

**1. Students will have opportunities to develop and use oral language.**

Students' comprehension of written language depends in large part upon their effective use and understanding of oral language. Language experiences are a central component of good reading instruction. Instruction that focuses on listening, speaking, and understanding includes the following:

- Discussions that focus on a variety of topics, including problem solving
- Activities that help students understand the world, in and out of the classroom
- Songs, chants, and poems that are fun to sing and say
- Concept development and vocabulary-building lessons
- Games and other activities that involve talking, listening, and following directions

**2. Students will have opportunities to develop and use printed language.**

Students' understanding of the purpose and functions of written language is essential to their motivation for learning to read. Reading and writing instruction that focuses on the use and appreciation of written language includes the following:

- Activities that help students to understand that print represents spoken language
- Activities that help students become aware that printed language is all around them on signs, billboards, and labels, and in books, magazines, and newspapers and that print serves many different purposes.
- Activities that highlight the meanings, uses, and production of print found in classroom signs, labels, notes, posters, calendars, and directions
- Activities that teach print conventions, such as directionality
- Activities in which students practice how to handle a book - how to turn pages, how to find the tops and bottoms of pages, and how to tell the front and back covers
- Lessons in word awareness that help students become conscious of individual words, for example, their boundaries, their appearance and their length
- Activities in which students practice with predictable and patterned language stories

**3. Students will have opportunities to hear various kinds of literature read aloud daily.**

Listening comprehension is a necessary skill to be developed in order to be a successful reader. Reading aloud to students every day and talking about books and stories supports and extends oral language development and helps students connect oral to written language. Listening to a book being read develops comprehension skills, increases language proficiency, increases attention span, and encourages visualization, a necessary component for comprehension and memory. A teacher should read books that are at a higher level than the students are reading on their own.

**4. Students will have opportunities to understand and manipulate the building blocks of spoken language.**

Students' ability to think about individual words as a sequence of sounds is important to their learning how to read an alphabetic language. Students learn that sentences are made up of groups of separate words and that words are made up of separate sounds.

Research has shown conclusively that students' phonemic awareness, their understanding that spoken words can be divided into separate sounds, is one of the best predictors of their success in learning to read. Instruction that promotes students' understanding and use of the building blocks of spoken language includes the following:

- Language games that teach students to identify rhyming words and to create rhymes on their own
- Activities that help them understand that spoken sentences are made up of groups of separate words, that words are made up of syllables and that words can be broken down into separate sounds
- Auditory activities in which they manipulate the sounds of words, separate or segment the sounds of words, blend sounds, delete sounds, or substitute new sounds for those deleted

**5. Students will have opportunities to understand and manipulate the building blocks of written language.**

Knowledge of letters leads to success with learning to read. This includes the

use, purpose, knowledge of letters, and function of letters. Instruction should include the following:

- Alphabetic knowledge activities in which students learn the names of letters and learn to identify them rapidly and accurately
- A variety of writing activities in which students learn to print the letters that they are learning to identify
- Writing activities in which students have the opportunity to experiment with and manipulate letters to make words and messages

**6. Students will have opportunities to learn the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters of written language.**

Increasing students' awareness of the sounds of spoken language and their familiarity with the letters of written language prepares them to understand the alphabetic principle - that written words are composed of patterns of letters that represent the sounds of spoken words. Effective instruction provides students with explicit and systematic teaching of sound letter relationships in a sequence that permits them to assimilate and apply what they are learning. Instruction that helps students understand the alphabetic principle and learn the most common relationships between sounds and letters includes the following:

- Alphabetic awareness activities in which students learn that printed words are made up of patterns, blends, and combinations of letters
- Lessons in sound-letter relationships that are organized systematically and that provide as much practice and review as is needed
- Activities in which students combine and manipulate letters to change words and spelling patterns

**7. Students will have opportunities to develop and use decoding skills.**

It is important that students learn effective sounding-out strategies that will allow them to quickly and effortlessly decode words they have never seen in print. Some strategies of decoding instruction focus primarily on the relationships between sounds and letters; others combine letter-sound practice with word families, with word parts and with blending activities. More advanced decoding strategies focus on structural analysis, the identification of root words, and prefixes/suffixes.

Instruction should introduce "irregular" words in a reasonable sequence and

use these words in the program's reading materials. It is important to realize, however, that essentially all words should become "sight words." Effective decoding instruction is explicit and systematic and can include the following:

- Practice in decoding and identifying words that contain the letter-sound relationships students are learning to read and need for reading and writing
- Practice activities that involve word families and rhyming patterns
- Practice activities that involve blending together the components of sounded-out words
- "Word play" activities in which students change beginning, middle, or ending letters of related words, thus changing the words they decode and spell
- Introduction of phonetically "irregular" words in practice activities and stories

**8. Students will have opportunities to incorporate spelling and reading skills in their writing.**

In the early grades, spelling instruction may be coordinated with the program of reading instruction. As students progress, well organized and systematic lessons in spelling will be beneficial. Activities for effective spelling instruction should include the following:

- Activities that are related to the words that students are reading and writing
- Proofreading activities
- An emphasis on pride in correct spelling
- Lessons that help students attend to spelling conventions in a systematic way
- Activities that surround students in words and make reading and writing relevant

**9. Students will have opportunities to practice accurate and fluent reading.**

As students learn to read words, sentences, and stories fluently, accurately, and automatically, they no longer have to struggle to identify words and are able to pay closer attention to the meaning. Reading material should be appropriate to the students' reading level. The reader should be able to read easily most of the words in a story, and after practice should be able to do so quickly, accurately, and effortlessly

**10. Students will have opportunities to read and develop comprehension skills.**

Students should read and comprehend a wide assortment of books and other texts, with access to materials for self-selected reading that cover a wide range

of skill levels and that can be read both during daily classroom time and taken home for reading independently or to family members. Classrooms that ensure wide reading provide the following:

- Daily time for self-selected reading
- Access to books students want to read in their classrooms and school libraries
- Access to books that can be taken home to be read independently or to family members

**11. Students will have opportunities to develop and comprehend vocabulary.**

During reading instruction, students should be encouraged to attend to the meanings of new words. Activities that promote the acquisition of vocabulary include the following:

- Wide reading of a variety of genres, both narrative and informational
- Instruction that provides explicit information both about the meanings of words and about how they are used in the stories the students are reading
- Activities that involve students in analyzing context to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words in a reading passage
- Discussions of new words that occur during the course of the day, for example, in books that have been read aloud by the teacher, in content area studies and in textbooks
- Activities that encourage them to use words they are learning in their own writing, and to keep records of interesting and related words

**12. Students will have opportunities to learn and apply comprehension skills as they think critically about what they read.**

Comprehension depends upon the understanding of word meanings, on the development of meaningful ideas, and the drawing of inferences. It also depends upon the demands of the text and the knowledge the reader brings to the text. For students to receive the greatest benefit and enjoyment from their reading, they must receive comprehensive strategy instruction that builds on their knowledge of the world and of language. Comprehension strategy instruction can include the following:

- Activities that help students learn to preview selections, anticipate content, and make connections between what they will read and what they already know
- Instruction that provides options when understanding breaks down (for

- example, rereading, asking for expert help, and looking up words)
- Guidance in helping students compare characters, events, and themes of different stories
  - Activities that encourage discussion about what is being read and how ideas can be linked (for example, to draw conclusions and make predictions)
  - Activities that help students extend their reading experiences through the reading of more difficult texts with the teacher