

What is structured literacy?

Structured literacy is a way to teach students to read.

What does it look like or sound like?

Structured literacy follows a specific order to teach reading, from simple to more complex skills, based on how we know people's brains work. It is also very direct. Teachers focus on the exact skills that students need to know to go from speech to printed words. Structured literacy is hands-on learning with lots of practice, review, and correction of errors as students learn their new skills. Structured literacy teaching can begin in early childhood and continue through high school. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are paired with one another to teach reading skills.

It looks like:

- Teaching letter names and sounds,
- Sounding out letters and how they blend together into words,
- Building words with letter tiles and other objects,
- Tapping or clapping out sounds and syllables in words,
- Using a word mapping chart to show students how each separate sound in a word is made up of one or more letters,
- Making sentences with words on cards, and
- Color-coding sentences in paragraphs.

Using this approach, we do not ask students to “guess” or use “context clues” in a book to teach them how to read words.

Where can I learn more?

Structured literacy is based on hundreds of thousands of research studies by educators, speech and language specialists, psychologists, neurologists, and more. This body of knowledge is called the Science of Reading.

Your local school district should be able to share more information with you about how they are using a structured literacy approach. There are also many organizations that share information about structured literacy and family-friendly activities that build reading skills. For example, the International Dyslexia Association ([DyslexiaIDA.org](https://dyslexiaida.org)) and [ReadingRockets.org](https://readingrockets.org). Visit the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center's website at [OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu](https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu) to view more resources like this one that support strong family, school, and community partnerships for student well-being and academic success!