

Science of Reading

Putting Research into Action



Alphabetics: What's Hard about Teaching Letters and Sounds (and How to Do It Well!)

Use the checklist below to support you in applying what you learned about alphabetics instruction.

When teaching letter names and sounds (i.e., alphabetics), my instruction:

- Occurs daily
- Is engaging
- Is brief (no more than 15 minutes)
- Involves examination from a variety of cognitive perspectives. For example:
 - Name:** Recognizing that the shape of a letter is associated with a letter name. *Example: Students use magnetic wands to take letters out of a sensory bin. As students remove a letter, they say the letter name.*
 - Symbol:** Recognizing the shape and size of a letter. *Example: Students identify the letter of focus by pointing it out repetitively in a text.*
 - Sounds:** Determining what sound corresponds to the shape and name of the letter. *Example: Students have a pile of alphabet flashcards. As they pick up a flashcard, they can share the sound(s) that particular letter makes.*
 - Discrimination:** The ability to differentiate between letters. *Example: Students sort labeled alphabet cards into two piles—B and C.*
 - Transcription:** The ability to form letters in a written format. *Example: Students form the desired letter in a variety of ways, such as with a pencil on paper, with their finger in a sand tray, etc.*