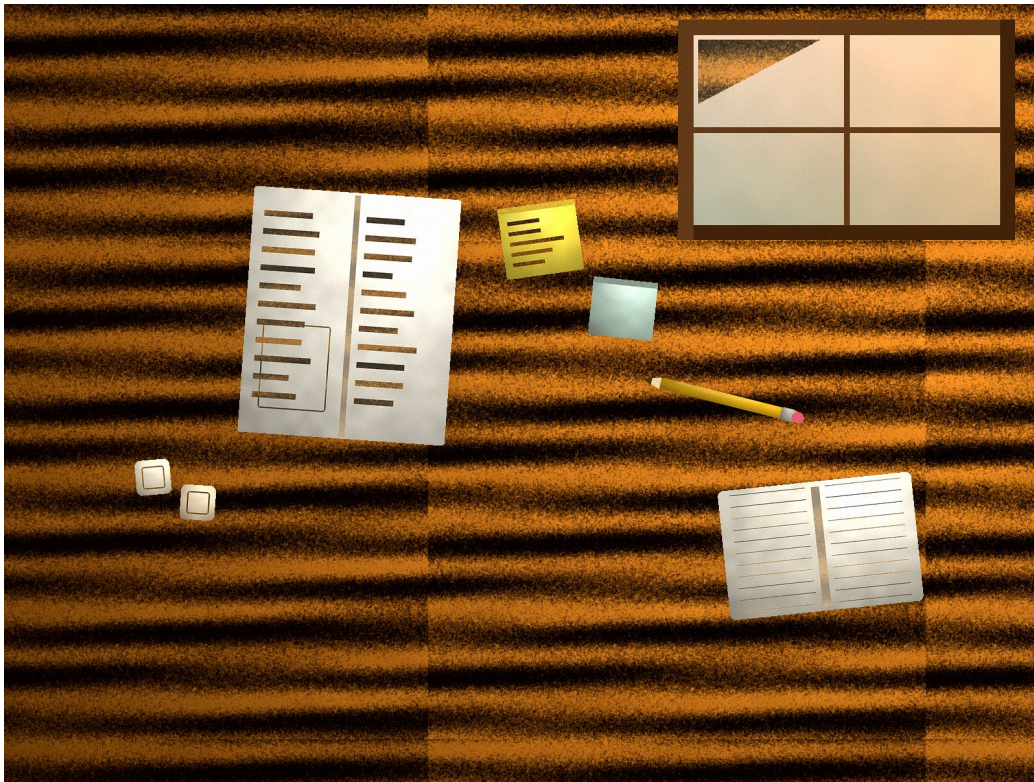


Figure 7: A short accurate page marked for a second oral reread — still-life, no people, no logos.

Decodable connected reading and fluency after accuracy

Why this matters

Look through the word — then where should we slow down for a smooth reread?

That question is the whole chapter in one breath. First the child looks through the printed word, left to right, saying the sounds and blending. Then — only when the page is mostly accurate — you ask where to slow down so a second and third read can sound more like talking. Accuracy is the gym. Fluency is the warm-up on yesterday's already-true page. Meaning rides on both.

For a five- to ten-year-old with dyslexia risk, word reading that stays hard does more than slow a page. It shrinks print volume. It makes independent reading feel like work without a finish line. Secondary costs to comprehension growth, written expression, and confidence can show up early — the International Dyslexia Association's October 2025 language names reduced reading experience as a foreseeable consequence, not a character flaw. Connected text that uses patterns you have already taught is how the code becomes reading. A stack of worksheets alone is not enough. A cozy read-aloud alone is not enough. A leveled ladder offered as proof that phonics happened is not enough.

The Institute of Education Sciences foundational-skills guide's Recommendation 4 asks for connected text every day to support accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.⁷⁵ The evidence tier is moderate. The National Reading Panel found that guided repeated oral reading with feedback helps word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.⁷⁶ Programs that mainly pushed large amounts of independent silent reading with little guidance did not meet the Panel's causal bar as a fluency program before alphabetic skills are in place.⁷⁷ Foorman and Torgesen's intensity language still applies: at-risk readers need teaching that is more explicit, more intensive, and more supportive than typical fare — short, sharp, and frequent at the

⁷⁵Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Recommendation 4 **moderate**: connected text daily for accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

⁷⁶NRP summary (2000): guided oral reading with feedback positive for word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.

⁷⁷NRP summary (2000): independent silent reading alone not shown as causal fluency instruction especially before alphabetic skills are in place — SSR-alone insufficient for code-limited readers.

kitchen table, not a Sunday marathon.⁷⁸ These are useful studies, not a promise that every home will see the same result. They still give you a clear kitchen order: decode through the word on controlled text; reread for smoothness after accuracy; ask one meaning question; refuse the stopwatch on cold hard text.

What this idea unlocks is a child who can finish a short page that matches today's code, then sound more like a storyteller on that same page tomorrow. Vocabulary and comprehension work in the next chapter need bandwidth. Writing needs a reader who can hear how a sentence sounds. If "fluency" still means a race on text the child cannot yet decode, you train guessing under pressure. If "connected reading" still means only picture walks and prediction from the cover, you train looking away from the letters.

Two refusals sit beside the invitation — and a third belongs in the same sitting.

Fluency before accuracy is refused. Timing a cold undecodable page is refused. Picture-guessing as word reading is refused. Accelerated Reader points (or any points chart) as comprehension are refused here and next door in Chapter 6 — points are a management system, not meaning.⁷⁹ A leveled book can be a difficulty ladder and still offer no discernible proof that alphabets were taught. The What Works Clearinghouse review of one widely used leveled literacy intervention found positive general reading effects and no discernible alphabets effects — school/vendor evidence, honest and limited.⁸⁰ Another school-labelled program, Sound Partners, showed positive alphabets, fluency, and comprehension in WWC summaries; that is school evidence, not a kitchen product pitch.⁸¹ Decodable or pattern-controlled text is a practice condition for today's code. It is not a forever cage, and it is not a brand identity on a transcript.

Torgesen's honesty about rate gaps for harder impairments already matters by ages 8–10: accuracy, decoding, and comprehension can grow while a rate gap relative to peers lingers.⁸² Say that without cruelty. Slow and accurate is the path. Personal

⁷⁸Foorman and Torgesen 2001 — more explicit, intensive, supportive.

⁷⁹WWC, *Accelerated Reader* (Adolescent Literacy, August 2010): no discernible effects in rated domains — school/vendor labelled. Points ≠ comprehension instruction.

⁸⁰WWC LLI (September 2017): positive general reading; potentially positive fluency; **no discernible alphabets** — school/vendor labelled.

⁸¹WWC Sound Partners Beginning Reading reporting — positive alphabets/fluency/comprehension; school tutoring design, not a kitchen crown.

⁸²Joseph K. Torgesen, "Avoiding the Devastating Downward Spiral," *American Educator* 28, no. 3 (2004) and related: rate gaps may linger even when accuracy grows — already relevant by 8–10; say so without cruelty.

smooth charts, if used at all, compare the child to yesterday's self on the same controlled text — not to a sibling's birthday and not to a national percentile as identity.

You do not need to be a reading specialist. You do need to cover the picture until after the words, tally meaning-harming errors without shaming every stumble, and say out loud: we only reread for smoothness after it's accurate.

This week you can learn to hear picture guessing, first-letter inventing, stopwatch-first panic, “just read more,” and leveled-as-phonics-proof as five different misses. Today the child can look through the word on a short controlled page and name one place to slow down on a smooth reread. Tomorrow they can make that same page sound more like talking — without a race, without shame, and without pretending points equal understanding.

What “connected” does not mean

Connected text does not mean any book from a bin. It does not mean a worksheet of isolated words pretending to be a story. It does not mean a picture walk that replaces looking through print. Connected means words in sentences and short paragraphs the child reads with the finger under the line, using the code you have taught, for accuracy first and smoothness second. Isolated word drills still matter in the phonics sit (Chapters 3–4). This chapter is where those words have to hold up inside a sentence when memory and meaning are also online.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults remember “reading fluency” as a timer and a chart on the wall. That memory is incomplete. Accuracy, rate, and phrasing work together — and accuracy comes first. Many adults were also told that “just reading a lot” would fix a slow reader, or that a leveled book color was the phonics program. Rust is normal. Five minutes of this section, then the warm-up, is enough for tomorrow. The child still reads aloud.

Everyday picture. Yesterday the child read a short digraph page with two sticky words. You previewed those words in isolation. Today you cover the illustration with a sticky note. The child reads. You tally only the slips that change meaning — not every soft self-correction. When the page is clean enough, you put yesterday's

clean copy back on the table and ask, “Where should we slow down for a smooth reread?” The child scoops a phrase with a finger. The third read sounds more like talking. A separate ordinary picture: a child races a hard chapter book while someone calls time. Speed rose. Reading did not. Another ordinary picture: a parent points at a cute cover and says, “What do you think this word is?” The child invents from the dog in the photo. The letters never got a turn.

Precise picture. Four ideas sit under this chapter, and they are not the same.

Connected accuracy (CT). Pattern-controlled or decodable text that mostly uses taught patterns. Finger under the word. Look through the whole word. Blend prompts, not picture prompts. Tally meaning-harming errors. One “what happened?” after. This is Foorman Rec 4’s daily gym. Exact percentages of “decodable words” on a page are a design choice in programs — treat them as guidance for “mostly taught patterns,” not a kitchen law.

Fluency after accuracy (FL). Same page (or yesterday’s already-accurate paragraph). Two or three rereads with feedback. Optional phrasing scoops. A meaning question. No timing unless it is optional personal comparison on text that was already accurate — never a sibling race, never cold hard text.

Bridge toward less-controlled text (mostly 8–10). After controlled accuracy holds, pre-teach a few sticky words, then try a short less-controlled paragraph on the same topic. If guessing returns, step back to controlled for two minutes and retry one hard sentence. Bridging is earned, not a birthday gift.

Access while code is repaired. Richer books by ear still belong some days (see Chapter 6, Ears Grow While Eyes Train). They do not replace today’s Accuracy Pass, and they are not scored as fluency practice.

Write on a scrap: accurate → reread for smoothness → meaning. Circle *accurate*. That is the hinge.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *Picture guess as word ID.* Child says *dog* from the photo while the print says *pup*. Hear the three-cueing habit. Cover the picture. “Look through the word.”
2. *First-letter invent.* Child sees *ship* and says *shop*, or invents from the first letter and the scene. Hear incomplete looking-through. Point to the middle. Stretch the sounds.

3. *Stopwatch before accuracy.* Timer on a cold page the child cannot decode. Hear the category error. Put the timer away. Run Accuracy Pass. Fluency tomorrow on that page.
4. *“Just read more” as the fluency program.* Silent minutes alone before the code holds. Hear the NRP caution. Add guided oral reading with feedback on known text. Wide reading can still motivate when it does not replace teaching.
5. *Leveled ladder as phonics proof.* “We’re on Level M, so phonics is done.” Hear the mismatch. A difficulty ladder is not alphabetic evidence. Keep controlled text for shaky patterns.
6. *AR points (or any points) as comprehension.* “We got ten points, so we understood it.” Hear the mash. Ask a talk-box meaning question with evidence instead.
7. *Chatbot or TTS finishing today’s decode page.* Hear the substitute. Access tools open content doors on another text; they do not complete the Accuracy Pass that is the lesson.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Do this before the lesson, with a short controlled paragraph and a sticky note, no child in the room.

Minute 1. Read the paragraph yourself. Mark two words that might stick. Decide a blend prompt for each — not “look at the picture.”

Minute 2. Cover the illustration. Practice saying: “Look through the word — then where should we slow down for a smooth reread?”

Minute 3. Imagine starting a timer while they guess. Decide what you will do instead: Accuracy Pass today; Accuracy-Then-Reread tomorrow.

Minute 4. Decide what counts as a meaning-harming error on this page (wrong word that changes the story) versus a soft stumble you will ignore for the tally. Pencil a tiny tally column in your mind: date, errors, gist yes/no.

Minute 5. Write the sentence you will actually say. Put the pencil down. That sentence is the lesson.

If you can do those five minutes, you are ready to sit down. The child reads. You hear.

How to teach it this week

A good English hour this week keeps the Structured Literacy shape from the front of the book. Scale the middle blocks to connected accuracy and, when yesterday was clean, fluency after accuracy. Intensity is kindness: clearer teaching and more reps, not louder teaching. Stop before melt.

Band 5–7 session shape (about 25–40 minutes)

- Cumulative review 3–5 minutes: known sounds, shaky words, two heart parts.
- PA crumb if needed 3–6 minutes: with letters, on today’s words.
- Phonics + encoding sit 10–15 minutes: today’s pattern (decode and dictate).
- Connected accuracy 6–10 minutes: **CT-1 Accuracy Pass** on a decodable page; habit **CT-5 Picture After**.
- Fluency or language crumb 4–8 minutes: if yesterday’s page was accurate, **FL-1 Accuracy-Then-Reread**; else **CT-2 Partner Echo** or **CT-3 Sentence Strip Rebuild**.
- Exit ticket 2–4 minutes: short controlled read tally, or third-reread + one meaning question.

Band 8–10 session shape (about 25–40 minutes)

- Cumulative review 3–5 minutes: syllable types, vowel teams, early morph, shaky list.
- Code sit 10–15 minutes: multisyllabic procedure or contrast encode.
- Connected accuracy → fluency 8–12 minutes: **CT-1** then **FL-1**, or **CT-4 Controlled-to-Less-Controlled Bridge** with pre-taught sticky words; **FL-2 Phrase Scoop** when robotic accuracy shows; optional calm **FL-4** only on already-accurate text.
- Vocab/comp crumb or writing crumb as the hour allows (see Chapters 6–7).
- Exit ticket 2–4 minutes.

Exact wording you can say:

- “Cover the picture until after you read.”
- “Look through the whole word — say the sounds, then blend.”
- “We only reread for smoothness after it’s accurate.”
- “We don’t race.”
- “What happened in this sentence?”
- “Where should we slow down for a smooth reread?”

- “You said _____. Check the middle letters. Blend again.”
- “Slow and accurate is the path.”

Age-band moves

5–7: Prefer shorter pages (about 40–60 words). Partner Echo and Sentence Strip Rebuild carry a lot of the week. Picture After is a habit every connected read. Fluency is Accuracy-Then-Reread and Assisted Duet — not a timer chart. Materials can be playful; the talk stays respectful.

8–10: Same accuracy-first rule. Add Bridge when you are ready to fade a pattern toward less-controlled text with three sticky words pre-taught. Phrase Scoop for robotic word-calling. Optional Personal Smooth Chart only on already-accurate text, self-comparison only. If blending is still unfinished, stay in Accuracy Pass with respectful materials and mature wording (“We’re mapping this paragraph”) — not a novel study because “third grade,” and not baby-talk through CVC as if they were four.

Fade help. First you cover the picture and supply blend prompts. Then the child covers the picture. Then the child self-corrects a sticky word before you speak. Then the child names where to slow down without your slash marks. Stop talking when the finger is under the word and the mouth is working.

When to stop. Stop before melt. A clean Accuracy Pass on a short page beats a meltdown on a long one. If tears rise, shorten the page, keep two success reps, and park the Bridge for another day.

Hypothetical week sketch (labelled illustration, not a reported family)

Band 5–7 focus: digraph *sh* after the phonics sit.

- Monday: CT-1 Accuracy Pass on an *sh* page; CT-5 cover; exit: ≤ 2 meaning-harming or note reteach.
- Tuesday: CT-2 Partner Echo on the same page; child solos two sentences.
- Wednesday: FL-1 Accuracy-Then-Reread on Tuesday’s clean text; one meaning question; no timer.
- Thursday: Package Grapheme Hunt for *sh*; home list of matching words; CT-3 Sentence Strip on one sentence.

- Friday: Cumulative review; short Accuracy Pass; one diagnostic wrong explained (Chapter 8); decide hold or add *th*.

Band 8–10 focus: closed vs silent-e already taught in the code sit.

- Monday–Tuesday: CT-1 on controlled contrast paragraph.
- Wednesday: CT-4 Bridge with three sticky words; return to controlled if guessing returns.
- Thursday: FL-2 Phrase Scoop + FL-1; optional FL-4 only if calm.
- Friday: Self-to-self note on the same paragraph; meaning question; no sibling chart.

In-hour named activities (map: CT-1...CT-5, FL-1...FL-4)

CT-1 — Accuracy Pass (Cold Decode)

Band: both. Time: 6–10 minutes.

Materials: Decodable or pattern-controlled page using mostly taught patterns; finger or tracking strip; pencil for adult tally; sticky note for the picture.

Steps: (1) Preview two or three hard words in isolation. (2) Cover the illustration. (3) Child reads aloud; adult tallies meaning-harming errors (not every stumble). (4) Stop for blend prompts, not picture prompts. (5) Record accuracy. (6) One “what happened?” sentence after. Uncover the picture and check whether it matches the words.

Error patterns: picture guessing; first-letter invent; skipping words; racing. Move: hold the cover; “say the sounds”; slow the pace; shorter page.

Exit crumb: ≤2 meaning-harming errors on a 40–60 word passage (5–7) or about 80–100 words of controlled text (8–10), or note the reteach pattern.

CT-2 — Partner Echo Read

Band: 5–7. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Same controlled text; two colors of sticky flags.

Steps: Adult reads a sentence accurately; child echoes with finger under words; swap so child leads a known sentence; end with child solo on two sentences.

Error patterns: echoes from ear without looking; loses place. Move: require finger-point; whisper-read before echo.

Exit crumb: solo accuracy on two sentences.

CT-3 — Sentence Strip Rebuild

Band: 5–7. Time: 8 minutes.

Materials: One decodable sentence cut into words; envelope.

Steps: Child reads the sentence in the book; mix strips; rebuild and reread; copy the sentence; change one taught-pattern word to make a new true sentence.

Error patterns: orders by capital and period only; guesses syntax without decoding each word. Move: decode each strip before placing.

Exit crumb: rebuilds and reads accurately once.

CT-4 — Controlled-to-Less-Controlled Bridge

Band: 8–10. Time: 10–12 minutes.

Materials: One pattern-controlled paragraph; one short less-controlled paragraph on the same topic; sticky notes for three pre-taught words.

Steps: Accuracy Pass on controlled text; pre-teach three sticky words (map known sounds; heart unexpected parts); read less-controlled text with blend prompts; ask, “Which words used this week’s pattern?”

Error patterns: abandons sounding when text feels “real”; reverts to guessing.

Move: return to controlled for two minutes; retry one hard sentence.

Exit crumb: both texts with ≤ 3 meaning-harming errors total after pre-teach.

CT-5 — Picture After, Not Before

Band: both. Time: built into any connected read.

Materials: Sticky note to cover the illustration.

Steps: Cover → read → uncover → “Does the picture match what the words said?”

Error patterns: peeks early; uses picture to name words. Move: adult holds the cover; praise the word-first habit.

Exit crumb: habit observed once without peeking.

FL-1 — Accuracy-Then-Reread

Band: both. Time: 6–10 minutes.

Materials: Yesterday’s already-accurate paragraph; optional phrasing slash marks.

Steps: Confirm accuracy quickly; child rereads for smoothness two or three times; adult models one phrase; child copies phrasing; one meaning question. No timing unless optional personal best on *already accurate* text — and never as shame.

Error patterns: speed without accuracy; robotic word-calling; skips meaning.

Move: slow down; add slash phrases; ask meaning before another timed try.

Exit crumb: third read smooth with ≤ 2 meaning-harming errors + one correct meaning answer.

FL-2 — Phrase Scoop

Band: 8–10 (advanced 5–7). Time: 5–7 minutes.

Materials: Printed sentences; pencil to scoop phrases.

Steps: Adult scoops (*The big dog / ran to the park*); child reads scoop by scoop; child scoops a new sentence; read whole.

Error patterns: scoops mid-word; ignores punctuation. Move: model punctuation pauses; keep scoops meaning-based.

Exit crumb: scoops and reads two sentences appropriately.

FL-3 — Assisted Duet Read

Band: both. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Text the child can mostly decode ($\geq 90\%$ known).

Steps: Adult and child read aloud together; adult drops volume as child steadies; child solo last two sentences.

Error patterns: child mumbles behind; adult races. Move: adult matches child's pace; shorter passage.

Exit crumb: solo last sentences accurate and reasonably smooth.

FL-4 — Personal Smooth Chart (not peer race)

Band: 8–10. Time: 4 minutes + prior accuracy.

Materials: Same 50–70 word accurate paragraph; notebook.

Steps: Only if yesterday's Accuracy Pass was clean; optional timing of a reread for *self* comparison; note one phrasing win; never post sibling comparisons.

Error patterns: anxiety; guessing to "win." Move: drop timer; return to Accuracy-Then-Reread without clock.

Exit crumb: self-note of one improvement OR decision to pause timing.

Practice that actually builds learning

Library shared reading, kitchen labels, and street signs motivate and transfer. They do not replace the Structured Literacy sit. Name the try-it. Watch the error pattern. Ample practice means more than one cute game.

In-home try-its

Accuracy-Then-Reread Couch

Band: both. Time: 6–10 minutes.

Materials: Yesterday's page from the hour; couch or table; timer stays in a drawer unless you later choose optional self-timing on a clean page.

Safety: ordinary — stop before fatigue tears; no shame language about "still slow."

The fun: the child hears themselves sound more like a storyteller on a page they

already own.

The skill: fluency after accuracy; meaning question at the end.

Error patterns: starting a cold new book “for fun fluency”; timing before accuracy; skipping the meaning question. Move: only yesterday’s clean page; ask “what happened?” before any clock thought.

Recipe / Label Decode

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: One food package with today’s grapheme (*sh*, *th*, a vowel team already taught).

Safety: no tasting unknown contents; aisle courtesy if you do this after a store trip.

The fun: print that feeds you.

The skill: look through the word on real packaging.

Error patterns: brand-logo guessing; first-letter grab. Move: cover the logo art with a thumb; finger under the letters; then home Accuracy Pass on a matching three-word list.

Tile Build → Sentence Read

Band: both. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Letter tiles; one controlled sentence using today’s words.

The fun: hands build what the mouth will read.

The skill: orthographic map to connected reading.

Error patterns: building untaught patterns; racing the sentence without looking through. Move: only taught tiles; Accuracy Pass voice on the finished sentence.

Caption the Photo (connected sentence)

Band: 5–7 labels; 8–10 a full sentence.

Time: 8–12 minutes.

Materials: Family photo; paper; three taught words.

The fun: real life on the page.

The skill: encode a true sentence after an Accuracy Pass week — transfer from reading to writing.

Error patterns: blank-page freeze. Move: adult scribes function words; child spells focus words (see Chapter 7).

Error Hospital Evening (connected misses)

Band: both. Time: 6–8 minutes.

Materials: Week’s sticky-word list from Accuracy Pass tallies.

The fun: detective, not defendant.

The skill: diagnose picture-guess vs vowel vs skipped ending.

Error patterns: shame flood. Move: keep curious; “Wrong isn’t shame — wrong is information.”

Out-of-home try-its

Street-Sign Sound-Out

Band: 5–7. Time: 2–4 minutes.

Materials: One reachable sign with a word inside today’s code.

Safety: sidewalk and parking-lot awareness; only words within code reach; no public quiz of strangers; no photographing strangers.

The fun: the world is print.

The skill: decode through the word; no first-letter guess.

Error patterns: choosing a word far outside today’s patterns; public shame. Move: adult picks the sign; whisper prompts; or adult reads the hard line and child reads the taught chunk.

Package Grapheme Hunt

Band: both. Time: 3–5 minutes in a store.

Materials: One package; today’s digraph or ending on a sticky in your pocket.

Safety: don’t lecture other children; don’t shoplift a “test.”

The fun: treasure hunt for *sh* or *-ing*.

The skill: grapheme recognition in the wild, then home Accuracy Pass on a matching list.

Error patterns: hunting logos instead of letters. Move: point to the letter team inside a word.

Menu Shared Read

Band: both. Time: 4–6 minutes.

Materials: Menu or flyer.

Safety: ordinary restaurant courtesy.

The fun: choosing food with print.

The skill: connected text with purpose *inform*; adult reads hard lines; child reads taught patterns.

Error patterns: forcing cold decode of the whole menu for fluency scoring. Move: shared roles; never time the menu.

Library Craft Question (after a decode sit at home)

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Picture book chosen for language, not as the week’s Accuracy Pass.

Safety: ordinary library manners.

The fun: being a reader among shelves.

The skill: one “what did the writer do?” after adult read-aloud — language growth, not a claim that the leveled sticker taught phonics.

Error patterns: treating the library level sticker as done-enough for code. Move: separate lanes out loud: “This book is for listening; our decode page is at home.”

Museum / Park Placard

Band: 8–10. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: One sentence on a placard.

Safety: skip if the text is far beyond code without adult read-aloud for meaning.

The fun: being a visitor who can sound a line.

The skill: look through the word, then a meaning talk.

Error patterns: shame in public when stuck. Move: whisper blend prompts; adult finishes hard names; praise the try.

Talk box

Exact opening question:

“Look through the word — then where should we slow down for a smooth reread?”

Follow-ups (pick three to five; one at a time):

1. Meaning: “What happened in this sentence — or what is this part mostly about?”
2. Representation: “Show me with your finger under the word — or scoop the phrase with a pencil.”
3. Type / evidence: “Which word used this week’s pattern? Point to it.”
4. Check: “Does that match the letters — and does the picture match after we uncover it?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind. Try that sticky word another way.”

How to wait: After you ask, count a slow three silently (classroom think-time habit — Stahl labelled; not a literacy RCT). After they stop talking, wait again. If they are mid-blend or mid-retell, do not cut them off. Look at the letters or the page, not at the child’s face, if the silence is hard. For dyslexic learners, wait is often longer than a parent’s anxiety wants — protect the try.

What a stuck silence usually means: Vague question; wait-time zero; picture cue still showing; first-letter grab habit; word outside today’s code; shame flood;

new chunk too big; need a shorter page or a preview of two sticky words. Pose, wait, point back at the print — do not fill the silence with the right word.

Blocked practice for a new move. When Picture After is new, practice only covering and reading one sentence before any fluency talk. When Phrase Scoop is new, scoop two sentences before any timing thought.

Mixed practice when ready. Alternate: one Accuracy Pass sentence, one reread sentence, one meaning question. Mix last week’s digraph page into Wednesday’s review so “got it” does not evaporate.

One incorrect example to diagnose. A nine-year-old (hypothetical) races a leveled page, glances at the picture, says *dog* for *pup*, and asks how many words per minute they “got.” Category errors stacked: fluency before accuracy, picture as word ID, speed as identity. Move: cover picture; switch to a controlled Accuracy Pass; drop the timer; ask the locked opening on yesterday’s clean page tomorrow. A seven-year-old (hypothetical) with shaky digraphs hunts *sh* on a cereal box, says /sh/, then reads *ship* from the week’s list at home — out-of-home to in-home transfer, not a WWC rating.

For the student

You are learning to read pages that match the patterns you have already practiced — and then to make those pages sound smooth.

What this idea is. First you look through each word. You say the sounds. You blend. The picture waits under a sticky note until after you read. When the page is mostly right, you reread it so it sounds more like talking. We do not race cold hard books to prove you are fast. Points on a chart are not the same thing as understanding.

Tiny worked example. The sentence says: *The ship is at the dock.* You cover the picture. You look through *ship*: /sh/ /i/ /p/ → *ship*. You read the whole sentence. One sticky word was *dock* — you blend again. Then you ask yourself: where should I slow down on a smooth reread? Maybe after *ship*. You reread. It sounds like telling someone what you saw. Then you uncover the picture and check: does it match the words?

Try 1. With your adult, cover a picture. Read one short page that uses this week’s pattern. Stop for blend help, not picture help. Tell what happened in one sentence.

Try 2. Tomorrow, take the same page if it was accurate. Reread it two times for smoothness. Scoop one phrase with your finger. Answer one meaning question. If a timer appears and your stomach drops, you may say, “Not today — smooth without the clock.”

Explain it back. Tell your adult, in your own words: why we cover the picture first, and why we only time a page (if we time at all) after it is already accurate.

Challenge. On a walk or in a store, find one word with this week’s letter team. Sound through it. Later, read a matching word on your home list. Slow and accurate is allowed. You are not lazy when you go carefully. You are allowed to change your mind when you look again at the letters.

If reading feels heavy. Tell your adult when your brain is melted. A shorter page with a true try beats a long page with tears. You can still be a person who loves stories while your eyes train on the code — your adult can read a richer book aloud some days while you keep practicing looking through words on a shorter page. Those are two lanes, not a contest.

Two ways to show today’s win. (1) Read the sticky word by itself. (2) Read it again inside the sentence, then tell what the sentence means. If both work — and they still work tomorrow — that is enough for this page.

If it isn’t clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Picture guessing or first-letter inventing.

What you see: wrong word that matches the illustration or the first letter; peeks under the sticky.

Next move: CT-5 every time; adult holds the cover; shorter Accuracy Pass; pre-view sticky words in isolation; praise looking through the middle and end. Log “guess-picture” for Friday’s diagnostic wrong (Chapter 8).

Diagnostic 2 — Accurate but robotic, or timed panic.

What you see: word-calling without phrasing, or anxiety when a clock appears; guessing to “win” a rate.

Next move: FL-2 Phrase Scoop, then FL-1 without a clock. Drop FL-4 timing. Ask meaning before another speed thought. Name Torgesen honesty kindly: rate gaps may linger even when absolute rate improves; accuracy and meaning still count as wins.

Diagnostic 3 — Yesterday’s “got it” gone, or leveled book meltdown.

What you see: pattern collapsed overnight; tears on a “just right” leveled page that is not code-controlled; Bridge abandoned for guessing.

Next move: rebuild cumulative review; return to controlled text for the shaky pattern; use CT-4 Bridge only after controlled accuracy holds; keep richer books by ear for language (Chapter 6) without scoring them as fluency; shorten the sit before melt.

When to slow down: new chunk too big; melt rising; more than a couple meaning-harming errors on a short page; sibling comparison shame.

When to go ahead: ≤ 2 meaning-harming errors; smooth third reread; child can name where to pause; Picture After habit holds.

When to reteach from the error log: same digraph, vowel team, or ending missed three days running.

When to seek a human specialist or evaluation: unexpected persistent struggle despite real systematic work — teach now; document as needed; Chapters 8 and 9 hold the kitchen checks and records. This book does not diagnose fictional children and does not give medical or legal advice.

Correct without crushing: “You said *shop*. Middle letter is *i*, sound /i/. Blend again.” Praise the try and the correction — not fake fluency.

Tools, including AI

Keep this short. The English-hour AI box at the front of the book is the full rule: parent holds the account always for ages 5–10 (COPPA under-13 for the whole band); parent in the room; child attempts first; no unsupervised chat as partner; no photo-to-key; no TTS finishing today’s decoding page; Bastani’s high-school math chatbot study is OFF-AGE for literacy — one caution that an unguarded window can make practice look better and leave unaided performance worse.

Optional helpers for you, the adult:

- Print or photocopy a short controlled page; tracking strip; sticky notes for Picture After.
- A simple tally column in the dated notebook: date, page, meaning-harming errors, gist Y/N, optional self-time only if accurate.
- OS text-to-speech or library audio for a *content* book on a different day — access, not substitute for Accuracy Pass (Wood and colleagues describe TTS

as compensation for access, not as decoding intervention).

- After the child has tried, you may ask a tool on *your* account for isomorphic practice sentences using today's pattern, with the answer key held by you. The child never sees the key. SCRIPT lines are for *you* to say, not paragraphs for the child to copy as their reading.

If a school sends home a fluency folder with cold timing on hard text, you may still run kitchen Accuracy Passes on controlled pages. You do not need to fight a faction war at pickup. You do need a calm dual-lane plan: honor school requests where you can without practicing guessing under a stopwatch as the identity of reading.

Refuse: a chatbot whispering the next word during the attempt; a listening app finishing the decode page that is today's lesson; AR points as the week's comprehension goal; detector scores on a child's short prose.

Materials kit for this chapter

Keep a small box beside the notebook so you are not inventing gear at 7:40 a.m.

- Sticky notes (picture covers + phrase flags)
- Tracking strip or clean finger habit
- Scissors and envelopes for Sentence Strip Rebuild
- Two or three short controlled pages for the week's pattern (photocopy OK)
- Pencil tally margin: date | meaning-harming errors | gist Y/N
- Optional kitchen timer that lives in a drawer — present only for calm FL-4 self-checks
- Headphones for a *different* book's audio access day (label the lane: access, not Accuracy Pass)

More exact parent wording

- "I'm covering the picture. Your job is the letters."
- "That stumble didn't change the meaning — keep going. This one did — let's blend."
- "Yesterday's page is today's fluency page. New hard book is not."
- "Points are not understanding. Tell me what happened."
- "Your rate can grow later. Accuracy and meaning count today."
- "We're aiming for short, sharp, frequent practice — not a Sunday marathon."

- “If we miss a day, we restart. We don’t shame.”

Meaning-harming vs soft stumble (kitchen definition)

Count as meaning-harming when the wrong word changes who did what, where, or whether the sentence is true (*pup* read as *dog* if the story hinges on a young animal; *ship* read as *shop*). Do not tally every self-correction that lands on the right word, every slow blend that finishes correctly, or every restart that shows good monitoring. The tally is a teaching tool, not a character score. Write the pattern you will reteach (*sh*, silent-e, ending *-ed*), not a scarlet letter.

Sibling and mixed-age note (hypothetical)

Same Package Grapheme Hunt in the aisle: a five-year-old finds *sh* and says the sound; a nine-year-old reads the ingredient line that uses *sh* and later does Phrase Scoop at home. One shared read-aloud for language. Separate Accuracy Passes if patterns differ. Skill, not birthday. Never post a fluency chart that ranks siblings.

When leveled books appear in conversation

Parents often ask whether to keep a school leveled bag beside the kitchen decode page. Honest answer: a leveled bag can be shared reading, interest reading with heavy support, or language growth by ear. It is not automatic proof that alphabets are finished. If the child guesses through the bag, the bag is not this week’s Accuracy Pass. If a school program’s WWC alphabets rating is “no discernible,” copy that honesty without a faction fight — then teach controlled text for shaky patterns and keep richer text for ears and talk.

Progress without percentile identity

Once a week, reread the *same* controlled paragraph used mid-week. Note errors and gist. Draw a tiny self-to-self arrow in the notebook if smoothness improved. Do not convert that arrow into “you’re a 90” or “you’re below benchmark” as the child’s name. Screening tools and formal evaluations, when a family seeks them, live in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9. Kitchen connected reading asks a simpler question: can you look through the word, keep meaning, and smooth a known page?

Dual-lane week (decode page vs content book)

Say this out loud once on Monday so the household shares the map:

“Lane A is today’s controlled page — Accuracy Pass, then Accuracy-Then-Reread when it’s clean. Lane B is a richer book we hear together or with headphones — for vocabulary and story sense. Lane B does not finish Lane A.”

That dual-lane sentence prevents two common collapses: (1) only phonics worksheets with no connected text, and (2) only cozy read-aloud with no code gym. Chapter 6 deepens Lane B. This chapter owns Lane A and the fluency that follows accuracy.

Friday sweep for connected reading

- Re-run a short Accuracy Pass on the week’s pattern page.
- One FL-1 on the best clean paragraph.
- Child explains one miss: picture, first letter, vowel, ending, or rush.
- Check done-enough boxes below.
- Write next week’s hold or advance in one line: “Hold *sh* connected” or “Add Bridge on silent-e.”

If the week melted, do not “make up” with a Sunday marathon. Restart short and sharp. Intensity is clearer teaching and more well-chosen reps — not tears as a badge.

What “done enough” looks like

Before you move the connected-reading focus forward, check skill — not birthday, not a franchise level name, not a percentile, not AR points.

Connected accuracy

- Reads a short taught-pattern page with ≤ 2 meaning-harming errors (about 40–60 words at 5–7; longer controlled text at 8–10 as skill allows).
- Looks through the word with the picture covered; Picture After habit holds once without peeking.
- Gives one-sentence gist after the Accuracy Pass.
- Can show two ways: sticky word in isolation *and* in the sentence.

- (8–10) Completes a Bridge with pre-taught sticky words and ≤ 3 meaning-harming errors total after pre-teach.

Fluency after accuracy

- Third reread of a *known* accurate paragraph is smooth, ≤ 2 meaning-harming errors, plus one correct meaning answer.
- Can scoop a phrase *and* answer what happened (two ways).
- Holds after a night: same paragraph still accurate tomorrow before any timing thought.
- Optional FL-4 only if calm; otherwise done-enough without a clock.
- Rate gap relative to peers may remain; do not withhold “done enough” on accuracy-and-meaning because a sibling is faster.

Exit ticket shapes this week (2–4 minutes)

- Connected accuracy: 40–60 word controlled read; tally meaning-harming errors; one gist sentence.
- Fluency: third reread of known paragraph + one meaning question.
- Mixed: read three taught words from the page, then reread one sentence smoothly.

Life-of-the-habit crumbs (not a ninth chapter). Mix last week’s controlled page into Tuesday’s review. Keep one Accuracy-Then-Reread Couch slot mid-week. Compare the child to yesterday’s self on the same text — never to a sibling’s chart as identity. Forgetting is normal; abandoning review is optional.

Place by skill. An eight-year-old who still needs digraph Accuracy Passes sits there with respectful pages. A leveled workbook’s “Level” is a publisher’s scope, not a transcript line. Print **Reading / Language Arts / English** on the notebook if you need a title a stranger can read — never a brand, never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I.

Done enough is showable, short, and kind. It is not AR points. It is not words-per-minute as a name for the child. It is look through the word — then a smooth reread where you both know where to slow down.

Point forward one sentence: Chapter 6 grows vocabulary, morphology-light, and comprehension on accessible text — including by ear — without skipping the decode gym you just protected. Chapter 8 will help you turn this week’s tallies into kitchen skill checks. Keep the sticky note over the picture until the letters have had their turn.

Illustration note (still-life): a controlled page, sticky note covering a picture corner, tracking strip, pencil tally in a dated notebook titled Reading / Language Arts — no child portraits, no brand logos, no timer resting on the cold page.

Keep the order sacred: look through the word first; smooth reread second; meaning always welcome; stopwatch never the boss of a cold hard page.

Chapter 6



Figure 8: Morphology cards stacked beside headphones and a print book — still-life, no people, no logos.

Vocabulary, morphology-light, and comprehension on accessible text

Why this matters

What does this word (or part) mean here — and what is this mostly about?

That double question keeps two jobs honest at once. Words and word parts carry meaning. Stories and informational pages have a gist. A child with dyslexia risk can grow a rich oral vocabulary and strong listening comprehension while print decoding is still under repair — and must keep repairing the code so print can eventually carry the same load. Access by ear is real access. Access is not a licence to skip today's sounding-out lesson.

Secondary consequences named in the International Dyslexia Association's October 2025 definition already matter at ages 5–10: comprehension problems and reduced reading experience can impede growth in language, knowledge, and written expression if adults only wait. The answer is not gift-only skip of phonics. The answer is dual lanes: Structured Literacy on controlled text (Chapters 2–5) and language growth on accessible text — printed when decoding allows, heard when print is the bottleneck.

Shanahan and colleagues' Institute of Education Sciences practice guide on improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through grade 3 rates comprehension strategies as strong evidence, text structure as moderate, and motivation as moderate; discussion and text selection sit at minimal evidence and are still recommended as practical moves.⁸³ Foorman Rec 1 on academic language has minimal evidence and is still worth kitchen talk in full sentences.⁸⁴ The National Reading Panel supported vocabulary teaching that is both direct and indirect, with multiple encounters.⁸⁵ Morphology — meaningful parts of words — belongs in Structured Literacy as word-part analysis; at ages 5–10 it stays **light**: *un-*, *re-*, *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*, *-er*, and a few transparent pieces such as *-ful* / *-less* at 8–10 — not adolescent Latin root clubs. These are useful guides, not a promise that every home will see the

⁸³Timothy Shanahan et al., *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*, NCEE 2010-4038 (IES/WWC, 2010): strategies **strong**; text structure **moderate**; motivation **moderate**; discussion/text selection **minimal** (still recommended as practical moves).

⁸⁴Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008, Recommendation 1 academic language — **minimal** evidence tier, still worth kitchen talk in full sentences.

⁸⁵NRP summary (2000): vocabulary — direct and indirect; multiple encounters.

same result.

What this idea unlocks is a child who can define one deep word in kid language, notice what *un-* does to *lock*, retell a story's beginning–middle–end, and say what a page is mostly about — even on a week when Accuracy Pass still needs digraph repair. Writing in Chapter 7 needs those meanings and plans. Assessments in Chapter 8 will ask for showable gist, not Accelerated Reader points.

Three refusals sit beside the invitation.

Accelerated Reader points (or any points) as comprehension are refused.⁸⁶ Skipping decoding because “we’re doing comprehension today” is refused. Using a hard print book as a cold fluency score while calling it vocabulary time is refused. Colored lenses as a comprehension cure are refused.⁸⁷ Three-cueing as word reading remains refused even when meaning talk is the goal: meaning matters for understanding; guessing from pictures is not how we identify the printed word.⁸⁸

You do not need to be a reading specialist. You do need one deep word revisited, light morphology when the code is ready, comprehension talk on text the child can access, and a clear sentence that ears grow while eyes train.

This week you can learn to hear vocab-list overwhelm, AR-as-comp, morph-as-noise, and “comprehension instead of decoding” as four different misses. Today the child can say what a word (or part) means here — and what this page or story is mostly about.

Knowledge builds when words are met again in talk, in stories, and in short writing plans. Dyslexia intensity does not mean silent days without books. It means the books and the code lesson stop stealing each other's jobs. You become the adult who can hear a points celebration that skipped gist — and ask a better question without crushing the child's pride in effort.

⁸⁶WWC Accelerated Reader Adolescent Literacy (August 2010): no discernible — points ≠ comprehension.

⁸⁷AAP–AAO joint statement: refuse colored lenses / vision therapy as cure for primary dyslexia.

⁸⁸Foorman et al., NCEE 2016-4008 Rec 3: meaning matters for understanding; guessing from pictures is not word identification.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults remember vocabulary as a weekly list of twenty and comprehension as a packet of multiple-choice bubbles. That memory is incomplete for a young dyslexic learner. One deep word with reuse beats a list that evaporates. A beginning–middle–end retell on a heard story beats a cold hard chapter quiz. Five minutes of this section, then the warm-up, is enough for tomorrow. The child still talks.

Everyday picture. You read aloud a short park story the child cannot yet decode alone. You stop on *exhausted*. Kid definition in your pocket: “very tired after hard work.” The child makes a new sentence about the dog after a long walk. At dinner you cue the word once; they use it. Separately, on the decode page, they still look through *ship*. Two lanes. Another ordinary picture: a points chart celebrating ten quizzes while the child cannot say what the chapter was mostly about. Points happened. Understanding did not.

Precise picture. Three strands share this chapter.

Vocabulary (VO). Direct teaching of a few words; multiple encounters; example and non-example; dinner reuse. Kid definitions of five to eight words beat encyclopedic lectures.

Morphology-light (MO). Prefixes and endings that change meaning and help decode/spell: *un-*, *re-*, *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*, *-er*; later *-ful*, *-less*. Always ask: What’s the base? What did the part do? Did spelling change (only if already taught)?

Comprehension (CO). Strategies and text structure on accessible text: B–M–E; problem/solution; main idea; evidence finger; one craft question. Ears Grow While Eyes Train is required some days while decoding is under repair.

Simple View spirit without a theory seminar: grow language comprehension while repairing word recognition. Both matter. Neither cancels the other.

Wrong answers you should be able to hear

1. *AR points as comprehension.* “We got points, so we’re done.” Hear the mash. Ask gist and evidence instead.
2. *Skipping decoding for a “comp hour.”* Hear the false trade. Schedule Ears Grow *and* keep the code sit.

3. *Twenty-word list once*. Hear the evaporate pattern. One deep word, reused tomorrow and at dinner.
4. *Morphology as syllable noise*. Child reads *unlock* but cannot say what *un-* does. Hear missing meaning. “What’s the base? What did the prefix do?”
5. *Picture-only evidence*. Child points at the illustration to “prove” a claim and never finds words. Hear CO-5 failure. Words first; picture after.
6. *TTS finishing today’s decode page while calling it vocabulary*. Hear substitute vs access. TTS may open a content book; it does not finish Accuracy Pass.
7. *Gift-only skip*. “They’re so verbal, so we can skip phonics.” Hear the refuse. Oral strength is an asset for this chapter — not a pass out of Chapters 2–5.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Choose one deep word from tonight’s read-aloud. Write a 5–8 word kid definition.

Minute 2. Invent one non-example question (“Would we say *exhausted* about a fresh apple? Why not?”).

Minute 3. Draw three boxes labelled Beginning / Middle / End for a short story you will hear together.

Minute 4. Practice the locked opening: “What does this word (or part) mean here — and what is this mostly about?”

Minute 5. Say dual-lane out loud: decode page stays; ears grow on this richer book.

How to teach it this week

Protect the English-hour shape. Vocabulary, morphology-light, and comprehension are often crumbs (5–10 minutes) plus some fuller Ears Grow days (10–15 minutes). They do not erase phonics+encoding or Accuracy Pass.

Band 5–7 session placement

- After connected accuracy: VO-1 One Deep Word (5 minutes) *or* CO-1 B–M–E after a short heard story.

- Two or three days this week: CO-6 Ears Grow While Eyes Train (10–15 minutes) instead of forcing cold decode on too-hard text.
- Morphology: MO-2 Ending Switch when phonics readiness allows (-s, -ing); late 5–7 may peek at *un-* / *re-* (MO-1).

Band 8–10 session placement

- Code/morph sit may include MO-1 / MO-3 (8–10 minutes).
- Vocab crumb: VO-1 daily thread; VO-2 Example/Non-Example once or twice weekly.
- Comp talk: CO-2 Problem/Solution; CO-3 Main Idea; CO-5 Evidence Finger; CO-4 craft crumb.
- Still schedule CO-6 when print volume would otherwise collapse.

Exact wording:

- “What does ____ mean here?”
- “Say it in your own words — about five to eight words.”
- “What’s the base? What did *un-* (or *-ed*) do?”
- “What is this mostly about?”
- “Point to the words that make you think that.”
- “This book is for listening while we build the code on a different page.”
- “TTS opens the content door; it does not finish today’s sounding-out lesson.”

Age-band moves

5–7: Concrete deep words; B–M–E with sticky boxes; craft question with two choices if freeze; endings before heavy prefix work; read-aloud heavy for C.

8–10: Academic-leaning words from science/social read-alouds (*predict*, *fragile*, *exhausted*); problem/solution; evidence finger; Morphology Lego Light; still shame-aware if code repair continues — respectful materials, not baby talk.

Fade help. First you supply the kid definition after their guess. Then they give the definition. Then they give definition + non-example. For morph: you separate base and prefix; then they do. For comp: you point to evidence; then their finger finds it.

In-hour named activities (VO / MO / CO banks)

VO-1 — One Deep Word Dinner Thread

Band: both. Time: 5 minutes in hour + 1 dinner reuse.

Materials: Sticky note with target word; kid definition in adult's pocket.

Steps: Adult says word in book sentence; child guesses from context; adult gives clear 5–8 word definition; child makes new oral sentence; non-example check; dinner cue once.

Error patterns: copies adult sentence verbatim; confuses look-alike; definition too encyclopedic. Move: force new kitchen context; shorten definition.

Exit crumb: own-words definition + new sentence same day; reuse next day.

VO-2 — Example / Non-Example Sort

Band: 8–10 (5–7 with concrete words). Time: 6–8 minutes.

Materials: 6 cards (3 yes / 3 no) for one taught word.

Steps: Review definition; sort; explain one of each with because-clause; write or dictate one new example.

Error patterns: sorts by pictures only; can't justify. Move: require "because ____."

Exit crumb: 5/6 sorts + one because-clause.

MO-1 — Prefix Peek (*un-*, *re-*)

Band: late 5–7 / 8–10. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Base cards (*lock*, *do*, *tie*, *heat*); prefix tiles.

Steps: Read base; add prefix; say new meaning; encode 4; find one in a controlled sentence.

Error patterns: treats *un* as noise; meaning guess without base. Move: "What's the base? What did the prefix do?"

Exit crumb: builds/defines 3/4; spells 2/3.

MO-2 — Ending Switch (*-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*, *-er*)

Band: both (match phonics readiness). Time: 8–12 minutes.

Materials: Base verbs/nouns; ending cards; doubling/drop-e only if taught.

Steps: Read *jump*; add endings; oral sentence; encode 3; show spelling change only if taught.

Error patterns: *-ed* always /ed/; untaught spelling changes. Move: transparent additions first; three sounds of *-ed* when ready.

Exit crumb: reads 4 affixed; spells 2; one oral sentence.

MO-3 — Morphology Lego Light

Band: 8–10. Time: 10 minutes.

Materials: Cards for *help*, *ful*, *less*, *er*, *un-*.

Steps: Build *helpful*, *helpless*, *helper*, *unhelpful*; meanings; spell two; one written sentence (scribe option for non-focus words).

Error patterns: invents untaught strings; meaning drift. Move: taught pieces only.

Exit crumb: four accurate builds + meanings; two spellings.

CO-1 — Beginning–Middle–End Retell

Band: 5–7. Time: 6–8 minutes after a short story.

Materials: Three boxes or sticky notes; story read aloud or decoded.

Steps: Listen/read; place one picture or word per box; oral retell; one why with because-prompt.

Error patterns: character list only; skips middle; invents ending from picture.

Move: “What problem showed up?”; reread middle.

Exit crumb: three-part retell + one because-clause.

CO-2 — Problem / Solution Card

Band: 8–10. Time: 7–10 minutes.

Materials: Folded card; short accessible narrative.

Steps: State problem; state solution/attempt; underline or point to evidence words; optional two written sentences.

Error patterns: theme lecture; no text tie. Move: “Point to the sentence that shows it.”

Exit crumb: problem + solution + one pointed evidence.

CO-3 — Stop-and-Say Main Idea

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Short informational paragraph (read-aloud if print hard); sticky note.

Steps: Read section; child says mostly-about sentence; adult writes child’s words; child checks sticky against page; one supporting detail.

Error patterns: detail instead of main; off-topic knowledge blast. Move: forced choice between two main-idea options.

Exit crumb: main-idea sentence + one detail.

CO-4 — Writer-Craft One Question

Band: both. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: Picture book or short text.

Steps: “What did the writer do here?” (repeat word, show-not-tell, bold heading, diagram); why might they; keep stakes literary/informational — not culture-war.

Error patterns: freeze; moralizing. Move: offer two craft choices; wait three seconds.

Exit crumb: names one craft move.

CO-5 — Evidence Finger

Band: 8–10. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Text; claim card (“The pup is scared”).

Steps: Find words that support or reject; read evidence; decide true/false *for this page*.

Error patterns: picture only; ignores contrary evidence. Move: words first; picture after.

Exit crumb: one text-tied accept or reject.

CO-6 — Ears Grow While Eyes Train

Band: both — required while decoding under repair. Time: 10–15 minutes some days.

Materials: Richer book than child can decode alone; optional headphones/Bookshare/Libby/OS TTS for access lane.

Steps: Adult reads aloud (or audio with adult present); one vocab crumb; one comprehension talk-box question; child does **not** cold-decode this text for fluency scoring.

Error patterns: skipping read-aloud because “only phonics”; forcing too-hard cold decode. Move: schedule 2–3 read-aloud/audio content days weekly explicitly.

Exit crumb: answers one meaning question on heard text.

Practice that actually builds learning

In-home try-its

Word-of-Day Dinner

Band: both. Time: 2–3 minutes.

Materials: Sticky on fridge.

Safety: ordinary family courtesy — no grilling guests.

The fun: word becomes household property.

The skill: VO-1 reuse.

Error patterns: exact copy of adult sentence. Move: “New sentence — kitchen object.”

Morphology Fridge Build

Band: 8–10. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Prefix/ending magnets or sticky tiles.

The fun: Lego feel with meaning.

The skill: MO-1 / MO-3.

Error patterns: invented affixes. Move: only taught pieces.

B–M–E Couch Retell

Band: 5–7. Time: 6–8 minutes after shared story.

Materials: Three sticky notes.

The fun: retell as a tiny play.

The skill: CO-1.

Error patterns: ending invented from cover art. Move: “What problem showed up in the middle?”

Caption + Deep Word

Band: both. Time: 8–10 minutes.

Materials: Photo; deep word sticky.

The fun: family life + precise word.

The skill: VO meets early writing.

Error patterns: blank page. Move: scribe ideas; child says the deep word aloud in the caption plan.

Out-of-home try-its**Library Craft Question**

Band: both. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Materials: Picture book.

Safety: library manners; not a leveled-as-phonics claim.

The fun: noticing what writers do.

The skill: CO-4.

Error patterns: using the visit to skip home code sits. Move: dual-lane reminder on the walk out.

Package Meaning Peek

Band: both. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: One package claim (*fresh*, *reheat*).

Safety: aisle courtesy.

The fun: real-world morph/vocab.

The skill: MO-1 (*reheat*) or VO kid definition.

Error patterns: brand guessing without base word. Move: “What’s *heat*? What did *re-* do?”

Bus Ad / Poster Meaning (keep calm topics)

Band: 8–10. Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: Ad text about ordinary products or library events — no live controversy.

The skill: “What do they want us to think?” + evidence words.

Error patterns: culture-war drift. Move: choose a safe placard; return to CO-5.

Museum Placard Gist

Band: 8–10. Time: 5–8 minutes.

Adult may read hard lines; child gives mostly-about + one detail (CO-3). Skip if overload; ears grow without shame.

Talk box

Exact opening question:

“What does this word (or part) mean here — and what is this mostly about?”

Follow-ups:

1. Meaning: “Say the definition in your own words — or what did *un-* do to the base?”
2. Representation: “Show me with a sketch, a sticky in the B–M–E box, or your finger under the evidence words.”
3. Type / evidence: “Is this a story problem/solution or an info main idea? How do you know?”
4. Check: “Does that match the story you heard — or the words on the page?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind. Try another because-clause.”

How to wait: Slow three after the question; second wait after they stop; do not cut off a mid-retell; look at the page or sticky boxes if silence is hard; protect longer waits for dyslexic learners.

Stuck silence usually means: Vague question; wait-time zero; word too rare without context; shame; blank “what’s the theme” lecture prompt; need two craft choices; need scribe so thinking can start; need heard text because print is the bottleneck. Pose, wait, point back at words or boxes — do not fill with your essay.

Blocked practice: New deep word only — definition + one sentence — before dinner thread. New B–M–E — three boxes only — before why questions.

Mixed practice: One morph build, one deep word reuse, one gist question on heard text in a single 12-minute block once skill is familiar.

Incorrect example to diagnose. Child finishes an AR quiz, earns points, cannot say the middle of the story, and skips the week’s Accuracy Pass because “we did reading.” Category errors: points-as-comp; access/comp lane replacing code.

Move: CO-1 with boxes on a heard chapter; restore decode sit; refuse points as the goal.

One more everyday picture

A six-year-old (hypothetical) melts at a blank comprehension packet after school. At home you close the packet. You read a short story aloud. Three sticky boxes appear. The child places Beginning, Middle, End with single words. One because-clause follows. Tomorrow's deep word comes from that story. The packet's points system stays at school if it must; your kitchen measures gist and word meaning. Same week, Accuracy Pass still happens on a digraph page. The child is not "behind on comprehension" because the packet cried; the child needed access and structure. That is diagnostic teaching.

For the student

You are growing word meaning and story sense — including on books your adult reads aloud — while your eyes keep training on the code.

What this idea is. Some days you sound out a short page. Some days you listen to a richer book and talk about what words mean and what the page is mostly about. Both days count. Points on a chart are not the same as understanding.

Tiny worked example. Word: *unlock*. Base *lock*. Prefix *un-* means "not" or "do the opposite." *Unlock* means open what was locked. Story: a pup gets stuck at a gate, someone helps, the pup runs free. Beginning — stuck; middle — help; end — free. Mostly about: getting help to open the gate.

Try 1. Learn one deep word today. Say a 5–8 word definition. Make your own sentence. Use it at dinner.

Try 2. After a short story (heard or read), fill Beginning / Middle / End. Tell the story back. Add one because.

Explain it back. Why can listening to a hard-ish book still be real reading work for your brain's meaning side — and why do you still need looking-through-words practice on another page?

Challenge. Find *re-* or *un-* on a package or sign. Say the base and what the prefix did. Later, build the word with tiles at home.

If words feel heavy. Ask for the book by ear today. You are not lazy. Ears grow while eyes train. You can still show meaning with boxes, a sketch, and a because-clause.

If it isn't clicking

Diagnostic 1 — Vocab evaporates or stays copied.

Next move: shorten definition; force new context; VO-2 because-clauses; dinner cue; fewer words, more encounters.

Diagnostic 2 — Retell is character list; no middle; picture-only “evidence.”

Next move: CO-1 boxes; “What problem showed up?”; CO-5 words first; reread or re-hear the middle page.

Diagnostic 3 — Morph parts read but empty; or comp hour ate the code sit.

Next move: “Base? Prefix job?” every time; MO encode 2 spellings; restore dual-lane schedule on the fridge; CO-6 labelled as access, not as substitute for Accuracy Pass.

Slow down when definitions are encyclopedic, when print is far beyond code without audio, when melt rises.

Go ahead when own-words definition + new sentence stick next day; B–M–E with because; affixed words built and spelled.

Reteach from error log: affix skipped; vocab gap after accurate decode; structure miss.

Seek evaluation when language comprehension stays unexpectedly weak *and* word reading stays hard despite systematic work — or when documentation is needed. Teach now; this book does not diagnose.

Practice that actually builds learning — extended bank

The short try-its above are the minimum. This extended bank gives you enough named moves for a month without inventing micro-steps.

In-home extended**Deep Word Three Encounters**

Band: both. Time: 5 minutes morning sticky, 5 minutes hour, 2 minutes dinner.

Materials: One sticky; notebook line.

Steps: Morning — adult uses the word in a real sentence about breakfast. Hour — VO-1 full sequence. Dinner — child must use it about a non-food object.

Error patterns: same sentence three times. Move: ban repeating the adult's sentence; require a new noun.

Ending Switch Laundry

Band: 5–7 late / 8–10. Time: 8 minutes.

Materials: Clothing words or action words on cards (*sock, wash, fold*).

Steps: Add -s / -ing / -ed as taught; say meaning change; encode two.

Safety: ordinary — no dunking cards in water.

Error patterns: meaning drift (*washes*). Move: say base first every time.

Problem/Solution Walk-Through at Home

Band: 8–10. Time: 8 minutes after a show or shared story (calm plots only).

Materials: Folded card.

Steps: Name the character's problem; name the attempt; point to a remembered line or replay a 20-second clip with adult; write one evidence sentence (scribe OK).

Error patterns: theme speech. Move: "One sentence from the story — not a life lecture."

Main Idea Sticky on a Kids' Science Paragraph

Band: both. Time: 6 minutes.

Materials: Short paragraph about animals, weather, or simple machines — adult reads if needed.

Steps: CO-3 exactly.

Error patterns: listing every fact. Move: forced choice between two main ideas.

Evidence Finger Kitchen Claim

Band: 8–10. Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Recipe sentence or cereal claim; claim card you write (*This needs heat*).

Steps: Support or reject from words; picture after.

Error patterns: tasting as "evidence." Move: words on the package first.

Out-of-home extended

Library Dual-Lane Checkout

Band: both. Time: 10–15 minutes in the library.

Materials: Library card.

Steps: Child helps pick (1) a short controlled/decodable-style book or pattern book for Lane A if available, and (2) a richer interest book for Lane B ears. Adult says the dual-lane sentence at the desk line quietly.

Safety: ordinary library manners; no shaming volume.

Error patterns: only picking hard graphic novels as the week's decode plan. Move: adult ensures Lane A exists at home even if both checkouts are "interest" — print your own controlled page.

Store Affix Hunt

Band: 8–10. Time: 4 minutes.

Find *re-* (*reuse*, *refill*) or *-ful* if taught; say base + job of affix; no lectures to other shoppers.

Postcard Meaning Plan

Band: both. Time: planning 5 minutes out-of-home (museum gift shop postcard), writing at home (Chapter 7).

Skill bridge: CO gist of the visit → WR thank/tell purpose. Keep controversy-free scenes: park, train, fish tank.

Worked talk-box transcripts (hypothetical)

Transcript A — deep word (5–7)

Adult: "What does this word (or part) mean here — and what is this mostly about?"

Child: silence.

Adult waits three.

Adult: "The word is *exhausted*. Guess from the pup who ran up the hill."

Child: "Tired?"

Adult: "Very tired after hard work. Your sentence?"

Child: "I'm exhausted after soccer."

Adult: "Would we say a fresh apple is exhausted?"

Child: "No — it didn't work hard."

Adult: "What was this page mostly about?"

Child: "The pup getting too tired on the hill."

Transcript B — morph (8–10)

Adult: locked opening focusing on *unhelpful*.

Child: “It has *help*?”

Adult: “Base *help*. What did *un-* and *-ful* do?”

Child builds with tiles; defines; spells *helper* and *helpless*; uses *unhelpful* in a sentence about a broken map key — scribe for the rest if needed.

Transcript C — stuck silence repair

Adult asked “What’s the theme of kindness in this book?” — too vague, too moralizing.

Child freezes.

Repair: “What is this mostly about — the pup or the gate? Point to words that show the problem.”

Error pattern → next-week move (quick table in prose)

If the child decodes accurately but stares blankly at meaning, log **vocab gap** and run VO-1 for a week on words from CO-6 books. If the retell skips the middle, log **comp structure** and keep CO-1 boxes visible on the table. If affixed endings are dropped in reading, log **affix** and return to MO-2 with encoding. If the family dropped Accuracy Pass to chase quizzes, restore Lane A before any new Lane B ambition. Wrong answers are information for tomorrow’s review — not identity.

Motivation without bribing comprehension

Choice can live inside the lane: which of two deep-word cards tonight; which of two CO-6 books; which evidence claim to test. Choice does not mean choosing to skip looking through words. Motivation research in the Shanahan guide sits at moderate evidence — kitchen translation: interest and success reps matter; stickers for points totals do not replace gist talk.

When oral language is a second bottleneck

Some children show weak word reading *and* broader oral-language thinness (Foorman & Torgesen’s second early group). They still need explicit word-reading help. They also need denser CO-6, more VO-1, more full-sentence adult talk, and possibly speech-language evaluation conversation with professionals — high-level pointer only; this book does not diagnose or prescribe therapy. Do not interpret

oral weakness as proof that Structured Literacy is optional. Do not interpret oral strength as proof that Structured Literacy is optional either.

Tools, including AI

Point back to the English-hour AI box. Parent holds the account. Unaided first on decode/encode lessons. After the try, you may ask a tool for kid-friendly definition options or extra example/non-example cards — you choose and voice them. You may schedule Lane A (decode) and Lane B (TTS/audio content) on separate pages.

Refuse: chatbot writing the child’s “comprehension answers”; photo-to-key on a packet; TTS finishing today’s decode page; AR points as the metric; detector-grading a child’s short response.

Bookshare (print disability; IEP/504 not required for qualification pathways described by the service)⁸⁹, library audio, and OS TTS are access tools. Label them. Keep headphones beside a print book in the still-life sense: both lanes visible.

Parent coaching scripts — morphology and gist

Script — Prefix Peek start: “Today’s pieces are only *un-* and *re-*. Watch *lock*. Your turn to read *lock*. Now add *un-*. What changed in the meaning? Stretch and write *unlock*. Read it back. Does it match?”

Script — Ending Switch: “Base word *jump*. Add *-ing*. Smooth read. Oral sentence. Write *jumps* and *jumping*. We are not doing drop-e tricks today unless we already learned them.”

Script — B–M–E: “Three boxes. Beginning — who and where. Middle — what went wrong or changed. End — how it finished. Then one because. I’m waiting.”

Script — Main idea: “Mostly about? I’ll write your words on this sticky. Check the sticky against the page. One detail that supports — not five.”

Script — dual-lane repair when someone panics: “We are not abandoning stories. We are not abandoning the code. Lane A ten minutes. Lane B ten minutes. Short, sharp, frequent.”

⁸⁹Bookshare, “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.

Student mini-page extras

Word detective badge (not a grade). When you catch a prefix in the wild and can name the base, tell your adult. When you catch yourself guessing meaning only from a picture, cover the picture and look at the words — that catch counts too.

Two-way show for Friday. (1) Define this week's deep word and use it. (2) Give B–M–E or problem/solution with one evidence point. If both hold after a night, you are done enough on language for this focus — while code practice continues.

If listening comprehension is strong but print is weak

Believe both facts. Strong listening is an instructional asset for knowledge and vocabulary. Weak print still needs Accuracy Pass intensity. The household myth to refuse: “They’re bright when we read to them, so the school must be wrong about reading risk.” Bright ears do not decode letters. Teach the letters. Keep feeding the ears.

If both listening and print are hard

Lower the language load of questions (forced choices). Keep CO-6 shorter but consistent. Increase VO-1 concreteness. Keep code sits intact. Consider whether a speech-language conversation with a qualified professional belongs on the family's list — pointer, not diagnosis. Continue Structured Literacy; do not wait years for a perfect label (wait-to-fail refused).

Academic language without snobbery

Foorman Rec 1's kitchen face is ordinary: talk in complete sentences; name concepts (*evaporate*, *edge*, *compare*) when they appear in science or kitchen life; revisit them. Minimal evidence tier still deserves a crumb because children with less print volume get fewer accidental encounters. Your deliberate encounters matter more, not less.

Text structure map (keep on a card)

- Story: beginning / middle / end; or problem / solution

- Info: main idea / supporting detail
- Craft: what did the writer do (repeat, diagram, bold heading, show-not-tell)?

Pull one card per day. Do not demand all four every sitting.

Connecting to Chapter 5 and Chapter 7

After FL-1 Accuracy-Then-Reread, ask one Chapter 6 meaning question — fluency without meaning is unfinished. Before WR-5 short paragraph, borrow today's deep word or morph piece so writing has fuel. Access tools that help composition appear in Chapter 7; they still must not erase spelling sits.

Done-enough poster text (plain)

- ☐ Deep word: own words + new sentence + next-day reuse
- ☐ Morph: build/define/spell on taught pieces
- ☐ Comp: structure retell + evidence or detail
- ☐ Ears Grow scheduled ≥ 2 days if print volume low
- ☐ Lane A decode gym still happened
- ☐ Showed two ways; held after a night
- ☐ Not using points or percentiles as my name

What “done enough” looks like

Vocabulary

- Own-words definition (5–8 words) + new oral sentence same day.
- Reuse next day or at dinner without verbatim copy.
- (8–10) VO-2: 5/6 sorts + because-clause.
- Showable two ways: say meaning *and* use in a new context.

Morphology-light

- Builds and defines 3/4 prefix words; spells 2/3.
- Reads 4 affixed endings; spells 2; one oral sentence.
- (8–10) Four Lego builds with meanings; two spellings.
- Holds after a night on a short review stack.

Comprehension

- B–M–E retell with one because — or problem/solution with pointed evidence.
- Main-idea sentence + one detail on accessible info text.
- One craft move named.
- Ears Grow: answers one meaning question on heard text at least twice this week.
- Showable two ways: retell *and* point to evidence (or boxes).

Exit tickets (2–4 minutes)

- Vocab: definition + new sentence.
- Morph: build/read 3 affixed; spell 2.
- Comp: oral B–M–E or problem/solution in 30–45 seconds.

Refuse as done-enough: AR points totals; skipping Accuracy Pass all week; percentile identity from a one-day quiz.

Life-of-the-habit crumbs. Keep a deep-word sticky on the fridge for three days. Mix last week’s *un-* words into Tuesday review. Schedule CO-6 on the calendar so language does not wait for perfect decoding. Place by skill: an eight-year-old with strong oral gist and weak decoding still needs Chapters 3–5 intensity — oral strength is fuel for this chapter, not a bypass.

Print **Reading / Language Arts / English** on samples if needed — never a brand, never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I.

Done enough is meaning you can show two ways on accessible text — including by ear — while the code gym stays on the schedule.

Dual-lane fridge poster (copy in plain text)

Lane A — Code gym: phonics, encoding, Accuracy Pass, fluency after accuracy.

Lane B — Language growth: read-aloud/audio, one deep word, morph-light, B–M–E / problem-solution / main idea.

Rule: B does not finish A. A does not cancel B.

Say it on Monday. Point to it when someone proposes “only quizzes this week” or “only phonics forever.”

Hypothetical week sketches (labelled illustrations)

Band 5–7 — deep word + B–M–E + digraph week continues:

Mon: VO-1 from read-aloud; Accuracy Pass separate.

Tue: CO-6 Ears Grow 12 minutes; CO-1 boxes.

Wed: MO-2 *-ing* on taught verbs; dinner deep-word reuse.

Thu: Library Craft Question; home decode sit still happens.

Fri: Exit — definition + B–M–E; diagnostic wrong if middle missing.

Band 8–10 — un-/re- + explain-structure:

Daily MO-1 or MO-3 crumb; VO-2 mid-week; CO-2 on accessible narrative; CO-3 on a short science paragraph by ear or print; WR purpose *explain* may borrow the deep word (Chapter 7); refuse AR points as the Friday celebration.

Materials kit

Sticky notes; three B–M–E boxes drawn on cardstock; prefix/ending tiles; claim cards for Evidence Finger; headphones; library card; kid-definition pocket strip; error log line for “vocab gap” vs “comp structure” vs “affix skip.”

More parent wording

- “Guess from the sentence — then I’ll give a clear short definition.”
- “Would we say this word about a rock? Why not?”
- “What’s the base word hiding inside?”
- “Show me the words — then we can look at the picture.”
- “Points are not understanding.”
- “Listening hard is real work.”

Morphology honesty without overload

English spelling becomes more friendly when children see meaningful parts — Moats’s morphophonological honesty belongs in the parent mind without turning dinner into a linguistics seminar.⁹⁰ If doubling or drop-e is not taught yet, do not demand it in MO-2. Transparent additions first. Three sounds of *-ed* (/t/, /d/, /ed/) when the child is ready — not all on day one of endings.

⁹⁰Moats, “How Spelling Supports Reading,” *American Educator* Winter 2005/06 — morphophonological spelling; light morphology at 5–10 (*un-*, *re-*, *-s/-ed/-ing/-er*).

Comprehension on accessible text — access defined

Accessible means the child can work on meaning without the word-reading load wiping out working memory. That may be print on a controlled page after Accuracy Pass. That may be adult read-aloud. That may be TTS/audio with the adult present for talk. It is not “any screen reading while we ignore the code.” Wood and colleagues’ TTS research speaks to compensation for access — distinguish that from intervention that improves unassisted decoding.⁹¹ Keep the distinction kind and firm.

Sibling note

Shared Lane B read-aloud works beautifully across ages. Separate Lane A pattern work if skills differ. Same deep word can appear in a five-year-old’s oral sentence and a nine-year-old’s VO-2 sort. Skill, not birthday.

Progress without percentile identity

Chart deep words reused across a week. Chart B–M–E completeness. Chart affixed spellings. Do not rename the child as a Lexile or a points total. Formal scores, when sought, inform placement; they do not replace tomorrow’s talk box.

Friday sweep

- Child explains one miss: vocab gap, missing middle, affix skip, or picture-only evidence.
- Check done-enough boxes.
- Plan next week’s deep word source (science read-aloud? kitchen?).
- Confirm two CO-6 days remain on the calendar if print volume is still low.

Five-minute parent warm-up — alternate version (morph day)

Minute 1. Write base *heat* and tiles *re-*. Say meanings aloud yourself.

Minute 2. Encode *reheat*; decide the controlled sentence where the child will find it.

Minute 3. Plan one non-example for a deep word if you also run VO-1.

⁹¹Wood et al., *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 51, no. 1 (2018): TTS $\approx$ compensation/access ($\bar{d} \approx 0.35$), not phonics instruction.

Minute 4. Practice wait-time with a silent count while looking at the tiles.

Minute 5. Write the locked opening on a scrap; put the scrap under the hour materials.

How to teach — fade schedule across two weeks

Week A: you supply definitions, you point to evidence, you separate base/prefix first.

Week B: child supplies definition after context guess, child points first, child separates base/prefix before your confirm.

If Week B collapses, return to Week A supports without shame — cumulative review logic applies to language moves too.

Activity timing honesty

VO-1 is five minutes for a reason. MO sits can run eight to ten. CO-6 can run fifteen some days. If the hour is only forty minutes total, rotate: morph Monday/Wednesday, deep word daily crumb, Ears Grow Tuesday/Thursday, structure talk after stories. Do not attempt every bank code every day. Ample activities means a rich menu — not a piled plate.

Incorrect examples — three more

1. Adult asks the chatbot to “explain the theme” and has the child copy the paragraph as their comprehension work. Refuse: write-the-child’s-essay energy applied to gist.
2. Adult uses TTS on the week’s Accuracy Pass page so the child “hears the vocab.” Refuse: substitute. Use TTS on Lane B.
3. Adult drills twenty Greek roots with a seven-year-old who still struggles with digraphs. Refuse: morph overload; return to light pieces and code intensity.

What “done enough” adds for mixed skills

An eight-year-old (hypothetical) may be done enough on CO-2 problem/solution by ear while still not done enough on silent-e Accuracy Pass. Record both truths.

Promote the language skill. Hold the code skill. Birthday does not force a novel study.

Place samples under Reading / Language Arts / English. Keep evaluation notes private when they exist. Keep kitchen checks humble and frequent.

Illustration note (still-life): headphones beside an open print book (access lane labelled), sticky deep-word note, three B–M–E boxes, prefix tiles *un-/re-*, claim card and pointing finger mark on a page — no child portraits, no brand logos, no points-chart worship.

Closing coaching paragraph

If you remember only three moves from this chapter, remember these. First, ask what the word or part means here — and insist on a short own-words answer plus a new sentence. Second, ask what the text is mostly about — and insist on structure (B–M–E, problem/solution, or main idea plus detail) with evidence from words or from a heard line. Third, protect Lane A. Ears grow while eyes train; ears do not replace eyes on the decode page that is today's lesson. Accelerated Reader points are not comprehension. Skipping Structured Literacy because a child speaks beautifully is not kindness. Forcing a cold hard print book as a fluency score during vocabulary time is not rigor. Short, sharp, frequent language crumbs — plus a few rich listened books each week — will do more than a Sunday packet mountain.

You do not need perfect literary analysis. You need one good question, wait time, and a sticky note. The child attempts first. You correct without crushing. Meaning becomes showable. The code gym stays on the calendar. That is English for a young thinker with dyslexia risk: language and print, both, without shame.

Keep the locked opening on a card in the book bin: what does this word or part mean here — and what is this mostly about? Ask it after Accuracy-Then-Reread. Ask it after Ears Grow. Ask it when a points chart tries to speak louder than the child's own words. Then wait. Then teach.

Chapter 7 will take meaning into writing with adaptations: scribe ideas when spelling blocks composition, and still teach today's focus spellings. Chapter 8 will help you check letter-sound, word reading, dictation, and oral samples without turning a percentile into a personality. Stay here until deep words reuse and gist talk are habits — then carry them forward without dropping the code.

Meaning first in the talk box; letters first on the decode page; both in the same week without shame.

Chapter 7



Figure 9: Plan boxes and a short draft with one revision target circled — still-life, no people, no logos.

Early writing with adaptations

Why this matters

What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, or thank — and what’s the plan?

Writing for a young thinker with dyslexia risk is a double load. The mind may have a story, an explanation, or a thank-you ready in talk. The hand and the spelling system may not keep up. If adults answer only with “just write more,” the page stays blank and shame grows. If adults answer only with endless handwriting drills, thinking never gets on the page. The kitchen path is a ladder with adaptations: talk → draw → label → sentence → short paragraph — and a clear rule that scribing ideas does not cancel today’s spelling sit.

Graham and colleagues’ elementary writing practice guide rates teaching writing process and purposes as strong evidence, and handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, and typing as moderate evidence.⁹² Daily time alone has minimal evidence and is still worth protecting — mere time is insufficient without teaching. Kitchen translation: name the job of the piece; plan aloud in three beats; draft with scaffolds; revise one target; keep spelling and handwriting crumbs fused to real words. These are useful findings, not a promise that every home will see the same result.

What this idea unlocks is a child who can say the job of the piece, sketch a plan, get ideas down (sometimes with a scribe), spell today’s focus words themselves, and fix one thing. Chapter 6’s meanings and structures become fuel. Chapter 5’s fluent ear for sentences helps them hear what they wrote. Chapter 4’s encoding map stays alive inside composition. Secondary costs to written expression named in IDA October 2025 language are foreseeable when print volume and spelling struggle persist — teach writing now with adaptations, without waiting for perfect decoding to “unlock”⁹³ composition forever.

Refusals beside the invitation: blank-page toughness as character test; adult filling the focus spelling blanks and calling it the child’s spelling work; chatbot writing

⁹²Steve 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).

⁹³IDA Definition of Dyslexia (Oct 2025): secondary consequences including reduced reading experience and problems of written expression — teach writing now with adaptations.

the essay; dictation producing the encoding target without instruction; gift-only skip because the child is “a verbal learner”⁹⁴; handwriting marathons that steal the code-and-compose hour.

You do not need to be a writing specialist. You do need the locked question, a three-beat plan, protected focus-word blanks, and one revise target.

This week you can learn to hear transcription overload, purpose-free sentence lists, and “scribe everything including today’s spellings” as three different misses. Today the child can name the job of the piece and show a plan.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults remember writing school as neatness grades and spelling lists disconnected from real messages. Others remember being told to free-write until it hurts. For dyslexia risk, neither memory is enough. Process and purpose matter. Transcription skills matter. Adaptations matter. Five minutes here, then the warm-up.

Everyday picture. A six-year-old (hypothetical) talks a full dog-walk story, then freezes at paper. You draw three plan lines. They sketch. They label three parts with taught words. You scribe the oral sentence’s function words; they spell *dog* and *path* in the blanks. They read it back. One revise: add *because* it was muddy. Separate ordinary picture: a blank journal and a timer. Tears. No teaching.

Precise picture. Four ideas.

Purpose. Tell (narrate), explain, thank (or persuade-light at 8–10). Job first.

Process. Plan → draft → share/read back → evaluate → revise/edit one target. Gradual release. Not all steps every day for five-year-olds — the spine grows.

Transcription adaptations. Scribe ideas when spelling blocks composition; child still encodes today’s 3–5 focus words. Handwriting crumb max 3–5 minutes fused to those letters/words. Dictation tools may capture oral composition beside handwriting instruction — they must not produce the “essay” that was the encoding target.

Sentence and paragraph craft. Shared sentence at 5–7; sentence combining and short paragraphs at 8–10.

⁹⁴English-hour AI bans: write-the-child’s-essay / write-the-essay; Bastani et al. 2025 OFF-AGE mechanism; unaided first on instructional targets.

Wrong answers to hear

1. *Blank page as moral test.* “They won’t write until they struggle.” Hear cruelty mistaken for rigor. Offer Talk-Draw-Label or Scribe-and-Spell.
2. *Adult fills focus spellings.* Hear abandoned encoding. Protect blanks.
3. *Chatbot or parent writes the piece; child signs.* Hear substitute composition.
4. *Dictation finishes today’s spelling list as “writing.”* Hear category mash. Encoding sit stays; composition may use dictation for non-focus words with honesty.
5. *No purpose.* Random sentences. Hear missing job card.
6. *Handwriting hour eats literacy hour.* Cap crumb; fuse to words.
7. *Gift-only:* “They’re creative verbally, so writing instruction can wait.” Refuse.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Pick purpose card: tell / explain / thank.

Minute 2. Write three oral plan beats you hope to hear.

Minute 3. Circle 3–5 focus spellings from this week’s pattern.

Minute 4. Practice: “I’ll scribe your ideas; you spell today’s words.”

Minute 5. Write the locked opening; decide one revise target only (detail OR pattern spellings — not both wars).

How to teach it this week

Writing often fills the last 5–12 minutes of the English hour, or a slightly longer block two to three days weekly. Do not wait for “perfect readers” to begin.

Band 5–7 shape

- Cumulative review + phonics/encoding as usual.
- Connected accuracy as usual.
- Writing try 8–12 minutes: **WR-1 Talk-Draw-Label** evolving to **WR-2 Shared Sentence**; **WR-6 Handwriting Crumb** only 3–5 minutes fused to today’s letters.

- Some days **WR-3 Scribe-and-Spell** when ideas are rich and spelling load is high.
- Exit: one sentence with ≥ 1 focus spelling, or three labels + oral sentence.

Band 8–10 shape

- Code/morph sit may feed focus words into writing.
- **WR-4 Sentence Combine Light** and **WR-5 Short Paragraph with Purpose**; scribe option for non-focus words.
- **WR-3** still available when overload hits.
- Exit: paragraph matches purpose + one revise; or combined sentence that keeps meaning.

Exact wording:

- “What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, or thank — and what’s the plan?”
- “Tell me the sentence first.”
- “I’ll scribe your ideas; you spell today’s words.”
- “Count the words on your fingers.”
- “Read it back. What’s one thing to fix?”
- “Wrong isn’t shame — wrong is information.”
- “We stop when you’re melted, not because it’s hard.”

Age-band moves

5–7: Talk-Draw-Label; Shared Sentence; purpose often *tell* or *thank*; handwriting crumb fused; invented spelling allowed beside taught words without shame; adult underwrites one label lightly for read-back if needed.

8–10: Purpose expands to *explain* and persuade-light; sentence combine; 3–5 sentence paragraphs; morphology-aware focus words; still scribe non-focus when needed; respectful tone if skills look “young.”

Fade help. Scribe more → scribe function words only → child writes more independently on known patterns. Never fade away the spelling sit because composition got exciting.

Named activities WR-1...WR-6

WR-1 — Talk-Draw-Label

Band: 5–7. Time: 8–12 min. Materials: paper, pencil, crayons, 3 taught words.

Steps: talk real event → draw → label ≥ 3 parts (invented + taught) → adult may underwrite one label lightly → child reads labels.

Errors: refuses; only draws; unrelated labels. Move: adult scribes two labels; child writes one taught word alone.

Exit: three readable labels + oral sentence.

WR-2 — Shared Sentence Build

Band: 5–7. Time: 6–10 min. Materials: whiteboard; 3 focus spellings.

Steps: child says sentence → count words on fingers → write together (child focus words; adult may scribe function words) → read back → fix one capital/end mark if taught → child copies once.

Errors: fragment; run-on; focus skipped. Move: “Who did what?”; point to focus slot.

Exit: one complete sentence with ≥ 1 focus spelling.

WR-3 — Scribe-and-Spell

Band: both. Time: 10–12 min. Materials: paper; 5 focus pattern words; cared-about topic.

Steps: plan aloud 3 beats → adult scribes skeleton → blanks for focus words → child encodes blanks → read whole → one revise target.

Errors: shutdown if asked to spell everything; adult over-scribes focus too. Move: protect focus blanks as non-negotiable child work.

Exit: five focus attempted; ≥ 3 correct or corrected after read-back.

WR-4 — Sentence Combine Light

Band: 8–10. Time: 8 min. Materials: two kernel sentences; connector bank (*and*, *because*, *when*).

Steps: read kernels → combine → write → check meaning.

Errors: glue without connector; meaning break. Move: offer three connectors.

Exit: one combined sentence keeping meaning.

WR-5 — Short Paragraph with Purpose

Band: 8–10. Time: 12–15 min. Materials: purpose card; 3-line planner; scribe option.

Steps: name purpose → plan 3 oral beats → draft 3–5 sentences (scribe ideas OK; child focus spellings) → read aloud → revise one target.

Errors: no purpose; unrelated list; spelling blocks all composing. Move: return to oral plan; WR-3.

Exit: paragraph matches purpose; one revise done.

WR-6 — Handwriting Crumb

Band: 5–7 especially. Time: 3–5 min max. Materials: model letters; start dots.

Steps: 3–4 letters from today's words → trace then write 3 of each while saying sound → immediate dictated word.

Errors: endless drills stealing code time. Move: hard cap 5 minutes; fuse to encoding.

Exit: three letters + one word.

Practice that actually builds learning**In-home try-its**

Scribe-and-Spell Story — 10–12 min; topic child cares about; protect five focus blanks; one revise.

Caption the Photo — labels (5–7) or sentences (8–10); taught words required.

Dictation Note to Family — 5–8 min; *Dog needs walk*; encoding + purpose; do not skip focus spellings.

Thank-You at the Table — oral plan three beats; WR-2 or WR-5; real audience tomorrow.

Error Hospital for writing — 6 min; three misspellings from the week; diagnose sound/position/affix; reteach without shame.

Out-of-home try-its

Postcard / Thank-You — 10–15 min total (may finish at home); real audience; scribe option; child focus spellings; calm scenes only.

Museum/Park placard → **explain sentence** — hear or read one line; at home write *explain* purpose sentence with one focus spelling.

Menu shared read → **tell preference sentence** — child writes or scribes-and-spells why they chose an item (no nutrition sermon).

Library craft → **thank librarian note** — short; focus words; optional scribe.

Safety: no public shaming; no forcing a cashier to be an audience; postcard addresses with adult help; privacy on mail.

Talk box

Opening: “What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, or thank — and what’s the plan?”

Follow-ups:

1. Meaning: “What do you want the reader to know or feel?”
2. Representation: “Show the plan with three beats, a sketch, or finger-counted words.”
3. Type: “Is this tell, explain, or thank — and which word proves it?”
4. Check: “Read it back. Does it match what you meant — and do the focus spellings match the sounds/patterns?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind. Pick one fix only.”

Wait: slow three; second wait; don’t cut mid-plan; look at planner lines if silence hard.

Stuck silence: blank page; no purpose; wait-time zero; spelling fear; chunk too big; need scribe so thinking can start; shame flood. Pose, wait, offer scribe + protected blanks — do not fill focus spellings yourself.

Blocked: purpose + three oral beats only, before drafting.

Mixed: one focus spelling dictation, one shared sentence, one read-back revise.

Incorrect example: Adult asks AI to “write a thank-you from my child,” prints it, child copies neat handwriting. Category error: machine composition + handwriting as cover. Move: child plans aloud; scribe-and-spell; child focus words; one genuine detail.

For the student

Writing means making your ideas readable. Dyslexia risk can make spelling and handwriting hard. That does not mean your ideas are small. We use tools: talk first, draw, plan, sometimes an adult writes the skeleton while you spell the week’s words.

Tiny worked example. Job: thank. Plan: (1) Aunt sent paints (2) I made a card (3) I want her to visit. Adult writes most words; you spell *paints* and *card* if those are focus words. Read back. Fix: add *because* I miss her.

Try 1. Name the job. Say three plan beats. Draw or write.

Try 2. Scribe-and-Spell: fill five focus blanks; read whole; one revise.

Explain it back. Why can an adult write some words while you still have real spelling work to do?

Challenge. Postcard or fridge note with a real audience. Slow and accurate spelling on focus words is allowed.

If the page feels scary. Say “I need a scribe for ideas.” That is strategy, not quitting. You still own today’s spellings.

If it isn’t clicking

1 — Great talk, blank page / meltdown. Transcription overload. WR-1 or WR-3; shorten; stop before melt; praise plan.

2 — Sentences without purpose / list salad. Return to job card; three beats; delete off-job sentences.

3 — Focus spellings skipped or adult-filled; or handwriting stole the hour. Protect blanks; cap WR-6; fuse letters to dictation word; restore encoding sit (Chapter 4).

Slow down when melt rises or revise targets multiply. Go ahead when purpose + plan + focus spellings show two ways (oral plan and written piece) and hold after a night. Reteach from error log. Seek specialist/OT/evaluation pointers when motor or language concerns persist beside word-level struggle — high-level; not medical advice. Correct kindly: “Focus word blank is yours — stretch *ship* again.”

Tools, including AI

English-hour AI box governs. Dictation may capture oral composition beside handwriting instruction. Dictation must not produce the essay that was the encoding target. Parent may ask a tool for kernel sentences to combine or purpose-card prompts after the child tried. Refuse: write-the-child’s-essay; photo-to-key; detector-grading dyslexic prose (high false positive risk)⁹⁵; unsupervised chat as writing partner.

TTS is not the main tool here; pencil, planner, and scribe are. Typing may appear as moderate-evidence transcription support at 8–10 for some families — still teach

⁹⁵Weixin 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. Photo-to-key and write-the-essay remain bans.

spelling separately.⁹⁶

What “done enough” looks like

5–7: ≥3 labels + oral sentence; or one complete sentence with focus spelling; handwriting crumb fused not endless; showable two ways (talk plan + marks on page); holds after a night on reread.

8–10: Combined sentence keeping meaning; or 3–5 sentence paragraph matching purpose with one revise; focus spellings attempted honestly; scribe only on non-focus if used.

Both: Job named before drafting; one revise target only; focus blanks protected; life-of-the-habit — mix last week’s spellings into a Tuesday note; real audience once a week when possible; cumulative review next Tuesday.

Exit tickets: one sentence or 3-beat oral plan + one written sentence; or five focus blanks.

Not done-enough: neat empty pages; AI prose; percentile as identity; franchise “Level” as transcript.

Print **Reading / Language Arts / English**. Never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I. Place by skill.⁹⁷

Materials kit for writing week

Purpose cards (tell / explain / thank / persuade-light); three-line planner pads; focus-word sticky lists; pencils; crayons; whiteboard; start-dot letter models; envelopes for postcards; error-log stickies; optional keyboard later — never as a reason to skip spelling sits.

More parent wording

- “What’s the job — tell, explain, or thank?”
- “Three beats. I’m writing them as you talk.”

⁹⁶Graham et al., NCEE 2012-4058, Rec 3 **moderate**: handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, and typing — still teach spelling separately.

⁹⁷Transcript lock: Reading / Language Arts / English — never brand, never **Young Thinkers Dyslexia I**. Place by skill, not birthday.

- “These five blanks are yours. Stretch. Write. Read back.”
- “One fix only today: add a because — or fix the *sh* words. Not both wars.”
- “Neatness is not the only goal. Clear message plus honest spelling practice is.”
- “We review spellings on purpose. Forgetting is normal; abandoning is optional.”

Hypothetical weeks

Band 5–7 — dog walk tell: Mon WR-1; Tue WR-2 with focus *path*, *mud*; Wed WR-3; Thu postcard thank to grandpa about the walk; Fri exit sentence + diagnostic spelling wrong explained.

Band 8–10 — explain a science demo: Purpose explain; plan three beats from CO-6; WR-5 with morph focus *reheat* / *helpful* if taught; WR-4 mid-week; scribe non-focus; Friday read-aloud of paragraph to family as share step.

Dual relationship to spelling (Chapter 4)

Composition adaptations never retire Dictation Relay. Twin the maps: if this week taught *sh*, focus blanks use *sh*. Spell-check later is an accommodation helper, not the curriculum for ages 5–10. Heart parts still mapped, not purely memorized as shapes.

Dual relationship to reading fluency (Chapter 5)

Have the child read their own sentence aloud as a mini Accuracy Pass on known words. If they cannot read what they wrote, the piece needs simplification or adult underwrite for read-back — without shaming invented spelling on untaught words.

Process without paperwork mountains

Graham’s process language is plan, draft, share, evaluate, revise, edit — gradual release.⁹⁸ At 5–7, share may mean reading labels to a sibling. Edit may mean one end mark. At 8–10, revise may mean adding a because or combining kernels. Do not print a twenty-page workshop packet. Keep one planner and one revise target.

⁹⁸Graham et al., NCEE 2012-4058 — process teaching with gradual release; one planner and one revise target at ages 5–10.

Transcription load — kitchen definition

Transcription means handwriting, spelling, and keyboarding mechanics that turn ideas into visible language. When load exceeds working memory, ideas vanish. Scribe lowers load. Focus blanks keep learning. Both/and.

Incorrect examples — bank

1. Parent rewrites the child's messy draft into perfect adult prose and turns that in as the child's work.
2. Thirty minutes of letter circles, zero sentences.
3. Child dictates entire paragraph into a phone, including focus words, and skips encoding sit.
4. Purpose never named; five unrelated sentences about dinosaurs, lunch, and a game.
5. Sibling comparison: "Your brother wrote a page." Shame flood.

Moves: return to WR-3 honesty; cap handwriting; protect encoding; job card; compare child to yesterday's self.

Student — longer try sequence

Day 1: Talk only + sketch. Day 2: Labels. Day 3: Shared sentence. Day 4: Scribe-and-Spell paragraph skeleton. Day 5: One revise + read to audience. That sequence is a week, not a forever pace — skip ahead if skill shows readiness; hold if melt shows overload.

If motor skills dominate the problem

Handwriting crumb stays capped. Consider whether an occupational therapy conversation belongs on the family's professional list — pointer only. Meanwhile keep oral composition and spelling maps alive. Do not pause all English until handwriting looks pretty.

If ideas are thin

Return to Chapter 6 Ears Grow and deep words. Writing needs fuel. A walk, a photo, a short experiment, or a thank-you to a real person supplies content without controversy sermons.

Tools extended

Optional: speech-to-text for non-focus drafting at 8–10 with parent in the room; child still hand-spells focus list. Optional: letter strip on desk. Ban: agent as ghostwriter; detector as grader; photo of worksheet for auto-complete.

Done-enough life-of-the-habit (ch07 special load)

This heading carries habit tips: keep a running list of real audiences (neighbor, relative, teacher thank-you); recycle focus spellings Thursday; reread Wednesday's sentence Friday; mix genres across weeks (tell → thank → explain); short, sharp, frequent writing tries beat rare marathons; stop before melt; show two ways — oral plan and marks on page; holds after a night means they can read their sentence tomorrow and still know the job.

Percentiles are not identity. Neatness grades are not the whole of writing. A franchise level name is not a transcript line.

Talk-box stuck silence — writing specific

Often the silence means fear of wrong spelling. Say: “Invent on untaught words; stretch the focus words; I can scribe the rest.” Often it means no job. Flash the purpose card. Often it means empty idea tank. Offer photo or three beats from today's read-aloud.

Fade ladder (post on fridge)

1. Adult scribes all; child spells 3 focus.
2. Adult scribes function words; child writes focus + some knowns.
3. Child writes sentence; adult supplies only rare heart words on request.

4. Child writes short paragraph; spell-check later as helper after attempt — not before.

Move up when success holds three days. Move down without shame when melt returns.

Out-of-home postcard — step detail

Buy or make card. On site: oral three beats about fish tank / train / park (calm). At home: purpose thank or tell; WR-3 or WR-5; address with adult; mail. Safety: adult handles personal info. Fun: real mail. Skill: audience + focus spellings. Error: adult writes whole card in the parking lot to “just be done.” Move: protect child ownership of focus words even if skeleton is scribed.

Connecting assessments (Chapter 8)

A short writing sample — dated, purpose named, focus words visible — belongs in the kitchen objects rotation. Diagnostic wrongs in writing often code as transcription overload, affix skip, or vowel error. Done-enough for writing is not a national percentile.

Closing

Ask the locked question every writing try. Wait. Plan. Adapt transcription. Teach spelling still. Revise one thing. Share with a kind audience. That is early writing with dyslexia intensity: ideas kept, code taught, dignity intact.

For the parent — precise contrast with “just journaling”

Journaling can motivate. It is not automatically Structured Literacy writing instruction. Without purpose teaching, spelling focus, and read-back, journals become blank books or secret shame stacks. Use journals as a place to put WR outputs, not as the whole method.

Share step ideas (Graham process, kitchen scale)

- Read labels to a stuffed animal (5–7) without baby-talking an older sibling who needs the same step — adjust audience.

- Read paragraph to a parent on video message for a relative.
- Post the thank-you on the fridge for family eyes.
Share is not public performance against the child's will. Consent matters.
Pride matters.

Edit vs revise (kid language)

Revise = make the message better (add because, clearer detail). Edit = fix mechanics you have taught (capital, end mark, focus spelling). Pick one lane per day for young writers. Adults who demand both while the child still struggles with CVC create overload.

Band 8–10 persuade-light honesty

Persuade-light means “please visit” or “we should walk the dog before dark” — reasons and because-clauses. It does not mean culture-war speeches or adult political theater. Keep stakes household and kind.

Inventory of focus-word selection

Choose focus words from patterns already taught in Chapters 3–4, appearing naturally in the child's plan. Do not invent a composition that requires ten untaught vowel teams. If the oral story needs hard words, scribe those; keep focus blanks on taught patterns. Diagnostic honesty beats fake independence.

What “done enough” checklist poster

- ☐ Job named
- ☐ Plan with three beats (oral OK)
- ☐ Draft exists (labels/sentence/paragraph by band)
- ☐ Focus spellings attempted by child
- ☐ One revise or edit done
- ☐ Read-back happened
- ☐ Showable two ways
- ☐ Holds after a night on reread

- ☐ Handwriting crumb ≤ 5 when used
- ☐ No AI ghostwriter

Illustration note

Still-life: purpose cards, three-line planner, pencil, focus-word sticky with blanks in a scribed sentence, postcard, start-dot letter strip — no child portraits, no brand logos.

Why this matters — continued depth

Writing is where reading, spelling, and thinking meet on one page. For many five- to ten-year-olds with word-level reading and spelling disability risk, that meeting feels like a traffic jam. The child who can explain a science demo aloud may produce two shaky words and quit. The child who labors through an Accuracy Pass may have no working memory left for a thank-you note. Intensity here does not mean louder demands for volume. Intensity means clearer teaching of purpose and process, more supportive transcription scaffolds, and honest spelling work that still happens.

Graham Rec 2's strong evidence for process and purposes is the spine of your talk box: job of the piece, plan, draft, share, revise. Graham Rec 3's moderate evidence for handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction is why WR-6 exists as a crumb and why focus blanks exist inside Scribe-and-Spell. Skip either strand and the week tips over — all mechanics or all “just express yourself.”

IDA 2025's secondary-consequence language about written expression is not a threat. It is a reason to begin the ladder early. Waiting until decoding is perfect to start composing is a form of wait-to-fail wearing a patience costume. Begin now. Adapt now. Teach spelling now.

For the parent — deeper wrong-answer hearing

When a child produces a beautiful oral story and a blank page, adults sometimes narrate laziness. Hear overload instead. When a child produces invented spelling on every word including the week's taught pattern, adults sometimes praise “creative spelling” and skip the encoding sit. Hear abandoned teaching. When a rel-

ative says, “Just type it — spelling doesn’t matter anymore,” hear a partial truth about later accommodations mashed into a reason to skip early orthographic mapping. Typing may help transcription load later; Moats’s encoding logic still belongs in the kitchen for ages 5–10.

When a teacher packet demands a five-paragraph essay from a child still blending CVC, hear birthday-locked curriculum. Place by skill: labels and sentences first. When an app offers to turn a voice note into a polished paragraph with vocabulary the child never used, hear ghostwriting. Keep the child’s words. Keep the child’s focus spellings.

Everyday picture 2. An eight-year-old (hypothetical) wants to explain how a paper airplane flew. Purpose card: explain. Three beats: fold, throw, measure. Adult scribes the skeleton. Child fills *fold*, *wing*, *long* if those match taught patterns — or different focus words from the week. They combine two kernels with *because*. They read it to a sibling. One revise: add the measurement. No AI polish. Pride is real.

Everyday picture 3. A nine-year-old still inaccurate on vowel teams is asked to “journal a page daily” with no teaching. By Thursday the journal is empty and the child calls themselves stupid. Repair: stop the page quota; start WR-3 twice weekly; restore Chapter 3–4 intensity; keep oral brilliance visible in plans.

How to teach — minute-by-minute WR-3

0:00–1:00 Job card. Locked opening. Wait.

1:00–3:00 Three oral beats; you jot them.

3:00–7:00 You scribe skeleton on paper leaving five blanks.

7:00–11:00 Child stretches and writes focus words; blend prompts if stuck; no filling for them.

11:00–12:00 Read aloud together; choose one revise target; stop.

If melt at minute four, stop. Keep the three beats as today’s win. Try blanks tomorrow. Short, sharp, frequent beats Sunday marathon.

How to teach — minute-by-minute WR-5 (8–10)

0:00–2:00 Purpose + plan three beats.

2:00–10:00 Draft 3–5 sentences; scribe non-focus on request; child owns focus list.

10:00–13:00 Read aloud; revise one target (detail or pattern set).

13:00–15:00 Share with agreed audience or park for tomorrow share.

Practice — extended in-home bank

Fridge Thank-You — write a three-sentence thank-you to a family member for a concrete help (rides, snacks, reading aloud). Purpose thank. Focus spellings from week. Scribe OK.

Explain the Game Rules — 8–10: short paragraph explaining how a simple household game works; because-clauses; no contested topics.

Sentence Combine Dinner — two kernels about the day on strips; child combines with *and/because/when*; write once.

Handwriting → **Dictation Fuse** — three letters, then dictate one word using them immediately; never letters alone for twenty minutes.

Plan Strips in Pocket — all day collect three beats on a sticky for evening writing; reduces blank-page fear.

Practice — extended out-of-home bank

Postcard series — one calm outing per month becomes a mailed card; skill compounds.

Library thank-you — one sentence to librarian about a book heard in CO-6; focus word from week.

Store list co-write — child writes two taught-pattern item names; adult writes the rare words; read list together in aisle (Recipe/Label Decode cousin).

Park tell — oral tell of what you saw; voice memo OK; home WR-3 from the memo without letting speech-to-text fill focus spellings.

Talk box — sample full cycle (hypothetical)

Adult: “What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, or thank — and what’s the plan?”

Child: “Tell. About the pup.”

Adult: “Three beats.”

Child: “Pup ran. Pup wet. We towel.”

Adult: “I’ll scribe. You spell *ran*, *wet*, *towel* if those are focus — today focus are *ran* and *wet*.”

... blanks filled ...

Adult: “Read back. One fix?”

Child: “Add because it rained.”

Adult: “Revise that. Done enough for tonight.”

For the student — longer

Your brain can hold a whole story. Your pencil might not keep up yet. That mismatch is common in dyslexia risk. It is not proof you are lazy. Tools exist:

1. Say the job.
2. Say the plan in three beats.
3. Draw if it helps.
4. Let an adult write some words.
5. You write the week’s special spelling words.
6. Read it. Fix one thing.
7. Share with someone kind.

Worked example 2. Job: explain. Topic: how to make toast. Beats: bread in, wait, butter. Sentences: I put bread in the toaster. I wait. I put butter on because it tastes better. Focus spellings: *toast* parts if taught, or *put*, *wait* — whatever the week’s list says. If *toaster* is too hard, adult scribes it; you still spell *wait*.

Try 3. Combine: *The pup ran.* / *The pup was wet.* → *The pup ran when it was wet* or *The pup ran and got wet.* Check meaning.

Challenge 2. Teach a younger sibling or stuffed animal your sentence. Teaching is sharing. If you are the youngest, teach the dog photo.

If it isn't clicking — expanded diagnostics

Diagnostic A — Refuses all writing. Check shame history. Return to oral-only plan success for two days. Add drawing. Then one taught word alone. Celebrate tiny marks.

Diagnostic B — Writes a lot with no readable focus patterns. Praise volume; restore encoding sit; pick fewer focus words; WR-3 with larger blanks.

Diagnostic C — Perfect copy of adult or AI text. Reset ownership. Child must produce plan beats in their voice.

Diagnostic D — Revises forever, never finishes. Hard rule: one revise target; then share or done.

Diagnostic E — Hand hurts / grip collapses. Cap WR-6; shorten sessions; consider professional OT conversation; keep oral and spelling maps.

When to seek evaluation: persistent unexpected struggle despite systematic literacy teaching; documentation needs; motor or language concerns beyond kitchen scope. Teach now while seeking. Not legal/medical advice.

Tools — extended AI and accommodation box

Allowed after attempt: parent asks model for three kernel pairs to combine; parent asks for a thank-you purpose checklist; parent asks for a SCRIPT of questions to ask the child — voiced by parent.

Banned: model drafts the child's paragraph; child pastes homework into chat; detector score as grade; voice-clone "writing teacher."

COPPA: parent account always. Ages 5–7: no live open chat partner. Ages 8–10: parent in room; unaided first.

Bastani OFF-AGE caution: ungarded help can inflate practice and deflate unaided performance — mechanism reminder only.⁹⁹

⁹⁹Bastani et al., *PNAS* 2025 — **OFF-AGE for literacy; not a dyslexia RCT.**

Accommodation honesty: extra time helps some composing; it does not teach spelling. Dictation helps transcription; it does not replace encoding lessons. Separate the lanes verbally.

What “done enough” looks like — extended

Done enough is not a novel. Done enough is not a percentile. Done enough is:

- A named job and a plan you can hear.
- Marks on a page that match the plan at the right ladder step for skill.
- Honest attempts on focus spellings, corrected after read-back when needed.
- One revise.
- Read-back.
- Two ways: oral and written.
- Holds tomorrow when reread.

Life-of-the-habit tips live here: real audiences; recycled spellings; genre rotation; cumulative review; self-to-self comparison; stop before melt; records titled Reading / Language Arts / English.

Point to Chapter 8: short writing sample as kitchen object. Point to Chapter 9: dated notebook. Point back to Chapter 4: spelling map. Point back to Chapter 6: meaning fuel.

Closing coaching

Every writing session, ask what the job is and what the plan is. Wait longer than your anxiety wants. Scribe to save thinking. Protect the spelling blanks so learning stays. Revise one thing. Share kindly. Refuse ghostwriters and shame. That is early writing with adaptations for young thinkers with dyslexia — ideas kept, code taught, dignity intact, short and sharp and frequent.

Purpose cards — exact kid definitions

Tell: “I say what happened, in order.”

Explain: “I say how or why something works.”

Thank: “I say what someone did and how it helped.”

Persuade-light (8–10): “I ask for something and give reasons.”

Practice flipping cards until the child can give the kid definition. That is thirty seconds of academic language for writing.

Sentence construction micro-moves

- Who + did what.
- Who + did what + where.
- Who + did what + because ____.
- Combine with *and* / *when* / *because*.

Use kernels on strips. Keep morph endings honest to Chapter 6 teaching. If *-ed* sounds are not ready, choose present-tense kernels.

Spelling-inside-writing error codes (preview Chapter 8)

When you log writing misses, use the same codes: sound, position, digraph unit, vowel team/silent-e, affix, heart-part rush. Next-week moves match Chapter 4 and 8 tables. Composition time becomes diagnostic time without becoming a shame trial. Ask the child to explain one miss on Friday.

Shared vs independent — honesty chart (prose)

If accuracy on focus spellings in isolation is below about 4/5, keep WR-3 heavy scaffolds. If isolation spelling is strong but composition collapses, the issue is load and process — not “more spelling lists only.” If both are weak, twin encoding sits with very short WR-1 attempts. Skill, not birthday, decides the mix.

Multilingual home note

If the household speaks more than one language, oral planning may begin in the language of greatest oral ease, then move to English labels/sentences as the English hour target. This book teaches English literacy intensity; it does not erase home languages. Keep controversy-free, practical, kind.

Motivation — MOT crumb inside writing

Offer choice of topic inside the purpose (which thank-you audience; which tell event). Offer choice of utensil (pencil vs marker) without dropping focus spellings. Choice is not choosing to skip the attempt.

Full worked week — band 5–7 (labelled hypothetical)

Monday: After *sh* Accuracy Pass, WR-1 labels on a ship drawing (*ship, fish, shell* as taught).

Tuesday: WR-2 sentence *The ship is at the dock* with child spelling *ship*.

Wednesday: WR-6 crumb on *s-h* formation 4 minutes; dictate *shop*.

Thursday: Postcard thank to cousin about museum fish; scribe skeleton; child *fish* / *ship*.

Friday: Child reads Tuesday sentence; explains one spelling miss; done-enough check on labels+sentence.

Full worked week — band 8–10 (labelled hypothetical)

Monday: Purpose explain — how we *reheat* soup; MO-1 feeds focus *reheat*.

Tuesday: WR-4 combine kernels about soup.

Wednesday: WR-5 paragraph; scribe non-focus; child morph spellings.

Thursday: Share paragraph aloud; one revise add detail.

Friday: Writing sample dated for Chapter 8 folder; diagnostic wrong on an affix miss.

Parent self-check before blaming the child

Did I name the job? Did I wait? Did I shrink the chunk? Did I protect focus blanks? Did I stop before melt? Did I teach this week's pattern in encoding before demanding it in composition? If any answer is no, repair the adult move first.

What “done enough” — edge cases

Child orally plans brilliantly and writes one true sentence with focus spelling — done enough for that day even if a sibling wrote more.

Child writes five sentences of related tell with invented spelling on untaught words and correct focus words — done enough; do not punish invented spelling on untaught patterns.

Child refuses marks but completes three oral beats and places picture cards in order — partial win; record it; try marks tomorrow with scribe.

Records bridge

Date the sample. Note purpose. Note focus words. Note scaffolds used (scribe Y/N). Title the subject Reading / Language Arts / English. Private evaluation chatter stays private. Chapter 9 expands the file.

Final student pep (respectful)

You are allowed to use help. Help that still makes you stretch sounds into letters is real learning. Help that writes your whole piece for you is not your voice. Your voice matters. Your plan matters. Your focus words matter. Slow and accurate is allowed. You are not lazy.

Tools table in prose

Pencil and paper remain default. Whiteboard lowers fear because erasing is easy. Sticky blanks on a scribed sentence make focus work visible. A simple checklist icon set (job / plan / draft / fix / share) can hang on the fridge. AI stays parent-side. Audio recorders can hold oral plans for children who lose beats — then write from the recording with focus blanks still protected.

If siblings write together

Same purpose card, different scaffolds. Younger child WR-1; older child WR-5 on the same family event. No race to page count. No public ranking. Shared share time can be sweet if consent holds.

Common curriculum mash-ups — calm responses

“School wants five sentences nightly.” Response: we may send three quality sentences with named purpose and taught spellings, plus a note that scaffolds are in use — without oversharing diagnosis.

“Curriculum says Level 2 composition.” Response: publisher scope $\neq$ skill. Place by inventory.

“Relative says cursive will fix dyslexia.” Response: handwriting crumb only; cursive is not the Structured Literacy program.

Closing

What’s the job of this piece — tell, explain, or thank — and what’s the plan? Ask it. Wait. Scaffold. Spell. Revise once. Share. Keep dignity. Keep the code. That is Chapter 7’s promise for ages 5–10 with dyslexia intensity: writing that thinks, spelling that maps, adaptations that liberate without lying about who did the work. Short, sharp, frequent writing tries — with a scribe when needed and focus spellings protected — beat rare marathons and blank-page shame.

One more parent warm-up variant (thank-you day)

Minute 1. Choose real audience and concrete help they gave.

Minute 2. Draft three beats yourself as a model, then erase — child must produce their own.

Minute 3. Circle focus spellings available from this week.

Minute 4. Lay out paper with five blanks already marked inside a light pencil skeleton you will adjust after hearing their plan.

Minute 5. Say the locked opening aloud once; put the timer away; decide melt stop signal with yourself.

One more incorrect example

A well-meaning adult types the child’s oral story into a chatbot and asks it to “fix grammar and make it sound older,” then prints the result for a portfolio. The portfolio looks strong. The child’s orthographic map did not grow. The voice shifted to machine register. Move: keep the child’s sentences; scribe lightly; teach one sentence pattern; protect focus spellings; date the honest sample for Chapter 8.

Bridge sentence to assessments

When Friday comes, do not only ask whether writing “felt good.” Ask what the child can show two ways — oral plan and written marks — and what still needs practice (Chapter 8’s locked spirit). Writing done-enough feeds the short writing sample object. Spelling misses feed dictation and diagnostic wrongs. Pride feeds motivation for next week’s try.

Keep the purpose card on the table every time. Keep the focus list short enough to win. Keep the scribe honest. Keep the child’s voice. Ask what the job is and what the plan is — then wait long enough for a young dyslexic writer to begin.

Illustration note (still-life): purpose cards, three-line planner, pencil, scribed sentence with five focus blanks, postcard, start-dot letter strip — no child portraits, no brand logos, no chatbot screenshot as a writing sample.

Done enough is a job, a plan, honest focus spellings, and one revise — showable tomorrow without shame. That is writing with adaptations, not writing abandoned. Teach now. Begin today with kindness.

Chapter 8



Figure 10: Four kitchen skill-check cards beside a dated notebook — still-life, no people, no logos.

Short assessments and progress checks

Why this matters

What can you show me two ways today — and what still needs practice?

That question is the spirit of kitchen assessment for ages 5–10 with dyslexia risk. Assessment here means short skill objects, exit tickets, one explained error, and done-enough checklists by skill. It does not mean a percentile as a personality. It does not mean NAEP stories. It does not mean Accelerated Reader points as comprehension.¹⁰⁰ It does not mean waiting years for a label before teaching the code.

Families need two truths at once. First: daily diagnostic teaching already assesses — every Accuracy Pass tally, every dictation, every B–M–E retell is information. Second: a dedicated rhythm of kitchen skill checks keeps the week honest when hope, fear, or a curriculum guide would skip review. Screening flags risk. Formal evaluation (when sought) maps needs and documentation. Kitchen checks decide tomorrow's sit.¹⁰¹ Those three columns stay separate.

IDA guidance encourages preventive intervention when risk appears and notes that word reading, decoding, and spelling measures become more informative for identification by mid-grade 1; earlier, precursors such as language, phonemic awareness, memory, rapid naming, and letter knowledge matter.¹⁰² This chapter does not turn you into a diagnostician. It gives you four kitchen objects you can rotate in under fifteen minutes, plus exit-ticket shapes, a diagnostic-wrong codebook, progress charts that compare the child to yesterday's self, and done-enough language that refuses percentile identity.

What this idea unlocks is calm evidence: letter–sound links growing; taught words read and spelled; a controlled oral reading sample with gist; a short writing sample from Chapter 7. You will know what to reteach Tuesday. You will know when to

¹⁰⁰Assessment lock: exit tickets / diagnostic wrongs / kitchen skill objects — not percentile identity, not NAEP as homeschool census, not AR points (WWC Accelerated Reader Adolescent Literacy 2010: no discernible).

¹⁰¹IDA Testing and Evaluation: screening $\neq$ diagnosis; teach on risk; formal evaluation when documentation or differential diagnosis matters — not a licence to freeze teaching.

¹⁰²IDA, “Testing and Evaluation” fact sheet / 2025 Definition Explanation: preventive intervention on risk; word-reading/decoding/spelling measures more informative by mid-grade 1; screening $\neq$ diagnosis. Access date 6 September 2026.

hold a pattern. You will know when systematic work has been real enough that seeking a professional evaluation is a wise next conversation — without freezing teaching while you wait.

Refusals: scores as names; sibling rank charts as motivation; stopwatch cult on cold undecodable text; AR points as mastery; skipping checks because “we feel fine”; waiting to teach until after an evaluation appointment months away.

You do not need to be a psychometrician. You need a dated notebook, a pencil, four short routines, and the locked question.

This week you can learn to hear percentile-as-identity, screening-as-diagnosis, and “we’ll just do the next lesson” without a Friday sweep as three different misses. Today the child can show one skill two ways — and name one thing still in practice.

For the parent: understand it yourself

Many adults remember assessment as secret tests, red ink, and a number that followed a child down the hall. Others remember no checks at all — only “read more.” For Structured Literacy at home, assessment is frequent, short, kind, and useful. Five minutes of this section, then the warm-up.

Everyday picture. Friday, twelve minutes. Letter–sound inventory on ten shaky links (2 minutes). Three taught words read, three spelled (3 minutes). One 50-word controlled oral sample with meaning-harming tally and gist (4 minutes). Child explains one miss (2 minutes). You check two done-enough boxes and write next week’s hold (1 minute). The child leaves knowing what worked. You leave knowing Tuesday’s review stack.

Precise picture — three columns

Kitchen check	Screening	Formal evaluation
What to teach tomorrow	Brief risk flag → intervene / refer	Comprehensive; qualified professional; written report; intervention map; documentation
Exit tickets; four objects below	School or clinic tools vary	Not replaced by kitchen grain

Kitchen check	Screening	Formal evaluation
Parent-run; skill-based	Not a diagnosis	Not a DIY project from this book

Screening $\neq$ diagnosis $\neq$ kitchen check. Say it until it sticks.

Four kitchen objects (rotate; under ~15 minutes when combined thoughtfully)

1. **Letter-sound inventory** — which taught graphemes are automatic, shaky, missing.
2. **Word reading** — taught-pattern words (+ occasional nonsense probes to check sounding vs memory).
3. **Spelling dictation** — same map as reading; position-error log.
4. **Oral reading sample** — controlled text; meaning-harming errors; gist; optional timing only if already accurate.

Add crumbs: exit tickets daily; one diagnostic wrong weekly; short writing sample from Chapter 7 periodically; progress chart self-to-self.

Wrong answers to hear

1. “*You’re a 22nd percentile.*” as identity.¹⁰³ Hear the mash. Translate to skill needs.
2. *Screening = diagnosis.* Hear column collapse.
3. *No checks — just next lesson.* Hear abandoned cumulative review.
4. *Timing cold hard text as the only “ORF.”* Hear fluency-before-accuracy.
5. *AR points as done-enough.* Hear Chapter 5–6 refuse.

¹⁰³Refuse percentile-as-identity. Progress charts compare the child to yesterday’s self on controlled skills — not a national percentile as personality.

6. *Comparing siblings' charts on the fridge.* Hear shame design.

7. *Stopping teaching until evaluation day.* Hear wait-to-fail.

Five-minute parent warm-up

Minute 1. Open the dated notebook to a blank grid (templates below).

Minute 2. Choose today's object: inventory, words, dictation, or oral sample.

Minute 3. Practice locked opening aloud.

Minute 4. Decide the one miss you will ask them to explain if errors appear.

Minute 5. Write "show two ways" examples for today's skill (read+spell; retell+point; plan+write).

How to teach it this week

Assessment is not a separate subject titled Young Thinkers Dyslexia I.¹⁰⁴ It lives inside Reading / Language Arts / English as short probes. Friday often carries the longer sweep; daily exit tickets stay tiny.

Band 5–7 weekly rhythm

- Daily: 2–4 minute exit ticket matched to the sit (PA / phonics / encoding / connected accuracy).
- Mid-week: one oral sample on controlled text or short dictation.
- Friday: inventory crumb on shaky letters; one diagnostic wrong explained; done-enough checklist; note reteach.
- Biweekly: short writing sample (labels or sentence).

Band 8–10 weekly rhythm

- Daily exit ticket may include morph build/spell or problem/solution oral.
- Mid-week: word reading with syllable/morph items; dictation contrasts (*cap/cape*).

¹⁰⁴Transcript lock: never Young Thinkers Dyslexia I; assessment lives under Reading / Language Arts / English.

- Friday: oral sample on controlled or bridged text; diagnostic wrong; done-enough; optional calm self-timing only on accurate text.
- Biweekly: short paragraph sample with purpose noted.

Exact wording:

- “What can you show me two ways today — and what still needs practice?”
- “Wrong isn’t shame — wrong is information.”
- “Show me with tiles and with the pencil.”
- “Read it — now spell it.”
- “Tell the middle — now point to the words.”
- “We’re checking the skill, not naming your worth.”

Age-band moves

5–7: Keep probes playful-respectful; shorter lists (5–10 letters; 5–10 words); non-sense probes sparingly and explained as “robot words for sounding.”

8–10: Longer controlled samples; contrast pairs; morph items; still shame-aware if skills look early — respectful materials; no baby-talk.

Fade help. First you model how to explain a miss (“I used /e/ instead of /i/”). Then they explain with a sentence frame. Then they classify with the codebook. Stop talking when they are mid-explanation.

Object 1 — Letter–sound inventory

Time: 3–6 minutes. **Band:** both (expand set with teaching).

Materials: Grapheme cards or list of taught letters/teams; notebook grid.

Blank template

Date	Grapheme	Sound said	Auto / Shaky / Miss	Note
	m			
	a			
	t			
	sh			
	th			

Steps: Show grapheme; child says sound (not letter name unless you ask names

separately); mark Auto/Shaky/Miss; include digraphs as one unit when taught; recheck misses within a week.

Errors: letter name instead of sound; digraph split; guessing from picture on card. Move: cover pictures; “sound, not name”; digraph as one tile.

Exit crumb: inventory expanded weekly; shaky items enter daily review stack.

Two ways: say the sound *and* write the grapheme when you dictate the sound.

Object 2 — Word reading (taught patterns + light nonsense)

Time: 3–5 minutes.

Materials: 8–10 taught words; optional 2–3 nonsense words using same patterns; tracking strip.

Blank template

Date	Word	Real/Nons	Correct Y/N	Error note
	ship	R		
	shop	R		
	shom	N		

Steps: Untimed; finger under; blend prompts not picture prompts; tally; if non-sense confuses, explain once: “Robot word — sound it; don’t make it a real word.”

Errors: sight-memory of real words masking weak sounding (nonsense reveals); first-letter invent.

Exit crumb: ≥9/10 taught words untimed for done-enough push on that set; non-sense used diagnostically, not as a scare.

Two ways: read the word *and* spell it later in dictation.

Object 3 — Spelling dictation

Time: 4–6 minutes.

Materials: Paper with numbered lines; 4–5 words + optional one short sentence with focus blanks; position-error column.

Blank template

#	Dictated	Child wrote	Pos (B/M/E)	Code	Next move
1	ship				
2	shop				
3	fish				
4	wish				
5	sentence focus				

Steps: Say word → child repeats → stretch → write → read back → you log.
Sentence dictation may use focus blanks (Chapter 4 / 7 twin).

Errors: final sound drop; digraph as two; vowel confusion; affix skip.

Exit crumb: ≥4/5 on today's pattern or clear error codes for reteach.

Two ways: spell *and* read back accurately.

Object 4 — Oral reading sample (controlled)

Time: 4–6 minutes.

Materials: 40–60 word controlled passage (5–7) or ~80–100 controlled (8–10); tally box; gist line.

Blank template

Date	Passage/pattern (approx)	Words	Meaning-harming errors	Gist Y/N	Optional self-time (only if accurate)	Note

Steps: Picture After habit; Accuracy Pass rules; tally meaning-harming only; one gist sentence; timing optional and only if accuracy already clean — never cold hard text; never sibling race.

Errors: picture peek; rush; fluency-before-accuracy pressure.

Exit crumb: ≤2 meaning-harming + gist Y for short sample.

Two ways: accurate read *and* gist (or scoop phrase + meaning).

Practice that actually builds learning

Assessment practice is still practice — short, named, kind.

In-home try-its

Friday Sweep Kit — 12–15 min; rotate objects; one diagnostic wrong; done-enough boxes.

Two-Ways Ticket — 3 min any day: read+spell same three words; or retell+point.

Error Hospital Evening — 6–8 min; three week misses; child explains; you classify with codebook.

Self-to-Self Chart Night — 4 min; same controlled paragraph as last week; arrow for smoother/fewer errors; no percentile.

Inventory Snap — 3 min; five shaky graphemes only.

Out-of-home try-its

Street-Sign Spot Check — 2 min; one word within code; note accuracy mentally; home list later — not a public exam.

Package Grapheme Confirm — find today's grapheme; say sound; home inventory mark.

Library “show two ways” — after CO-6, child gives gist and points to a remembered detail or picture *after* words — keep dual-lane honesty.

Postcard as writing sample — mail becomes dated sample for the folder (Chapter 7 + 8).

Safety: never quiz a child loudly in public as performance; never photograph strangers; never shame.

Talk box

Opening: “What can you show me two ways today — and what still needs practice?”

Follow-ups:

1. Meaning: “What does this check tell us about tomorrow's practice?”
2. Representation: “Show tiles *and* pencil — or read *and* spell — or retell *and* point.”
3. Type: “Was that a sound miss, position miss, guess, or affix miss?”

4. Check: “Does your explanation match what you wrote/read?”
5. Revise: “You may change your mind about the error type after we look again.”

Wait: slow three; second wait; protect explanation time; look at the paper.

Stuck silence: fear of being “tested”; vague ask; wait-time zero; shame from past red ink; no frame for error talk. Move: “Wrong is information”; give two error-type choices; shrink list.

Blocked: teach how to explain one miss before a full Friday sweep.

Mixed: two-ways ticket + one inventory crumb.

Incorrect example: Parent posts “ORF 60” on fridge beside sibling’s “ORF 110.” Category error: rate-as-identity + peer shame. Move: remove chart; self-to-self on accurate text only; ask locked opening.

Exit ticket menu (2–4 minutes)

Focus	Exit ticket
PA	Segment 3 words with tiles; blend 3 robot words
Phonics	Read 3–4 words with today’s pattern; spell 2
Encoding	Dictate 4 words + 1 short sentence focus blanks
Connected accuracy	40–60 word controlled read; tally meaning-harming
Fluency	Third reread of known paragraph + one meaning Q
Vocab	Own-words definition + new sentence
Morph-light	Build/read 3 affixed words; spell 2
Comp	Oral B–M–E or problem/solution in 30–45 seconds
Writing	One sentence or 3-beat oral plan + one written sentence

Diagnostic wrong codebook (Friday spine)

Child explains the miss. Adult classifies:

Code	Example	Next-week move
Sound	/i/ for /e/	Contrast stack; more encoding
Position	Final sound dropped	Final-sound PA + dictate finals
Digraph unit	<i>s-h</i> as two	Digraph as one tile
Guess-picture	Said <i>dog</i> from photo	Cover picture; CT-5 habit
Vowel team / silent-e	<i>cap</i> for <i>cape</i>	Syllable sort; contrast encode
Affix	Skipped <i>-ing</i>	Ending switch MO-2
Vocab gap	Accurate decode, blank meaning	VO-1 deep word
Comp structure	No middle in retell	CO-1 with boxes
Transcription overload	Great talk, blank page	WR-3 Scribe-and-Spell

For the student

Checks are how we find what to practice — not how we decide if you are good.

What this idea is. Sometimes you show a skill two ways: read and spell; tell and point; plan and write. Sometimes you explain one mistake like a detective. Mistakes help tomorrow's lesson. Numbers on big tests are not your name.

Tiny worked example. You read *ship*, *shop*, *fish*. You spell *ship* and *fish*. That's two ways for *sh*. One miss: you wrote *sip* for *ship*. You explain: "I forgot the /sh/ — I wrote /s/." Code: digraph unit. Next week we practice *sh* as one tile. Still needs practice: *sh*. Working: short vowels in those words.

Try 1. Pick three words. Read them. Spell them. Tell which still needs practice.

Try 2. After a short page, tell the gist and point to a word that proves it.

Explain it back. Why is explaining a wrong answer useful — and why isn't a percentile your personality?

Challenge. Keep a tiny "two ways" card this week. Each day add one check mark when you show two ways.

If checks feel scary. Say so. Ask for a shorter list. You are allowed to be nervous and still brave for three words. Wrong isn't shame.

If it isn't clicking

1 — Meltdown when anything looks like a test. Shrink to three items; use game voice without mocking; always end on a known win; never post scores publicly; teach error-explanation frames first.

2 — Scores everywhere, no reteach. You collected numbers but didn't change Tuesday's stack. Move: every check must write one next-week move.

3 — Evaluation confusion freezing teaching. Keep kitchen objects running while you seek professional evaluation if needed. Screening flags $\neq$ diagnosis. Teach now.

Slow down lists when accuracy collapses. Go ahead when two-ways holds after a night. Reteach from codebook. Seek human specialist when unexpected persistence continues despite real systematic work or when documentation is required — this book does not diagnose and does not give legal advice.

Tools, including AI

Parent may use a tool to generate isomorphic word lists for a taught pattern with answer key held by parent. Parent may format grids. Refuse: photo-to-key on school assessments; chatbot diagnosing dyslexia; detector scores; uploading the child's face; treating vendor placement tests as IES-certified RCTs.

Vendor placement tests (when a program offers them) are optional tools for scope entry — label vendor; not worth. OS TTS is access, not an oral reading sample of decoding. Keep accounts parent-held (COPPA)¹⁰⁵.

What “done enough” looks like

Code / word reading (starter checklist)

- Links taught letter-sounds (inventory expanding).
- Blends CVC with tiles, then without (5–7).

¹⁰⁵COPPA under-13 — parent-held accounts for the whole 5–10 band.

- Reads 10 taught decodable words $\geq 9/10$ untimed.
- Reads 40–60 word decodable ≤ 2 meaning-harming errors + one-sentence gist.
- Spells 5 dictation words on today's pattern $\geq 4/5$.
- (8–10) Distinguishes closed vs silent-e in read+spell $\geq 8/10$.
- (8–10) Reads simple two-syllable closed compounds with scoop $\geq 8/10$.

Fluency / language / writing

- Third reread of known paragraph smooth, ≤ 2 meaning-harming errors.
- Uses taught word in new oral sentence next day.
- Retells B–M–E or problem/solution with evidence.
- Labels ≥ 3 or writes one complete sentence with focus spelling.
- (8–10) Short paragraph 3–5 sentences with named purpose (scribe OK for non-focus).
- Waits for turn once in the hour (observed).

Meta done-enough for assessment habit

- Showable two ways on the focus skill.
- Holds after a night.
- One diagnostic wrong explained weekly.
- Next-week move written.
- No percentile identity language.
- Self-to-self chart only.

Nonsense word honesty

Nonsense probes check whether the child is sounding versus only memorizing a small set. Use sparingly. Explain kindly. Never use nonsense as a humiliation game. If nonsense is strong but real-word reading is weak, consider vocabulary or print experience gaps (Chapter 6). If real words are memorized and nonsense collapses, deepen sounding and encoding.

Optional timing policy (print on card)

1. Accuracy first — always.
2. Timing only on already-accurate text.
3. Self-comparison only.
4. Drop timer if anxiety or guessing appears.
5. Rate gaps may linger (Torgesen honesty by 8–10)¹⁰⁶; accuracy and meaning still count as wins.

Vendor placement — one paragraph

If you use a purchased program, its placement test can help you enter a scope and sequence. Label it vendor. It is not a national normed identity score. It is not proof of diagnosis. Use it to choose a starting pattern, then verify with kitchen objects within two weeks.

Hypothetical Friday (5–7)

Inventory: *sh, th, a, i* — *th* shaky.

Word reading: 9/10 *sh* words; nonsense 2/3.

Dictation: 4/5; miss *ship*→*sip* (digraph).

Oral sample skipped (time); replaced with two-ways on three words.

Diagnostic wrong: digraph unit.

Done-enough: not yet on *sh* spell; hold *sh* next week; add *th* contrast lightly.

¹⁰⁶Torgesen, *American Educator* (2004) and related: rate gaps may linger; accuracy and meaning still count as wins.

Hypothetical Friday (8–10)

Word reading: closed/silent-e 8/10.

Dictation contrasts 4/5.

Oral sample: 90 controlled words, 2 meaning-harming, gist Y; no timing.

Morph exit: *unlock, redo, helpful* read; *unlock, helpful* spelled.

Diagnostic: vowel silent-e miss on *cape*.

Done-enough: approaching; hold contrasts; Bridge only after two clean Accuracy Passes.

Materials kit

Dated notebook; grapheme cards; word lists; controlled passages folder; timer in drawer; sticky codebook; progress chart page; pencil; tracking strip; purpose cards for writing samples; error-log stickies.

More parent wording

- “Show me two ways.”
- “What still needs practice — your words?”
- “I’m writing this miss so tomorrow is smarter.”
- “This number is not your name.”
- “We check so we can teach — not so we can rank.”
- “Short check. Then play.”

Student — fear repair script

Adult: locked opening.

Child: “I hate tests.”

Adult: “This is a three-word check to help tomorrow. You pick which three from today’s list. Wrong answers help us. Ready?”

Child picks. Completes. Explains one. Ends on a known win.

Connecting all chapters

ch02–04 feed inventory, word reading, dictation.

ch05 feeds oral sample and fluency-after-accuracy rules.

ch06 feeds vocab/comp exit tickets and refuses AR-as-comp.

ch07 feeds writing sample and transcription-overload code.

ch09 stores dated records.

ch10 names materials and program fit — not crowns.

Life-of-the-habit in assessments

Cumulative review is the dyslexia differentiator. Friday sweeps prevent “got it” evaporation. Interleave old patterns with new. Keep the error log alive. Compare to yesterday’s self. Stop before melt. Restart after missed days without shame theater. Intensity is clearer teaching and more well-chosen reps — not tears as a badge.

What tests means in this book (plain)

Exit ticket. Diagnostic wrong. Done-enough. Four kitchen objects. Optional vendor placement. Formal evaluation when sought. Not NAEP. Not MAP-as-identity. Not DIBELS-as-worth. Not AR points.

Closing

What can you show me two ways today — and what still needs practice? Ask it at the end of sits and on Fridays. Wait. Record without ranking. Reteach from the code. Keep teaching while any evaluation process unfolds. Percentiles are data points, not souls. Kitchen checks are how young thinkers with dyslexia risk get tomorrow’s lesson instead of another vague pep talk.

Why this matters — continued

Homeschool and after-school families often swing between two poles: endless worksheets that feel like testing every minute, or almost no evidence until a report card shock. Structured Literacy intensity needs a third way. Short checks create a feedback loop. The child sees that effort changes the next lesson. The adult sees which grapheme, which position error, which guess habit, which affix still needs the stack. Without that loop, even a good program becomes a page-turning ritual.

Prevalence ranges for dyslexia sit in named bands (stricter roughly 5–10%; broader symptom language roughly 15–20%) — never mash those with the NCES home-

school percentage. Many readers of this manual are not in the homeschool pond at all; they are school parents building a kitchen hour. Kitchen assessments still fit. Dual-path and after-school families still need dated samples titled Reading / Language Arts / English.

For the parent — deeper pictures

Everyday picture — inventory day. Ten cards. Child says /sh/ for *sh*, /a/ for *a*, hesitates on *th*, says letter name “tee” for *t*. You mark shaky and miss. You do not say “you should know this by now.” You say, “Two ways tomorrow: I’ll say the sound, you write the letter; then you see the letter and say the sound.” Review stack updated in thirty seconds.

Everyday picture — oral sample day. Sticky over picture. Fifty words on *sh*. Two meaning-harming errors. Gist correct. Child wants a timer. You ask: “Was it accurate first?” Yes. Optional ten-second self-time on a reread — or not, if stomach drops. You write errors 2, gist Y, smooth improving vs last Friday. No percentile.

Precise picture — done-enough vs promotion. Done-enough means the skill holds on a short set, two ways, after a night. Promotion in a franchise book means the guide’s next lesson number. Those can disagree. Your mastery cannot wait for a book’s pacing if the inventory still bleeds. The book’s next lesson can wait. Mastery cannot — kindly, with review, without shame.

Wrong answers — expanded set

8. *Using a one-day cold hard ORF as proof the child “can’t comprehend.”* Decode load wiped meaning. Check gist on accessible/heard text too (Chapter 6).
9. *Treating kitchen checks as secret from the child.* Secrecy breeds fear. Show the grid. Share the next-week move.
10. *Uploading a child’s assessment photo to a chatbot for “diagnosis.”* Refuse. Tools may help you format lists; they do not diagnose.

How to teach — building the Friday ritual

Post a simple order on the fridge:

1. Smile / known win (30 seconds).
2. Locked opening.
3. One primary object (inventory *or* words *or* dictation *or* oral sample).
4. Tiny second object if energy holds.
5. One diagnostic wrong explained.
6. Done-enough boxes.
7. Next-week move in one sentence.
8. Stop before melt — even if the template isn't full.

Total target: under fifteen minutes for the sweep core. If melt at step 3, stop. Partial data beats tears.

Nonsense probe script (exact)

“Some words are robot words. They aren't real. Your job is to say the sounds and blend. Ready? *shom*.”

If child invents a real word: “That would be a real word. Look through all the letters — robot style.”

Dictation position teaching

After a miss, ask: “Beginning, middle, or end problem?” Child points. You confirm. This grows metacognition without jargon overload. Position codes feed PA crumbs and encoding sits.

Oral sample — meaning-harming reminder

Count errors that change who/what/where/truth. Soft self-corrections that land right need not inflate the tally. The sample teaches you; it does not prosecute the child.

Practice — month map (labelled hypothetical)

Week 1: emphasize inventory + dictation.

Week 2: word reading + oral sample.

Week 3: dictation + writing sample.

Week 4: full Friday sweep + progress chart arrow.

Daily: exit tickets never stop.

In-home — Two-Ways Olympics (gentle)

Not a competition with others. Child earns a sticker on a private card for each day they showed two ways. Stickers motivate some children; skip if stickers become points-as-identity. The skill is the point.

Out-of-home — quiet confirm only

A street sign sound-out is a micro word-reading check. Do not announce “pop quiz!” in the parking lot. Whisper. Home log later.

Talk box — longer transcript

Adult: “What can you show me two ways today — and what still needs practice?”

Child: “I can read *ship*. I don’t know.”

Adult waits.

Adult: “Read *ship*. Now spell *ship*. That’s two ways. What still needs practice?”

Child: “*th* words.”

Adult: “Yes — inventory marked *th* shaky. Tuesday we contrast *s* and *th*. Explain Friday’s miss on *sip* for *ship*?”

Child: “I forgot *h* in *sh*.”

Adult: “Digraph unit. One tile. You taught me what to teach. Thank you.”

For the student — expanded

Detectives love clues. Your misses are clues. Your wins are clues too. When you show two ways, you prove the skill is flexible — not a lucky one-time trick. When something still needs practice, you are not behind as a person. You are mid-practice on a pattern.

Worked example 2. Oral sample: you read a short page with one sticky word. You tell what happened. Two ways: reading + gist. Still needs practice: the sticky vowel team. Working: looking through the word with the picture covered.

Try 3. Teach your adult how to mark Auto / Shaky / Miss on one letter. Teaching the system lowers fear.

Challenge. Write your own next-week move once: “Practice ____.” Compare to what your adult wrote. Discuss kindly.

If it isn’t clicking — more branches

Anxiety from past public reading. Use whisper reading for oral samples; allow finger tracking; shorter passages; end on success.

Parent over-logging. If grids become a second job, shrink to Friday only plus daily mental exit tickets. Sustainable beats elaborate abandoned.

Child refuses nonsense. Pause nonsense; use contrast real words (*ship/shop*) until trust returns.

Too many codes. Start with three codes only: sound, guess-picture, other. Expand later.

Tools — grids and AI boundaries

You may ask a parent-side tool: “Give me ten CVC words with short *a* and three nonsense with short *a*; answers separately.” You may not ask: “Does this mean my child has dyslexia?” from a photo of a worksheet. You may not auto-complete a school psychoeducational form with a chatbot’s guesses.

Keep formal reports in a private family file (Chapter 9). Kitchen notebook stays practical and stranger-readable in title only.

What “done enough” — narrative examples

A seven-year-old (hypothetical) reads 9/10 *sh* words, spells 4/5, gives gist on a short page, explains a digraph miss, and still has shaky *th*. Done enough to advance *sh* into review-not-daily-new; not done enough to ignore *th*. Hold and advance can both be true.

A nine-year-old (hypothetical) has clean Accuracy Passes, calm self-timing improving, morph spellings 2/3, and weak explain paragraphs. Done enough on connected accuracy for Bridge trials; writing still at WR-3 scaffolds. Skill strands promote separately.

Percentiles $\neq$ identity — teach the child the sentence

Optional script for 8–10: “Schools sometimes use numbers to compare large groups. Those numbers can help adults plan. They are not your name. Your name is you. Our kitchen cares what you can show two ways and what we’ll practice next.”

Done-enough poster (full)

- ☐ Short set accurate
- ☐ Two ways shown
- ☐ Holds after a night
- ☐ Error explained (weekly)
- ☐ Next move written
- ☐ Review stack updated
- ☐ No rank chart vs sibling
- ☐ No AR points as mastery
- ☐ Teaching continues
- ☐ Title: Reading / Language Arts / English

Closing expanded

Assessment is love with a pencil. It refuses both neglect and humiliation. It keeps Structured Literacy diagnostic — the fourth pillar beside explicit, systematic, and cumulative. Ask what they can show two ways. Ask what still needs practice.

Wait. Record. Reteach. Progress without turning a child into a percentile. That is Chapter 8 for English for Young Thinkers with Dyslexia.

Object deep-dive — letter–sound inventory scheduling

New graphemes enter the inventory the week they are taught. Mastered graphemes move to spaced review (every other Friday). Shaky graphemes appear in the daily cumulative review deck. Missing graphemes become the next Teach-One candidates (Chapter 3). Digraphs and vowel teams count as units once taught — do not forever test *s* and *h* separately if *sh* is the taught link, except when diagnosing digraph-split errors.

For 8–10 repair without baby talk, call this “sound check for English spelling,” not “ABC quiz.” Same grid; respectful voice.

Object deep-dive — word reading lists that stay fair

Fair lists use taught patterns only for the “mastery” claim. Mix in a few known heart words to keep morale, but do not let heart words hide weak decoding. Separate columns if needed: decodable set vs heart set. Nonsense stays diagnostic. If you only ever test the same five words, memory masquerades as decoding — rotate isomorphic items.

Object deep-dive — dictation twin to reading

Whatever they read in the word-reading object should be eligible for spelling within a day or two. Showable two ways fails open when reading and spelling never meet. Sentence dictation with focus blanks ties Chapter 4 and 7 into the assessment chapter without demanding a full essay under “test” conditions.

Object deep-dive — oral sample text selection

Choose controlled text matching the week’s pattern $\geq$ mostly. Avoid cold chapter books. Avoid leveled text as alphabetics proof. Keep a folder of reusable paragraphs labelled by pattern (*sh-A*, *sh-B*, *silent-e-1*). Reusing the same paragraph next week enables self-to-self smoothness notes.

Exit tickets — how to avoid turning every day into Friday

Daily exit tickets are 2–4 minutes and 2–4 items. They are not full inventories. If a daily ticket fails, note it; do not immediately run all four kitchen objects unless the child is eager. Save depth for the sweep. Intensity includes knowing when enough data is enough for tonight.

Diagnostic wrongs — teaching the child to talk about errors

Sentence frames:

- “I used the wrong sound for ____.”
- “I dropped the ending sound.”
- “I looked at the picture instead of the letters.”
- “I forgot the *e* that makes the vowel say its name.”
- “I skipped the ending *-ing*.”
- “I could read it but I didn’t know what it meant.”
- “I knew the story talk but my pencil froze.”

Practice frames on easy misses first so Friday isn’t the first time they speak error language.

Progress without shame — design details

Use pencil, not red pen, if red carries trauma. Let the child mark Auto/Shaky/Miss sometimes. Keep charts in a notebook, not on a public wall, unless the child requests a private fridge corner. Celebrate strategy use (“You covered the picture”) as much as raw scores. If a week regresses after illness, name it as rust, not failure — rebuild review.

Mixed-age siblings on assessment day

Stagger sweeps so neither watches the other's misses as entertainment. Shared celebration can be "we both showed two ways," not numbers. Same dual-lane philosophy as teaching days.

Formal evaluation — what kitchen data helps (without DIY diagnosing)

Dated samples of word reading, dictation, oral reading, and writing; notes on intensity and duration of systematic teaching; error patterns; family history notes kept private. Bring organized facts; do not bring a chatbot printout claiming a diagnosis. Qualified professionals integrate measures you cannot ethically freestyle from a manual.

Accommodations vs intervention — check clarity

If a child uses TTS for a content quiz at school, that access result is not your kitchen oral decoding sample. Log them in different columns mentally: access success vs decoding skill. Both matter. They are not the same check.

AI tool paragraph revisited

Parent-side list generation: yes, after you know the pattern. Photo of today's assessment for the model to score: no. Asking the model whether scores "prove dyslexia": no. Asking the model to rewrite Chapter 8's grids neatly: yes. Bastani OFF-AGE caution still applies to unguarded practice windows — mechanism only.¹⁰⁷

Full done-enough storyboard

Monday exit: decode 3 / spell 2 on *sh* — 5/5.

Wednesday oral crumb: gist Y, 1 error.

Friday: inventory *sh* auto; dictation 4/5; diagnostic explained; two ways on *ship*; holds from Wednesday's words still readable.

¹⁰⁷Bastani et al., *PNAS* 2025 — OFF-AGE for literacy; mechanism only.

Decision: *sh* moves to review deck; introduce *th* carefully next week.

Record line: “2026-09-12 Reading — *sh* done-enough for now; *th* next.”

Student challenge — make a mini codebook

Draw nine boxes for the error codes you actually use. Put a tiny picture clue in each (eye for guess-picture; puzzle piece for digraph; etc.). Use it Friday. Ownership lowers dread.

If parents disagree on “how testing should feel”

One adult may remember drill sergeant checks; another may fear any check. Agree on Chapter 8 rules: short, kind, useful, two ways, no percentile identity, teach next. Write the agreement in the notebook cover.

Bridge to Chapter 9 and 10

Chapter 9 shows how samples live in a dated file and how evaluation notes stay private. Chapter 10 lists materials (tiles, cards, controlled pages, error log, headphones) and program fit without crowns. This chapter taught you what to put on the page when you check.

Final locked-opening reprise

End many sits with a whisper of the question even when you are not running a formal object: What can you show me two ways today — and what still needs practice? The child who can answer becomes a partner in diagnostic teaching. The adult who asks without ranking becomes a coach worth trusting. That partnership is the assessment culture this book wants in English for Young Thinkers with Dyslexia — ages 5–10, skill first, dignity intact.

Illustration note

Still-life: dated notebook open to a letter–sound grid, pencil tally on a controlled page, sticky codebook, progress chart with self-to-self arrows only, timer in a drawer not on the cold page — no child portraits, no brand logos, no percentile report screenshots as identity art.

One-week parent checklist (copy)

- ☐ Mon exit ticket logged
- ☐ Tue cumulative review includes yesterday's misses
- ☐ Wed oral or dictation crumb
- ☐ Thu two-ways ticket
- ☐ Fri sweep (object + diagnostic wrong + done-enough + next move)
- ☐ Error log updated
- ☐ No sibling rank posted
- ☐ Teaching continues next week

Last coaching paragraph

You now own a dedicated assessment chapter because ample short checks were part of the promise of this manual. Use them. Do not worship them. Let them change Tuesday's tiles and Thursday's dictation. Let them refuse wait-to-fail and refuse percentile-as-name. Ask what the child can show two ways — and what still needs practice — then wait long enough for an honest answer. Record it under Reading, Language Arts, or English. Teach again tomorrow.

Appendix-style quick grids (ready to copy)

Daily exit ticket log

Date	Focus	Items (2–4)	Score/note	Reteach?

Weekly decision line

Week of _____ Pattern focus _____
 Hold: _____ Advance to review: _____ New next: _____
 Child voice — still needs practice: _____
 Adult next move: _____

These two grids, plus the four object templates earlier, are enough paper for most months. If grids overwhelm, use only the weekly decision line and a sticky error log. Sustainable diagnostic teaching beats abandoned perfectionism. Keep checks short, kind, and useful — and always ask what they can show two ways today, and what still needs practice tomorrow.

Percentiles are not identity. Points are not comprehension. Kitchen checks are how you teach smarter tomorrow — letter–sound, word reading, spelling dictation, oral sample, exit tickets, diagnostic wrongs, and done-enough that holds after a night. That is enough assessment culture for ages 5–10 with dyslexia intensity.

Show two ways. Name what still needs practice. Record it under Reading / Language Arts / English. Then teach again — short, sharp, frequent, without shame.

Ask the locked opening. Wait. Write the next move. Begin again Monday.

Dignity intact. Skill first. Data in service of teaching only. That is the Chapter 8 promise. Keep going kindly.

Chapter 9 — Records and next steps



Figure 11: A dated notebook titled Reading / Language Arts / English — still-life, no people, no logos.

This chapter is about the file you keep. It is not a new teaching skill. The English hour still teaches the code. Chapter 8 still runs the short skill checks. Here you

learn what to name the work so a stranger can read it, what to date and keep, what stays private, and how evaluation and plan language sit beside teaching without freezing it.

Many readers of this book are not full-time homeschoolers. You may be reinforcing after school while an IEP or 504 conversation runs. You may tutor on weekends. You may teach the whole day at the kitchen table. The same record habits fit: ordinary subject titles, dated samples, an error log that drives tomorrow's review, and a private folder for evaluation papers.

Titles a stranger can read

Print these and only these as the subject name, if a name is needed at all:

- **Reading**
- **Language Arts**
- **English**

That is the whole list for this subject. Use the noun your state or school already prefers. Do not invent a fancy credit line.

Never title the work with a curriculum brand. Never put a franchise level on the transcript or portfolio header. Never title it **Young Thinkers Dyslexia I**¹⁰⁸. The disability is not the course name. This book's title is not a credit line. Brands change. Skills transfer. A stranger years from now needs to know the child worked on reading, spelling, and writing — not which box sat on the shelf.

Wrong (illustration only): “Young Thinkers Dyslexia I — Level 1 Honors.”¹⁰⁹

Right (illustration only): “Language Arts,” with a materials note underneath if someone asks: structured literacy materials; decodable readers; spelling dictation; read-alouds and audio for content subjects.

Optional skill notes belong in a portfolio narrative or lesson log — “digraphs; closed syllables; short paragraph with purpose” — not in the credit title.

¹⁰⁸Transcript lock: Reading / Language Arts / English — never brand, never **Young Thinkers Dyslexia I**.

¹⁰⁹Illustration of refused branding — skills transfer; brands change; disability is not the course name.

The dated notebook

Keep one simple notebook or binder section for Reading / Language Arts / English. Date every entry. You do not need fancy software. A composition book and a sticky stack are enough.

Use a header like this (composite illustration — not a required form):

Reading / Language Arts

Date: _____

Band focus: 5-7 / 8-10 (skill, not birthday)

Skill: _____

Activities run: _____

Exit ticket: _____

Error log: _____

Oral reading sample: _____

Dictation: _____

Next review stack: _____

What goes inside across a week or a month:

- Letter-sound inventory dates (which links are automatic, which are sticky).
- Taught-pattern word reading lists and a few nonsense probes when you use them.
- Spelling dictation pages — the child stretches, writes, reads back.
- Oral reading notes on controlled text: accuracy, one gist question, fluency notes only after accuracy.
- Short writing samples: labels → sentences → short paragraphs by skill.
- A running list of decodable or controlled readers finished.
- Accommodations you actually used that day (audio for a science chapter; extra time on a quiz; adult scribe for ideas while the child fills focus spellings).

Chapter 8's four kitchen objects are the assessment crumbs that feed this notebook: letter-sound inventory, word reading, spelling dictation, oral reading sample. You do not need a new battery here. You need dates beside the checks you already know how to run.

Done-enough for records is the same kindness as done-enough for teaching: accurate on a short set, showable two ways when possible, holds after a night. A dated page that shows growth is useful. A national percentile taped to the fridge as identity is not.

The error log

Wrong answers are information for tomorrow's review. Keep a thin error log — sticky notes, a page in the notebook, a small card in the binder.

For each sticky miss, write three things:

1. The word or pattern (or a short example).
2. The code for what happened: sound, position, digraph, first-letter grab, picture guess, silent-e, vowel team, heart part, rushed blend, shame flood.
3. The next move: reteach that link; add it to cumulative review; cover the picture; slow the sit; shrink the new chunk.

You do not need courtroom language. You need a Tuesday stack. When yesterday's "got it" is gone this morning, the error log tells you what to rebuild — not that the child is lazy.

Screening tools and school risk flags are not the same object as this kitchen log. A screener can say "at risk." Your log says "/sh/ is not automatic yet." Both matter. Neither replaces the other. Screening is not diagnosis. A publisher placement test is a vendor tool for starting skill — not an eligibility determination and not a national cut score.

Private file vs stranger-readable file

Keep two piles.

Stranger-readable (or portfolio-facing): Reading / Language Arts / English title; dated samples; attendance or instructional log if your state asks; test tickets if required; a calm materials list.

Private family file: evaluation reports; IEP or 504 documents; prior written notices; private clinician letters; detailed diagnostic scores; anything with medical or disability detail you would not hand a casual stranger.

Share minimally. You may bring selected samples to an evaluation meeting. You do not owe every sticky note to every adult. Plan documents live under privacy rules when a school is involved. Homeschool portfolios still benefit from the same split: ordinary titles outside, sensitive papers inside.

Optional vendor placement results belong in the private file or in a lesson-planning pocket — not as the credit title on the face of the record.

Teaching while papers move

Teach now on risk. Seek evaluation when documentation, differential sorting, or school services matter. Do not freeze Structured Literacy until a report arrives. Weeks of dated code practice still count when a written evaluation later clarifies the profile.

Seek evaluation when letter–sound learning, accurate or fluent word reading, or spelling stays hard despite instruction that works for peers; when family history or early speech/language delay raises concern; when a screening risk does not resolve after targeted help across weeks, not years; when the family needs documentation for an IEP, a 504 plan, or private-school accommodations; when co-occurring concerns need sorting.¹¹⁰ Labels and plans open doors informal worry does not. Teaching on suspicion is still teaching.

A kitchen parent may use short skill checks and vendor placement as starting points. A comprehensive evaluation is a different object: history, phonological and word-reading measures, spelling, fluency and comprehension as appropriate, a written report, and an intervention starting point at current skill — not birthday. Initial diagnosis is often tentative for young children. That caution is a feature of the early years, not a reason to wait years.

This book does not diagnose. It does not invent a clinical label for a fictional child. It points you toward qualified professionals when you need a report, then returns you to the English hour.

IDEA and Section 504 — high-level map

Not legal advice. This section summarizes publicly available U.S. Department of Education / OCR / OSEP guidance patterns for parent orientation.¹¹¹ It is not a substitute for the IDEA statute and regulations, Section 504 regulations, state rules, or advice from a qualified

¹¹⁰IDA Testing and Evaluation / 2025 Explanation: seek evaluation when unexpected persistence after real instruction; screening $\neq$ diagnosis; teach now. **Not legal advice.**

¹¹¹High-level IDEA/504 orientation only — **not legal advice.** Procedures vary by State and LEA.

attorney or trained advocate. Procedures and timelines vary by State and LEA. Read your own notices. Keep copies.

Two federal frames often appear in elementary conversations.

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; FAPE through an IEP.

Section 504 is a disability civil-rights law for recipients of federal funds (including public schools). Its 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.

Child find reaches homeschooled children. OSEP guidance (QA 21-05) states that child find obligations apply to children who are home schooled.¹¹² Generally, the LEA where the parents reside is responsible for child find activities, including initial evaluations, for homeschooled children. Leaving a public classroom does not erase that map. Implementation quality still varies. **Not legal advice.**

MTSS / RTI cannot delay or deny an initial evaluation.¹¹³ Parents may request evaluation at any time regardless of tier. Waiting through helpful intervention is fine. Using the wait to deny evaluation is not, under this guidance pattern. That matters acutely in kindergarten through early grades, where families are sometimes told to "wait until third grade." **Not legal advice.**

Put requests in writing. Date them. Keep a copy. Describe observed letter-sound, reading, spelling, or writing difficulties. Attach screening or private reports if you have them. Ask for procedural safeguards. If the child is homeschooled, say so clearly.

Reading is a major life activity. Under OCR's 2016 parent and educator resource guide, major life activities include reading.¹¹⁴ Mitigating measures (except ordinary eyeglasses) are not considered when deciding whether an impairment substantially limits. OCR's dyslexia example is load-bearing for bright elementary

¹¹²OSERS/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.**

¹¹³OSEP QA 21-05: MTSS/RTI must not delay or deny an initial evaluation. **Not legal advice.**

¹¹⁴U.S. Department of Education, OCR, *Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504* (December 2016): reading as major life activity; mitigating measures (except ordinary eyeglasses) disregarded. **Not legal advice.**

students: good grades earned through extreme effort do not bar a finding that reading is substantially limited.¹¹⁵ “Her report card is fine” is not a refusal script by itself. **Not legal advice.**

Eligibility is not identical to a clinical label. A child can have dyslexia risk and hold a 504 plan without an IEP. A child can hold an IEP that never uses the word “dyslexia” while still serving reading. A child can be denied IDEA eligibility and still qualify under 504 if an impairment substantially limits a major life activity. Local practice varies. **Not legal advice.**

This book will not draft state-specific due-process strategy. It will not promise every LEA will evaluate on your preferred calendar. It will not dump later high-stakes testing paperwork into an elementary chapter. Point yourself to Parent Centers, OCR resources, and IDA fact sheets when you need next procedural steps — then return to teaching.¹¹⁶

Five-state elementary grain (pattern examples)

These five states illustrate ordinary subject language. They are pattern examples, not counsel for your address. Read your own statute and agency page. None of these patterns requires a dyslexia brand name. None requires **Young Thinkers Dyslexia I**.

Texas. Under the *Leeper* / TEA Alternative Schooling pattern, home schools operate as private schools when conducted in a bona fide manner with a written curriculum consisting of **reading, spelling, grammar**, mathematics, and good citizenship. Reading, spelling, and grammar are named. Map your structured literacy work to those nouns — not to a brand on a transcript line.

North Carolina. DNPE requirements include notice of intent and an annual nationally standardized test that includes **English grammar, reading, spelling**, and mathematics. DNPE does not prescribe a curriculum brand. Test objects are ordinary English nouns.

Pennsylvania. Statute requires that elementary education include English

¹¹⁵OCR 2016 Section 504 Resource Guide — dyslexia/good-grades example: extreme effort and good grades do not bar a finding that reading is substantially limited. **Not legal advice.**

¹¹⁶IDA fact sheets (testing/evaluation; accommodations); OCR 2016 Section 504 Resource Guide; OSEP QA 21-05 — next procedural stops, then return to teaching. **Not legal advice.**

(**spelling, reading, writing**), among other subjects. Portfolio review includes reading/language arts testing in grades **3, 5, and 8**. For ages 5–10, grades 3 and 5 are the near portfolio objects. English (spelling, reading, writing) is the statutory phrase.

Virginia. The parent provides a description of the curriculum limited to a **list of subjects**. Write **Language Arts, Reading, or English** — not a franchise name. Evidence-of-progress options are separate from publisher placement PDFs.

New York. For grades 1–6, required subjects include **reading, spelling, writing, English language**, among others. IHIP materials lists and quarterly reports still use ordinary nouns. Elementary grain through age 10 maps cleanly here.

Across these patterns, accommodations and interventions live in instructional notes and, when a school is involved, in IEP or 504 documents handled privately. Brand names belong on receipts and lesson plans.

If you are not in these five states, the habit still holds: use stranger-readable English subject language; keep dated samples; store plan papers privately; teach the code while paperwork moves.

Life of the habit — the file you keep

The life of the habit is not a ninth teaching chapter. It is the rhythm already in the English hour and in Chapters 7 and 8, plus this file:

- Cumulative review next Tuesday from the error log.
- Mix last week's pattern into this week's exit ticket.
- Show two ways when you can (read and spell; retell and point).
- Check that a skill holds after a night before you call it done-enough.
- Date the notebook. Protect the private folder.
- Keep the title ordinary so the next adult can help.

A diploma is not the promise of this book. A percentile is not the child's name. A brand level is not the credit. Reading / Language Arts / English — with short, sharp, frequent practice and a calm paper trail — is enough structure for a stranger to respect and for a child to keep dignity.

You do not need to be a reading specialist to keep these records. You need dates, ordinary titles, assessment crumbs from Chapter 8, and the courage to teach tomorrow.

row while the longer papers find their place.

A week that feeds the file

You do not need a high-stakes Friday. You need a light spine that matches Chapter 8.

Across ordinary days: date the skill you taught; jot one error code when a miss repeats; keep the controlled page or dictation sheet if it shows something useful.

On a calm check day (often Friday, sometimes midweek if Friday is chaos):

1. Sweep letter-sounds that were new or sticky this week.
2. Read eight to ten taught words and two nonsense probes on the same patterns.
3. Dictate four or five words plus one short focus sentence.
4. Hear a forty-to-sixty-word controlled oral reading sample: tally meaning-harming errors; ask one gist question.
5. Ask the child to explain one miss. Classify it. Note the reteach. Stop.
6. Celebrate one automatic win out loud.

That stack becomes notebook crumbs. It is teaching hygiene first. Dated, it also becomes a record a future teacher or evaluator can skim without needing your whole sticky drawer.

For band **5–7**, keep checks short and cheerful. For band **8–10**, keep materials respectful even when the skill is early — mature wording, less babyish art — and still place by skill, not birthday. An eight-year-old rebuilding CVC accuracy belongs in that notebook section with dignity.

Dual-path and after-school families

If school already runs an intervention block in the morning, do not invent a conflicting guessing habit at the kitchen table in the afternoon. Prefer the same code objects: cumulative review, encoding of today's patterns, controlled rereads. Ask the interventionist what patterns are current. Your home notebook can still say Reading / Language Arts even when the school suite has a brand name on its binder.

If you are gathering samples for a meeting, choose a small set: one recent letter-sound inventory, one dictation page, one oral reading note, one short writing sample, and a one-page timeline of what you have already tried. Bring the private evaluation folder separately if asked. Do not paste standard scores on the fridge as identity.

Homeschool families in the national “instruction at home” pond are only one audience. NCES figures about how many children are homeschooled describe a **setting**, not dyslexia prevalence.¹¹⁷ Do not mash those numbers into a clinical percent. Your records habits still help whether you are in that pond or reinforcing beside a public or private school day.

What not to put on the face of the record

Do not put medical conclusions you are not qualified to write.

Do not put “lazy,” “behind forever,” or a single screener color as the child’s name.

Do not put a brand level as the course title.

Do not put Young Thinkers Dyslexia I anywhere a stranger will read it as credit.

Do not treat a twenty-minute online quiz as diagnosis documentation.

Do not replace tomorrow’s sit with binder worship. The file serves the teaching. The teaching does not serve the file.

When the next adult asks what you did

Answer in ordinary language:

“We taught Reading / Language Arts with structured literacy intensity — phonemic awareness with letters, systematic phonics and spelling, controlled connected reading after accuracy, vocabulary and light morphology, comprehension on accessible text including by ear when needed, and early writing with adaptations. Here are dated samples. Here is what still needs practice. Here is the private evaluation folder if you need it.”

¹¹⁷ Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113: homeschool pond (~3.4% / ~1.765M) is a setting — not dyslexia prevalence.

That sentence is enough. It does not require a franchise crown. It does not require a percentile identity. It does require the notebook you kept, the error log you used, and the dignity you protected while the child learned the code.

Chapter 10 — Resources by fit



Figure 12: Library card, headphones, and a blank fit card — still-life, no people, no logos.

This chapter is a fit map, not a ranking. No program is crowned. No sticker-price table appears here. Vendor dose and age claims are labelled as vendor information.

When a What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) rating exists, it is copied honestly and labelled as a **school/vendor** review object — not as a kitchen promise.¹¹⁸

Use three questions before you buy or borrow anything:

1. **Who teaches?** Parent solo after training, hired tutor, classroom teacher, or certified practitioner?
2. **What dose can this family sustain?** Minutes per day × days per week × months — not a Sunday marathon.
3. **Where is the child’s skill?** Letter–sound and CVC territory, digraphs and silent-e, or early syllable work? Place by skill, not birthday.

Then ask whether school already runs a suite, and whether you need **access** tools (audio, TTS) beside — never instead of — Structured Literacy instruction.

First path: library \$0 and free access

Start here for **content access** while you build or choose an instructional plan.

Public library

A library card is the first tool. Libraries are a major source of books and curriculum materials for families who instruct at home, and library visits are common in that setting compared with all K–12 students in recent NCES snapshots.¹¹⁹ Exact percents differ by survey year and question — use them as context that libraries matter, not as a dyslexia cure rate.

What the library is good for:

- Picture books and trade titles for language and knowledge.
- Audiobooks and ebooks through Libby / OverDrive in participating systems (library card; no print-disability certification required).
- Quiet space, story hours, and craft questions that turn into out-of-home try-its.
- Occasional decodable or early-reader shelves — variable by branch.

¹¹⁸WWC honesty rule — copy domain ratings; label school/vendor; “no studies meet” ≠ banned approach, bans crowning as WWC-proven. Access date 6 September 2026.

¹¹⁹Sempeles and Cui, NCES 2024-113 (and related PFI/homeschool tables): library use patterns for homeschooled vs full K–12 — access path, not a curriculum or cure rate.

What many branches do **not** hold in depth: a full closet of controlled, pattern-matched decodable series aligned to your week's phonics. You may still need program readers, teacher-made controlled pages, or borrowed curriculum-library sets for the decoding diet. Use the public library for language and knowledge; protect a separate code sit at home.

A read-aloud hour is English growth. It is not a substitute for systematic decoding and encoding when those are the lesson.

Bookshare

Bookshare provides accessible ebooks for people with **print disabilities**, including dyslexia and related reading disabilities.¹²⁰ It operates under a copyright path for print disability, **not** under IDEA — so an **IEP or 504 plan is not required** for membership. A qualified professional certifies eligibility (educators, medical or mental-health providers, librarians, and others on Bookshare's certifier lists). Reciprocal paths with related library services may be accepted.

Free for qualifying U.S. students is the lock this book uses. Adult non-student fee paths exist; exact dollars are omitted here. Elementary students can qualify without waiting for an IEP meeting calendar — certification is still required.

Bookshare is **access**. It opens content doors. It does not finish today's sounding-out page when decoding is the lesson.

Device-native text-to-speech and dictation

Modern phones, tablets, and computers include text-to-speech and speech-to-text at no extra specialty cost. Browser reader views and magnification are presentation supports. Practice them in ordinary work so they are usable when a school plan names them later.

Same honesty as Chapter 8 and the English hour: TTS and dictation are accommodations for content and idea capture. They are not Structured Literacy. They must not finish the decode or encode target that is today's lesson.

¹²⁰Bookshare qualify page (opened 6 September 2026): print disability including dyslexia; Chafee path; IEP/504 not required; free for qualifying U.S. students. Access $\neq$ substitute for decoding instruction.

Learning Ally and National Library Service (pointers)

Human-narrated audio collections aimed at print-disabled readers (including school-license paths) and Library of Congress National Library Service materials for blind and print-disabled residents are parallel **access** lanes. Confirm current eligibility and any fees on the provider's page. This book does not list dollar amounts. Treat them like Bookshare: access beside instruction, not instead of it.

What \$0 cannot replace

A free audiobook stack without phonemic awareness with letters, systematic phonics, spelling, and guided decoding leaves the word-level bottleneck unaddressed. Instructional materials, tutoring, and evaluations often have costs. Scholarships, used markets, and district child-find services exist. This book does not invent a national free Tier-3 therapist for every five-year-old. Start library + Bookshare eligibility + OS TTS for access; choose a fit-based instructional path for learning to read.

How to read a fit card

Each card below uses the same fields:

- **Who teaches**
- **Dose** (vendor claim labelled)
- **Age / skill stage fit**
- **Parent load**
- **WWC status** (if any; school-labelled)
- **Access notes**
- **Not a crown** — one plain limit sentence

“No studies meet” WWC standards means the Clearinghouse could not validate eligible evidence under that protocol at that time. It does **not** mean parents must not use the approach. “Potentially positive / small extent” is a precise phrase — do not upgrade it to “proven to fix dyslexia.”

Placement tests from vendors place by skill. They are not IES-certified RCTs and not IDEA eligibility determinations. Start where skill says, even if birthday says otherwise.

Early kitchen options

All About Reading / All About Spelling (early)

Who teaches: Parent-taught, scripted, multisensory materials.

Dose: Vendor often describes short daily lessons (commonly framed around roughly twenty minutes a day). **Vendor claim.** Watch under-dose for severe profiles — short and sharp is kindness; chronically too thin is not.

Age / skill stage fit: Pre-reading and early levels map naturally to band 5–7. Level numbers do not correspond to grade levels (vendor placement language). Most spelling students start at the beginning of the building-block sequence regardless of age. Separate reading and spelling tracks let you match encoding intensity when spelling is the harder signal.

Parent load: Moderate scripting; materials prep; need to protect cumulative review and encoding frequency beyond a skim.

WWC status: No WWC intervention report for these programs opened for this book’s evidence base. Do not invent one.

Access notes: Pair with library/Bookshare for content subjects. Keep the decode page unaided when decoding is the lesson.

Not a crown: A friendly twenty-minute script is a fit candidate for many early kitchens. It is not proof that every child with dyslexia risk will thrive on that minute count alone.

Barton Reading & Spelling System (early)

Who teaches: Parent or tutor after vendor tutor screening; one-to-one tutoring system.

Dose: Vendor recommends at least about **two hours** one-on-one per week, year-round, with sessions not longer than about an hour. **Vendor claim.** Not a five-minute bedtime add-on.

Age / skill stage fit: Students may begin as young as age 5 (vendor). Every student starts at **Level 1**; levels are not based on grade or age. Formal diagnosis is **not required** to begin if dyslexia is suspected — that is a **vendor access rule**, not a

medical standard and not a substitute for evaluation when documentation is the goal.

Parent load: High upfront training; strong scripted support once running; sustained weekly hours.

WWC status: WWC Students with Learning Disabilities, July 2010 — **no studies meet** evidence standards; unable to draw conclusions about effectiveness for students with learning disabilities under that protocol. Homeschool testimonials on marketing pages are testimonials, not RCTs.¹²¹

Access notes: Protect content knowledge with audio while intensive tutoring runs.

Not a crown: Strong fit candidate when a family can be the tutor and protect hours for a child as young as five. Not automatically “#1,” and not WWC-proven for LD under the 2010 protocol.

Logic of English Foundations (early lock)

Who teaches: Parent or teacher with curriculum materials; homeschool/at-home is a named vendor path.

Dose: Vendor frames Foundations as typically spanning multiple years across early levels with a playful, reading-forward emphasis. Exact daily minutes vary by lesson — follow the materials you have; do not invent a national minute law.

Age / skill stage fit: **Foundations** designed for ages roughly 4–7 (vendor). **Essentials** designed for ages roughly 8 to adult (vendor). For this book’s early band, lead with Foundations. For older-in-band (8–10) with weak code, Essentials is often the better fit conversation than repeating early-childhood game frames — skill first, birthday second. Vendor notes Foundations is not a strict prerequisite for Essentials.

Parent load: Phonogram-heavy teaching; planning across levels; attention to encoding as well as reading.

WWC status: No WWC intervention report opened for this book’s evidence base.

Access notes: Same two-clock rule — code sit plus content access.

¹²¹WWC, *Barton Reading & Spelling System*, Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): **no studies meet**. Testimonials ≠ RCTs.

Not a crown: Foundations is the early-band lock for this title’s age window. It is not a franchise victory over every other fit card.

Kitchen OG-informed approaches (labelled as approach)

Who teaches: Parent or tutor using Orton–Gillingham–informed manuals, recipes, or Structured Literacy routines (many branded wrappers exist in the community).

Dose: Whatever the manual and the child’s severity require — short, sharp, frequent; more explicit and supportive than a typical skim. School research often discusses intervention sits on the order of roughly twenty to forty-five minutes as a design cue, not a parent statute.

Age / skill stage fit: Any early skill stage, if the sequence is explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic, with encoding beside decoding and controlled text for accuracy.

Parent load: Varies widely. Some manuals are highly scripted; others assume training. Multisensory (say it, see it, write it, build it) is a rationale — not a sand-tray franchise crown.

WWC status: WWC unbranded Orton-Gillingham–based strategies for students with learning disabilities (July 2010) — **no studies meet** standards; WWC unable to draw conclusions about effectiveness or ineffectiveness for that protocol.¹²² That bans crowning “WWC proves OG,” not the act of teaching OG-informed Structured Literacy principles.

Access notes: Same as above.

Not a crown: Name principles. Label vendors. Do not pretend one kitchen recipe is the national cure.

Spalding and similar classical structured-literacy communities appear for some households; WWC Beginning Reading reporting for Spalding has included **no studies meet** under named protocols.¹²³ Mention lightly if it is already your com-

¹²²WWC, Orton-Gillingham–based Strategies (Unbranded), Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): **no studies meet** — bans crowning “WWC proves OG,” not teaching OG-informed Structured Literacy principles.

¹²³WWC, Spalding Method (Beginning Reading, October 2012): **no studies meet** under named protocols.

munity’s language. This book does not list kit dollar amounts.

Early school-suite and intensive edge

SPIRE (early school-suite / named homeschool audience)

Who teaches: Often a teacher or interventionist in a school Tier 2/3 block; vendor also names specialized audiences including homeschool — confirm current order paths before you assume a kitchen kit.

Dose: School schedules vary. Follow the suite’s lesson design when the school runs it with fidelity.

Age / skill stage fit: Vendor positions PreK–8+ multisensory intervention for beginning and striving readers, including students with dyslexia (**vendor language**). Early grades and Sounds Sensible / foundations pieces in the suite matter for band 5–7.

Parent load: If school runs SPIRE in the morning, coordinate afternoon kitchen work so you do not teach a conflicting scope order the same day.

WWC status: No WWC intervention report for SPIRE opened for this book’s evidence base.¹²⁴

Access notes: Ask what patterns are current; match home review to those objects.

Not a crown: Fit candidate when the school already invested in the suite. Not a reason to fight a working block — and not automatic proof of kitchen superiority.

Wilson Reading System (edge for older-in-band)

Who teaches: Ideally a WRS Level I Certified Wilson Dyslexia Practitioner or Level II Certified Wilson Dyslexia Therapist (vendor). Small group (ideally up to about four) or one-to-one.

Dose: Tier 3 intensity by design — not a casual parent flip-through.

Age / skill stage fit: Vendor targets Grades 2–12 and adults with word-level deficits. Use as an **edge pointer** for band 8–10 (and late 7+) when certified in-

¹²⁴SPIRE / EPS Learning: no WWC intervention report opened this stream — do not invent one. Vendor overview opened 6 September 2026.

structor access exists — **not** the default kitchen pick for a five-year-old. Related early Wilson products (for example Foundations) are **different** programs; do not conflate them with the WRS object reviewed below.

Parent load: High if you seek certification or hire a certified instructor; coordination with school if the suite is already running.

WWC status: WWC Beginning Reading (2 July 2007): one study of a **modified** WRS met standards — **potentially positive** effects on alphabetics; **no discernible** effects on fluency and comprehension; extent of evidence **small**.¹²⁵ WWC Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): **no studies meet**. Copy those phrases; do not inflate them.¹²⁶

Access notes: Audio for content while intensive word-level work runs.

Not a crown: Edge tool when certification and age/skill fit. Not “proven to fix dyslexia” and not age-5 default.

Take Flight (clinic / therapist pointer)

Who teaches: Designed for use by dyslexia therapists (developer/article framing).

Dose: Small group of roughly two to six; minimum patterns such as about forty-five minutes a day, five days a week, or sixty minutes a day, four days a week, across a long direct-instruction sequence (developer/article figures — label as design dose, not a kitchen shopping-cart promise).

Age / skill stage fit: Ages **7 and older** with developmental dyslexia in the program’s framing. Edge for ages 7–10 when a therapist pipeline exists. Parents cannot casually self-certify from a cart alone.

Parent load: Logistics of clinic or school therapist access; transport; coordination with home review.

WWC status: No WWC intervention report found for Take Flight in this book’s opened evidence base.¹²⁷

¹²⁵WWC, *Wilson Reading System* (Beginning Reading, 2 July 2007): **potentially positive** alphabetics; **no discernible** fluency/comprehension; extent **small**; modified study. Do not upgrade to “proven to fix dyslexia.”

¹²⁶WWC, *Wilson Reading System*, Students with Learning Disabilities (July 2010): **no studies meet**.

¹²⁷Take Flight (Luke Waites Center / Scottish Rite for Children): no WWC intervention report

Access notes: Same two-clock honesty.

Not a crown: Clinic intensity pointer. Not the default kitchen franchise for band 5–7.

School-labelled WWC honesty (keep these as school objects)

These products inform **school conversations**. They are not this book’s franchise list.

- **Sound Partners:** positive ratings on alphabetics, fluency, and comprehension in WWC beginning-reading reporting — **school tutoring design**.¹²⁸ Directional honesty that explicit phonics tutoring can move alphabetics; still school-labelled.
- **Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI):** positive general reading achievement; potentially positive fluency; **no discernible alphabetics**¹²⁹ (WWC September 2017 reporting). Honesty card when a school offers only leveled literacy pull-out for a child with word-level disability — do not tell parents WWC “proves LLI fixes dyslexia alphabetics.”
- Other whole-school or pull-out beginning-reading programs appear in WWC tables with their own ratings. Keep them school-labelled. Do not import them as kitchen crowns.

Unbranded OG / Barton / Wilson-on-LD (July 2010): no studies meet under those LD protocols. Say it calmly. Teach principles anyway when they match Structured Literacy. Do not upgrade silence in the Clearinghouse into a sales pitch or a ban.

found this stream — cite developer research as developer research. Vendor/center materials opened 6 September 2026.

¹²⁸WWC Sound Partners Beginning Reading — positive alphabetics/fluency/comprehension; school tutoring design.

¹²⁹WWC LLI (September 2017): positive general reading; potentially positive fluency; **no discernible alphabetics** — do not tell parents WWC “proves LLI fixes dyslexia alphabetics.”

Choosing without ranking — early decision tree in prose

If the parent can train and sustain one-to-one hours of roughly two or more per week and wants a dyslexia-specific tutoring system for a child as young as five → Barton is a fit **candidate**.

If the parent wants scripted short daily lessons and a separate spelling track for early levels → All About Reading + All About Spelling is a fit **candidate** (watch dose).

If age is roughly four to seven for a phonogram-heavy playful curriculum → Logic of English Foundations is a fit **candidate**.

If age is eight to ten and code is still weak → Essentials (or another skill-honest intensive path) more often than repeating Foundations games; Barton if hours hold; Wilson WRS if a certified instructor is available; Take Flight if ages seven-plus therapist capacity exists.

If the school already runs SPIRE with fidelity → coordinate rather than stack a conflicting kitchen sequence the same afternoon.

If spelling misery leads → lean encoding intensity (dictation, spelling track) while decoding continues. If decoding is the bottleneck → word-level intervention plus audio for knowledge. If decoding looks adequate but comprehension stays weak → look at language, attention, and knowledge gaps with qualified help — it may not be classic dyslexia alone.

Never put “#1 program for dyslexia” in your kitchen. **Never** invent a 2026 price table from memory.

Stacking hazard

Running one systematic sequence at school and a conflicting sequence at home can confuse a six-year-old. Prefer:

- Same code object, complementary practice, or
- Clear division: school = intervention program; home = cumulative review + controlled rereads + encoding of the **same** patterns.

Ask what is current. Write it in the Chapter 9 notebook.

Activity materials list

You do not need a warehouse. You need a bag you can actually reach.

Code and PA

- Letter tiles or sticky-note letter tiles (lowercase set; digraph cards)
- Sound boxes (drawn squares on paper or a small whiteboard grid)
- Grapheme / digraph cards
- Small whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- Tracking strip or finger guide for left-to-right looking through the word
- Heart stickers or a red pencil for mapped irregular “heart” parts

Connected reading and fluency

- Controlled / decodable pages matched to taught patterns
- A folder for finished controlled readers
- Optional personal smooth chart (self-comparison only — no sibling races)
- Phrase-scoop sticky notes

Encoding, writing, talk

- Lined paper and pencil
- Purpose cards for writing (tell / explain / thank)
- Scribe notepad for ideas when spelling blocks thinking — child still fills focus spellings
- Morphology-light cards (*un-*, *re-*, *-s/-ed/-ing/-er*) for band 8–10 crumbs

Records and access

- Dated notebook titled **Reading / Language Arts** (or **English**)
- Error-log sticky stack
- Headphones beside a print book (access lane labelled — not a substitute for the decode sit)
- Library card; Bookshare eligibility path when print disability applies
- Device with OS text-to-speech / dictation practiced in ordinary work

Out-of-home try-it crumbs (ordinary, not a shopping list)

- Street signs and store labels as print

- Package grapheme hunts
- Recipe / menu shared reads
- Postcards
- Library craft questions

Safety stays ordinary: roads, aisle courtesy, no tasting unknown things, no public quiz of a cashier, no shaming the student in a store.

Try-before-you-commit (without a sales pitch)

Before you lock a paid path:

1. Run two weeks of kitchen Structured Literacy with the materials list above and Chapter 2–5 session shapes. Date the notebook. Watch whether short daily sits hold.
2. Use any free vendor placement or screening only as a **skill start** — not as diagnosis.
3. If school is in the picture, ask what intervention is already scheduled and whether home should mirror patterns or protect review only.
4. Price-shop only from current vendor pages when you are ready; this book leaves dollars off the page because list prices move.
5. Protect the access lane (library, Bookshare if eligible, OS TTS) on day one so knowledge does not freeze while you decide.

If the child melts, shorten the sit and shrink the new chunk. Intensity means clearer teaching and more useful reps — not tears as a badge.

Accommodations beside the program — not instead

Whatever fit card you choose, keep the two clocks from the English hour:

- **Intervention clock:** letter–sounds, phonics, spelling, supervised decoding of controlled text.
- **Content clock:** science, history, and rich stories by read-aloud or audio so knowledge grows.

Extra time helps when the child has been taught how to use it to apply strategies — it rarely fixes decoding by itself. Practice extended-time and audio conditions

in ordinary work before anyone names them on a school plan. Scribe or speech-to-text can capture ideas; the child still spells today's focus words. Chapter 9 keeps accommodations used as a dated note, not as the course title.

High-stakes secondary testing accommodations exist later with documentation. This early-years book points once toward that future paperwork and returns to elementary quizzes, portfolios, and classroom access. Do not dump a college-testing walkthrough into a kindergarten week.

Dual-path coordination checklist

When school and kitchen both touch reading:

- ☐ Same day's phonics patterns named out loud between adults when possible.
- ☐ Home = review + encoding + controlled reread of known patterns (or agreed complementary practice).
- ☐ No picture-guess habit introduced at home to "get through" homework.
- ☐ Audio allowed for content packets; decode page still taught separately.
- ☐ Portfolio / home notebook still titled Reading / Language Arts / English.
- ☐ Evaluation or 504/IEP papers stay in the private folder (Chapter 9).

If school offers only leveled literacy pull-out for a word-level struggler, remember LLI's WWC alphabetics honesty above. You may accept a school block *and* seek structured literacy intensity — local advocacy, not legal advice in this chapter. Fit, don't fight the child with two opposite theories of the printed word.

Materials setup — one afternoon

Lay out a single tote:

Front pocket: tiles, digraph stickies, tracking strip, red pencil or heart stickers. Middle: whiteboard, sound-box template, today's controlled page. Back: dated notebook, error-log stickies, headphones. Side: library card in a sleeve; Bookshare login note for the adult if eligible.

Label two folders: **Code sit** and **Content access**. That physical split teaches the same honesty as the two clocks. A chatbot does not live in the tote as the child's partner. Parent holds any AI account (English hour rules); the child attempts first.

Forward pointers (not chapters)

Adolescent morphology depth, high-school argument writing, and secondary testing documentation belong in later schooling — including the sister overview for grades 1–12 when you need that grain. Wilson WRS and Take Flight appear here only as edge/clinic pointers for older-in-band intensity. Typical-literacy overviews for ages 5–10 without dyslexia intensity are a different book; one pointer, then return to Structured Literacy for this title.

What this chapter refuses

It refuses ranked “best dyslexia curriculum” lists.

It refuses sticker-price tables that go stale.

It refuses “WWC proved our kitchen franchise.”

It refuses audiobooks-as-cure and extra-time-alone-as-remediation.

It refuses Wilson or Take Flight as the default age-five kitchen pick.

It refuses Young Thinkers Dyslexia I as a product or credit name.

It refuses to replace Chapter 9’s ordinary titles with brand levels.

Close

Fit first. Access first for content. Instruction first for the code. Library card and Bookshare eligibility cost courage and paperwork more often than money. A structured literacy plan costs attention every week. Wrong answers stay information. Slow and accurate stays the path. Choose the card your family can sustain — then teach tomorrow’s sit.

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.