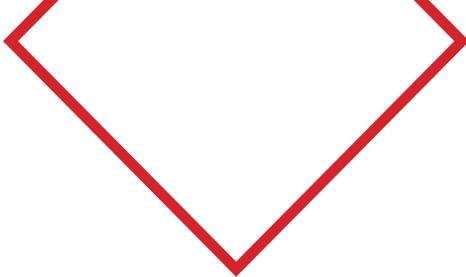




# Wonders

**Research-Based Approach  
to Foundational Skills**





*Wonders* provides explicit and systematic instruction in foundational skills, including phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, structural analysis, high-frequency words, and fluency. Foundational skills instruction is built on standardized routines, assessment-driven instruction, multimodal learning, and inclusion of both whole- and small-group instruction for students at all levels. The systematic predictability of *Wonders* foundational skills lessons allows children to focus on content instead of process, while the explicitness presents content in a clear, concise manner.

The complexity of the foundational skills taught gradually increases throughout the units of instruction. To ensure that students develop proficiency in decoding words by translating the letters and spelling patterns into phonemes and pronunciations, a large proportion of the instruction is focused on the direct and explicit instruction of phonological awareness and phonics (Adams, 1991; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Phoneme awareness and letter-sound skills are not optional—they are central to the process of permanent word storage and sight vocabulary development (Kilpatrick, 2016, p. 43). With continued instruction and practice, children build automaticity in decoding and word recognition. Because the weekly Phonics and Spelling lessons are directly linked, students also gain an understanding of the connection between decoding and encoding.

In each grade of *Wonders*, phonics instruction is cumulative. Additionally, year after year, skills are reviewed recursively, and there are strong links among all Word Work strands throughout the grades.

## **Focus on Word Work**

The Teacher’s Edition “Focus on Word Work” planning pages (shown on the next page) show how students acquire foundational skills that are immediately applied to reading decodable texts. Students use a variety of multimodal materials to practice and develop automaticity in word recognition, a priority of foundational skills instruction. The Phonics Skills Trace shows how phonics instruction grows more complex across the year. In addition, these pages support teachers in developing an understanding of how systematic instruction can be used to support the needs of all students.

Formative assessment data can have a positive effect on student academic achievement (Klute et al., 2017). Opportunities for ongoing formative assessment using the Student Check-In are available in each lesson. These short check-in assessments are aligned with the lesson goals.

Build Foundational Skills with Multimodal Learning



**1**  
Phonemic Awareness Activities

**2**  
Response Board

**3**  
Sound-Spelling Cards

Word-Building Cards online

Phonics Activities

**5**  
Practice Book

Spelling Cards online

**6**  
High-Frequency Word Cards

High-Frequency Word Activities

Visual Vocabulary Cards

**7**  
Shared Read

Decodable Readers

Take-Home Story

**Phonemic Awareness**

- Identify, add, substitute, blend, and segment phonemes

**Phonics: Long *a*: *a\_e***

- Introduce/review sound-spellings
- Blend/build words with sound-spellings
- Practice handwriting
- Structural Analysis: Build reading word bank
- Decode and encode in connected texts

**Spelling: Long *a*: *a\_e***

- Differentiated spelling instruction
- Encode with sound-spellings
- Explore relationships with word sorts and word families

**High-Frequency Words**

- Read/Spell/Write routine

See Word Work, pages T10–T13, T20–T23, T30–T33, T52–T53, T58–T59.

**Apply Skills to Read**

- Children apply foundational skills as they read decodable texts.
- Children practice fluency to develop word automaticity.



Explicit Systematic Instruction

Word Work instruction expands foundational skills to enable children to become proficient readers.

**Daily Routine**

- Use the In a Flash: Sound-Spelling routine and the In a Flash: High-Frequency Word routine to build fluency.
- Set Learning Goal.

**Explicit Minilessons and Practice**

Use daily instruction in both whole and small groups to model, practice, and apply key foundational skills. Opportunities include:

- Multimodal engagement.
- Corrective feedback.
- Supports for English Language Learners in each lesson.
- Peer collaboration.

**Formative Assessment**

**Check-In**

- Children reflect on their learning.
- Children show their progress by holding up 1 to 4 fingers in a Check-In routine.

**Check for Success**

- Teacher monitors children's achievement and differentiates for Small Group instruction.

**Differentiated Instruction**

To strengthen skills, provide targeted review and reteaching lessons and multimodal activities to meet children's diverse needs.

● **Approaching Level, ELL**

- Includes Tier 2

● **On Level**

● **Beyond Level**

- Includes Gifted and Talented

**Independent Practice**

Provide additional practice as needed. Have children work individually or with partners.

**9**  
Center Activity Cards

Digital Activities

Word-Building Cards online

Decodable Readers

Practice Book

- Student-Facing Digital Activities** provide independent practice for phonemic awareness, phonics, and high-frequency word skills.
- Response Boards** feature sound boxes and write-on lines for phonemic awareness and phonics lessons.
- Sound-Spelling Cards** support instruction in sound-symbol correspondence for all consonants and vowels.
- Printable **Word-Building Cards** and **Spelling Cards** provide multimodal opportunities for students to build and sort words.
- The **Practice Book** contains reproducible practice pages for students to apply foundational skills.
- High-Frequency Word Cards** and High-Frequency Word **Visual Vocabulary Cards** support orthographic mapping and comprehension of high-frequency words.
- Students apply their phonics knowledge in connected text through **Shared Reads**, **Decodable Readers**, and **Take-Home Stories** in the Practice Book.
- The **Phonics Skills Trace** shows the phonics skills covered across the year.
- Center Activity Cards** provide students additional foundational skills practice for independent or partner work.

## Phonological/Phonemic Awareness

### Research Says...

Building phonological awareness facilitates later mastery of the alphabetic writing system and orthographic mapping (Ehri & Roberts, 2013). Research indicates that the most critical phonemic awareness skills are blending and segmenting, since they are most closely associated with early reading and writing growth (NICHD, 2001).

### Wonders Support

| GRADE K  | GRADE 1  | GRADE 2   |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Wonders</i> Phonological Awareness instruction begins in Start Smart and continues in Units 1–10 as part of the Oral Language lessons. Lessons in Phonemic Awareness are presented daily throughout the program.  | Daily Word Work lessons in the Teacher’s Edition include explicit, systematic instruction for Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, beginning in Start Smart and continuing in Units 1–6. | The <i>Wonders</i> Teacher’s Edition includes both phonological and phonemic awareness lessons across the entire year for second graders, providing flexible instruction and practice opportunities to address skill gaps from previous grade-level benchmarks. |
| Phonological and Phonemic Awareness lessons are routine based and include the use of multimedia, such as Photo Cards and Elkonin boxes on Response Boards. Practice Book reproducible pages and online games are provided for additional student practice with these skills. |  |   |

## Phonics and Word Analysis

### Research Says...

Well-designed phonics instruction is a necessary component of effective reading programs (NICHD, 2000; Slavin et al., 2011). Phonics instruction is a critical component of literacy instruction because it leads to an understanding of the alphabetic principle—the set of systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds. For children to learn how to sound out word segments and blend these parts to form recognizable words, they must know how letters correspond to sounds (Berninger et al., 2009; International Literacy Association, 2018). Research strongly supports phonics instruction that is both *explicit* and *systematic*. (Carnine et al., 2010; Ehri et al., 2001; Hemenstall, 2016; Stuebing et al., 2008). Phonics instruction should vary in amount and intensity based on the needs of individual students as determined through assessments (Ehri et al., 2001; Fletcher et al., 2019; Connor et al., 2009).

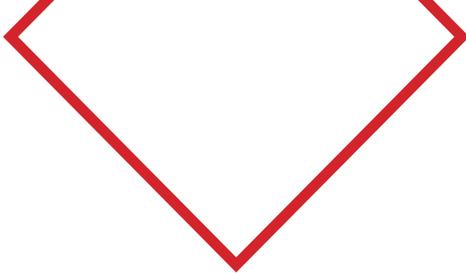
### Wonders Support

*Wonders* phonics instruction is explicit and systematic and progresses from simple to more complex sound-spellings, providing support and scaffolding as new sound-spellings are introduced, relating new knowledge to that which is already known. Lessons focus on helping readers understand the relationship between letters and sounds. Blending, decoding, and word-building are instructional priorities, as they are foundational and necessary skills that allow students to become proficient readers and writers.

Students then have opportunities to reinforce and apply their phonetic knowledge in context via Shared Read selections in the Reading/Writing Companion at Grades K–1, Decodable Readers at Grades K–2, and the Take-Home Stories in the Grades K–1 Practice Book blackline masters. Decodable Passages are also available for all grades. In Grade K, teachers have the option to fast track Long Vowel instruction by using the Long Vowel Express feature beginning in Unit 4 Week 3.

Spelling instruction supports a deeper understanding of letter-sound correlations and improves decoding and spelling skills (Graham et al., 2002; Graham & Santangelo, 2014; Snow et al., 1998). *Wonders* spelling instruction is aligned to phonics instruction, emphasizing the relationship between decoding and encoding letter-sound correlations. Spelling skills are taught weekly and practiced in the Practice Book. Spelling instruction in Grades 1–2 is supported with research-based practice using Word Sorts. Word Sorts provide meaningful, hands-on activities for students to see Phonics/Spelling patterns.

Advanced phonics instruction, including structural analysis and morphology, supports decoding and spelling of multisyllable words (Carnine et al., 2010; Castles et al., 2018; Vaughn et al., 2022). Like phonics instruction, weekly structural analysis instruction at Grades 1 and 2 is explicit and systematic, focusing on high-utility word constructs. After the structural analysis skill is introduced, it is reviewed and reinforced throughout the week.



## High-Frequency Words

### Research Says...

Orthographic mapping is the mental process we use to store words for immediate retrieval and can be used for words with both regular and irregular sound-spellings. Words are anchored into permanent memory when the string of phonemes in word pronunciations is associated with the letter order in the written word (Ehri & Roberts, 2013).

### Wonders Support

New high-frequency words are introduced each week using the Read/Spell/Write routine. To introduce new words, teachers point out sound-spellings that students have already learned as well as any irregular sound-spellings. Students also review previously taught high-frequency words cumulatively each week. High-frequency words are taught in isolation and in context using the Word Work lessons as well as the Shared Read lessons in Grades K–1. Practice Book pages reinforce learning, and the Decodable Reader selections provide an additional opportunity for students to read high-frequency words in context.

## Fluency

### Research Says...

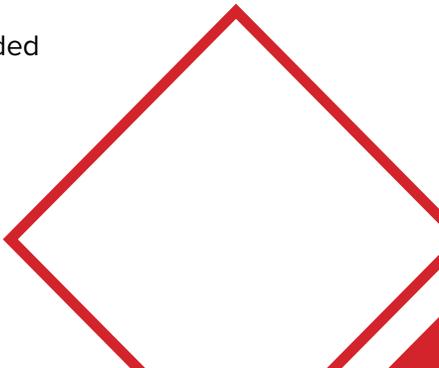
To support the development of reading fluency, the National Reading Panel recommends approaches that incorporate repeated oral reading (guided or unguided) rather than less focused attempts to encourage reading; subsequent research has lent further support for this recommendation, providing evidence that this practice is beneficial alone or in conjunction with other instructional strategies (e.g., Ari, 2011; Lee & Yoon, 2017; Lo et al., 2011; Vaughn et al., 2022).

### Wonders Support

*Wonders* provides explicit instruction and practice in fluency. In Grades K–1, explicit fluency lessons begin in the middle of the year. Prior to that point, students focus on building automaticity with letter recognition, sound/symbol correspondence, high-frequency words, and accuracy of decoding words in isolation and in context.

In Grades 1–2, students practice and apply reading fluently with a variety of student materials within each text set, including Decodable Readers, Shared Reads in the Reading/Writing Companion; Anchor Texts and Paired Selections in the Literature Anthology; and Differentiated Genre Passages.

Lessons focused on Fluency instruction for whole group and small group are included in the instructional plan, as well as a Reader’s Theater lesson in Week 6 of each unit. The Center Activity Cards include Fluency practice activities that students can engage in independently or with partners while the teacher is meeting with other students in small groups. Fluency Assessments are also provided as a progress monitoring tool.



## Concepts of Print

### Research Says...

The National Early Literacy Panel Report confirms that beginning readers need to develop foundational knowledge that includes concepts of print, that is, understanding how print conveys a message through formatting and other features (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

### Wonders Support

Grade K: *Wonders* instruction in Concepts of Print begins in the three-week Start Smart unit and can be found each week throughout the year in both teacher- and student-read materials.

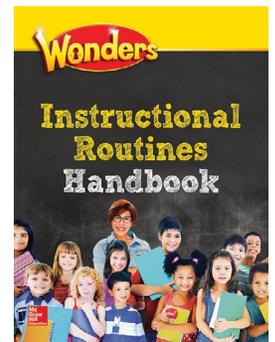
Grade 1: *Wonders* begins with three weeks of instruction called Start Smart and each day includes a Concepts of Print minilesson with explicit instruction and practice. In Units 1–3, students continue to learn, practice, and apply knowledge of concepts of print through the Literature Big Book and Shared Read lessons.

### Additional Support

For the full scope and sequence of skills, see the back pages of each Teacher’s Edition. For the instructional path and phonics skills trace, see the planning pages that introduce each unit, week, or text set in the Teacher’s Editions.

For more information about *Wonders* foundational skills routines, see pages 29–71 and pages 129–136 in the Instructional Routines Handbook (Digital Course: [choose a grade] → Teacher’s Edition → Resources → Resource Library → Teacher Resources → Instructional Routines).

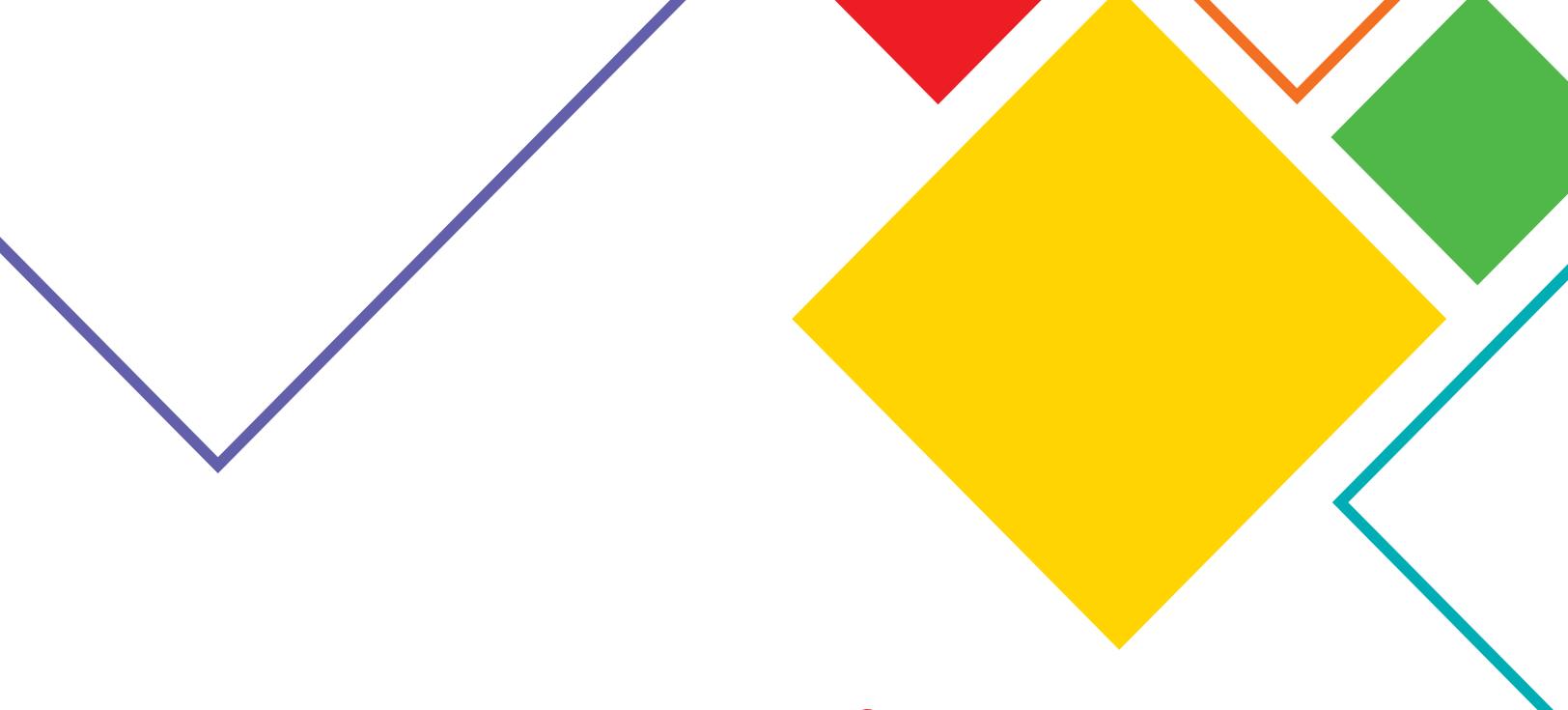
For more detail related to the scientifically-based studies that support the *Wonders* approach, see program author Jan Hasbrouck’s “Foundational Skills, Grades K–5” white paper and the *Wonders* Research Base Alignment. (Digital Course: [choose a grade] → Teacher’s Edition → Resources → Professional Development → Research Base and White Papers.)



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