

The Schenck School Reading Model

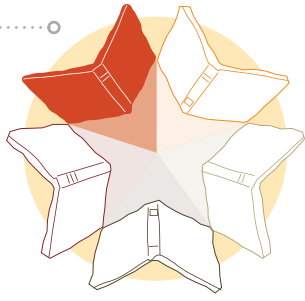
 **IN ACTION**

The Schenck School
Reading Model—Learning
Environment, Decoding
& Encoding, Phonological &
Phonemic Awareness, Writing,
and Reading Comprehension:
Fostering Successful
Teaching and Learning

At The Schenck School, our approach to supporting dyslexic learners is harnessed in our Reading Model, designed to empower students through five foundational elements: Learning Environment, Decoding & Encoding, Phonological & Phonemic Awareness, Writing, and Reading Comprehension. These components are not standalone pillars but interconnected facets that collectively nurture our students' growth, resilience, and success.







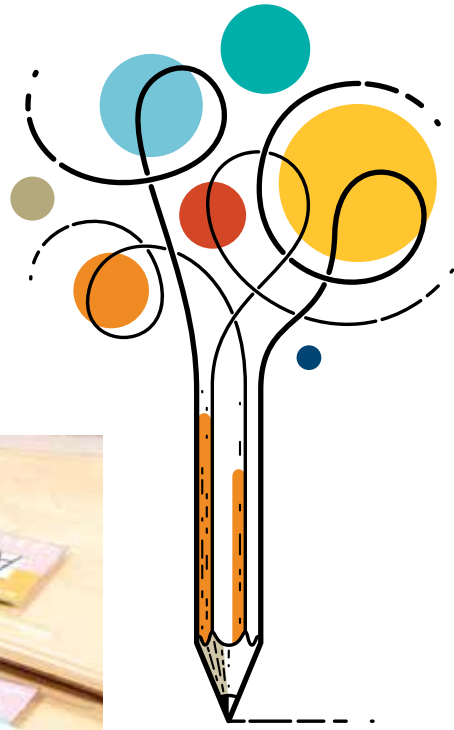
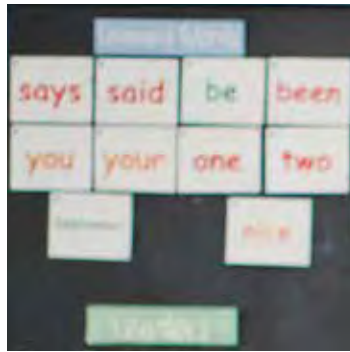
Learning Environment

- Positive student-teacher environment
- Diagnostic, appropriately paced and cumulative
- Similar learning profiles
- Oral language

Thriving in a Safe Learning Environment

Dyslexic learners often encounter challenges that can seem insurmountable without the right support. A thoughtfully structured learning environment addresses the specific needs of dyslexic students and is arguably one of the most important pillars of The Schenck School Reading Model. Our team-teaching approach allows teachers to get to know their students on a personal level, tailoring their lessons to lean into the strengths of the students and address what is challenging for them. Whether it's seating arrangements that minimize distractions, the use of technology to aid learning, or the presence of visual aids that support memory and comprehension, every element of Schenck classrooms is considered in order to mitigate challenges throughout the school day. This deliberate and supportive structure ensures that all students have access to the tools and strategies they need to succeed.





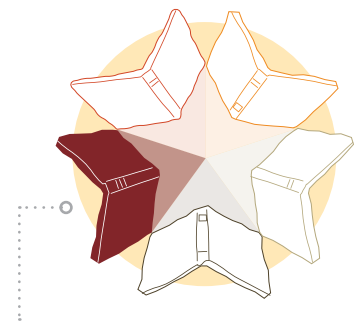
“Learning begins at the tip of a pencil.”

— David Schenck



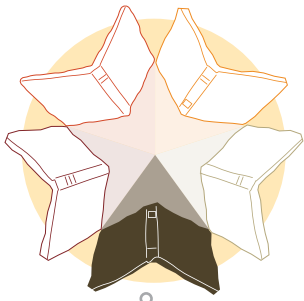
Unlocking the Code with Decoding and Encoding

Decoding and encoding, or more simply put, reading and writing, are the keys to unlocking the written language. In teaching these skills simultaneously, we reinforce the interconnectedness of reading and writing, providing students with a clearer understanding of how language works. Whatever is written is read, and whatever is read is grounded in the instruction of the logical structure of the English language. This dual approach demystifies reading and spelling for our students. As students progress at Schenck, they are introduced to new and clever ways to spell and incorporate words into everyday usage. In Kindergarten and first grade, students might use sand to trace letters and words; feeling the sand on their fingers and the motion of the letters helps them address different phenoms. As students move through the curriculum, they may start writing with dry-erase markers on desks, like in third grade, adding prefixes and suffixes to their letters to form words. This technique weaves together different learning styles and creates a system of tactile memorization that students find useful as they continue their education.



Decoding & Encoding

- Alphabetic principle
- Letter formation
- Syllables
- Decoding/encoding
- Morphology
- Oral language

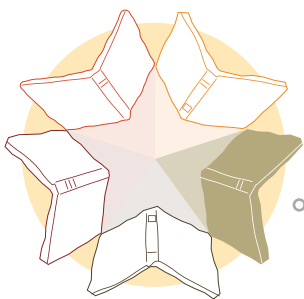
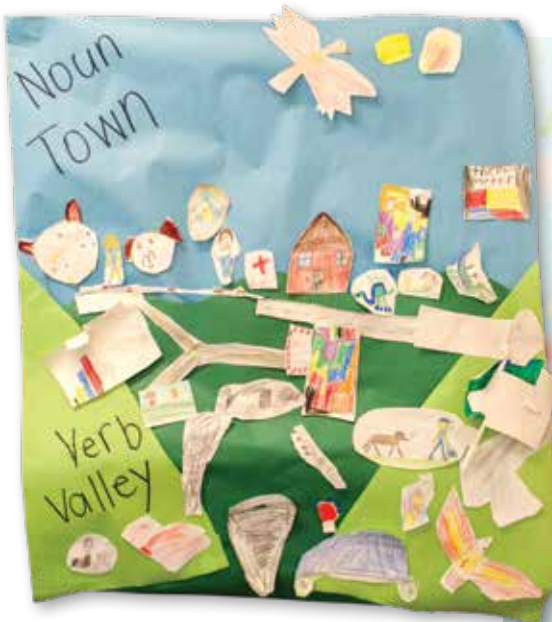


Phonological & Phonemic Awareness

- Phonological/morphological awareness
- Phonemic awareness
- Oral language

Phonological & Phonemic Awareness: The Sounds of Success

Central to our Reading Model is the development of Phonological and Phonemic Awareness. By focusing on the ability to recognize, manipulate, and understand the sounds within words, we address one of the core challenges faced by dyslexic learners. Through engaging, multisensory activities, students improve their auditory and phonemic skills, which are crucial steps toward fluent reading and effective communication. A technique that we've found to be incredibly effective is the tapping method (pictured below), where students will tap out vowel sounds on their arms. In third grade, students can be seen standing and stomping out vowel teams or using the big red staircase to count the number of syllables in a word. In kindergarten, there is a lot of emphasis on rhyming and rhyme recognition.



Writing

- Handwriting
- Written expression
- Language structure: syntax, grammar & usage
- Oral language

Forging Paths of Expression Through Writing

In the writing component of the reading model, students discover their voices and learn to express their thoughts clearly and creatively. We integrate spelling, grammar, and mechanics with expressive writing tasks, allowing students to see writing as a form of personal expression rather than just another academic requirement. This approach not only improves written communication skills but also boosts self-esteem as students take pride in their work. Stacey Prusak, second grade teacher, and OGA Fellow In Training, is taking writing to the next level with her “noun town” and “verb valley” (pictured, above left) to help students remember parts of speech that will help with their writing.



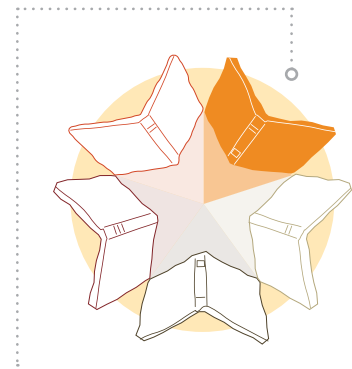
“Learning to write sophisticated sentences makes it easier to comprehend long sentences that students encounter in text. When writing is tied to content, it helps to solidify and expand students’ background knowledge, which is an essential component of reading comprehension.”

— Laura Dreyer

Reading Comprehension: Opening Worlds of Understanding

Reading Comprehension ensures that students can not only read words but also understand, analyze, and reflect on their meaning. Through strategies that promote active engagement with texts, we help students develop the critical thinking skills necessary for deep comprehension. This empowers them to access new ideas, perspectives, and worlds, enriching their academic journey and personal growth. As a way of teaching reading comprehension, and one that students and teachers find success with alike, we use the “KWL” sheets with their charts of “I know, I want to know, I learned.” One of the most important facets of teaching is knowing that student learning is not uniform and students will learn from different approaches. When it comes to Reading Comprehension, our teachers take that into account, teaching our students multiple ways to comprehend stories—including Readers Theater, where students read a book, dress like the character, and reenact a section of the book to a larger audience. It’s one of our landmark events in third grade, and it feels special for students when they complete the assignment.

The Schenck School Reading Model is more than a curriculum; it’s a holistic approach to education designed specifically for dyslexic learners. By addressing the unique challenges and harnessing the inherent strengths of our students, we soar on prepared for success in life beyond The Schenck School. Together, these five elements form a comprehensive framework that supports, challenges, and celebrates our students every day. ■



Reading Comprehension

- Background knowledge
- Discussion, reasoning, making connection
- Language structure: syntax, grammar & usages
- Literary structures
- Vocabulary/morphology
- Fluency
- Oral language