

Read Alouds • Shared Reading • Small Group Reading Instruction • Writing • Phonological Awareness • Word Work • Speaking and Listening • Viewing, Visualizing and Representing • Digital Literacy • Cross-Curricular Literacy • Independent Reading

COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GUIDES

Introduction



INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS SERIES?

Eleven learning guides were designed to provide a foundational understanding of the key components of elementary literacy instruction: **Read Alouds, Shared Reading, Independent Reading, Small Group Reading Instruction, Writing, Phonological Awareness, Word Work, Oral Production, Visual Literacy, Digital Literacy, and Cross-Curricular Literacy.**

Guides include an overview of each literacy component, connections to learning outcomes in the *Alberta Education English Language Arts Programs of Study K-6*, planning and assessment guidelines, insights from consultants and literacy experts, photos and videos of the strategies in action, as well as options for modifications and considerations for inclusion.

Recommended resources are included in the guides that might prove helpful to teachers and may already be found in schools. They should not be interpreted as a required list of resources.

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDES:

These guides can be used by individual teachers to enhance their instruction and planning, may be used in conjunction with the support of literacy leads and district consultants or might be included in an extended professional development opportunity.

These guides are a quick reference tool, particularly relevant for beginning teachers or teachers who are new to elementary literacy instruction. They were not intended to replace key reference materials that already exist in the field.

WHO CREATED THESE GUIDES?

In 2016, the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium in partnership with school districts in the greater Edmonton area identified key areas of need in literacy instruction. A large cohort of literacy leaders collaboratively developed this series to support teachers, administrators, learning coaches and other educational staff. ERLC would like to thank the following districts for their time and effort in supporting this project:

- Aspen View Public Schools
- Black Gold Regional Schools
- Edmonton Catholic Schools
- Edmonton Public Schools
- Elk Island Catholic School Division
- Elk Island Public School Division
- Evergreen Catholic Schools
- Fort McMurray Public Schools
- Fort McMurray Catholic School District
- Greater St. Albert Catholic Division
- Grande Yellowhead Public School Division
- Parkland School Division
- Pembina Hills Public Schools
- St. Albert Public School District
- St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic School Division
- Tribal Chiefs Education Foundation
- Representative from Central Alberta Regional Consortium

WHAT NEEDS TO BE INCORPORATED IN ALL CLASSROOMS TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE LITERACY

In conjunction with the instructional strategies and approaches outlined in the eleven literacy learning guides, there are five other considerations when structuring an effective literacy learning environment:

1. Creating student independence - teaching with the Gradual Release of Responsibility model
2. Structuring daily literacy time
3. Supporting students with significant disabilities
4. Designing a literacy-rich classroom environment
5. Using assessment to guide instruction
6. Modeling a love of literacy

INTRODUCTION

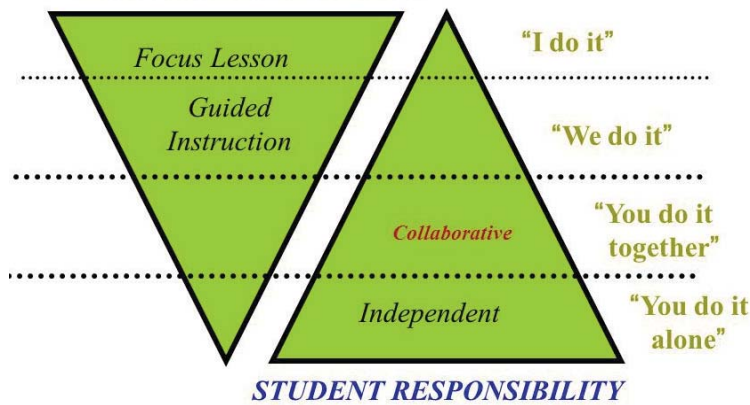
GRADES K-6

1. Creating Student Independence - Gradual Release of Responsibility

In initial phases of learning, students need extensive support and coaching, but eventually, scaffolding should be removed and students should be able to manage tasks effectively on their own. There are three parts of a Gradual Release of Responsibility process that lead to the development of engaged, self-directed learners: I do, We do, and You do. This framework, which includes explicit instruction, modeling and time for collaborative practice, ensures that all students are well supported before they are expected to use skills and strategies independently.

This framework is not linear; teachers may cycle back and forth between the levels of responsibility depending on identified areas of student need. When students have the required skills to undertake learning on their own, the teacher then has time to differentiate instruction using small, flexible groups and one-on-one conferences.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY



www.epd-mh.com/mhpd_assets/Effective_Use_Douglas_Fisher.pdf

Focus Lessons – This type of explicit instruction, otherwise known as a mini-lesson, allows teachers an opportunity to share the intent of the lesson, activate students’ background knowledge, model skills or strategies and deepen student understanding in a short session. Brain research from Ken Wesson (2001) shows that the age of the child is equivalent to the number of minutes they can focus on explicit instruction. Focus lessons, whether taught to a whole class, small group or one-on-one need to be brief, approximately 5-15 minutes. *Content for focus lessons should be based on curriculum outcomes from the Alberta Program Studies.

Guided Instruction - During guided instruction, teachers teach or model a concept and the thinking starts to shift to students. For example, the teacher prompts students with a series of questions or things to observe to increase their understanding. This instruction can be done whole class or in a small group setting and is based on student needs that have been identified through observation and formative assessments.

Collaborative Learning - This type of learning allows students opportunities to work with peers to coach one another through a skill or strategy and synthesize their thinking through exploration, problem-solving, and discussion.

Independent Practice - Students need frequent opportunities to practice new literacy skills and strategies, therefore it is important that students have time daily to read and write.

Mentoring Roles & Responsibilities

	Teacher	Student
I do it <i>Direct Instruction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides direct instruction Establishes goals and purpose Models Think aloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively listens Takes notes Asks for clarification
We do it <i>Guided Instruction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive instruction Works with students Checks, prompts, clues Provides additional modeling Meets with needs-based groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks and responds to questions Works with teacher and classmates Completes process alongside others
You do it independently <i>Independent Practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides feedback Evaluates Determines level of understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works alone Relies on notes, activities, classroom learning to complete assignment Takes full responsibility for outcome
You do it together <i>Collaborative Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves among groups Clarifies confusion Provides support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with classmates, shares outcome Collaborates on authentic task Consolidates learning Completes process in small group Looks to peers for clarification

Developed by Ellen Levy

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2. Structuring Literacy Time

Many students will benefit from having a predictable literacy structure with routines and expectations clearly defined.

On the next page are some possible examples of how literacy time could be structured and will work at any grade level as well as in multi-grade classrooms.



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SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR INTRODUCING COMPONENTS OF THE LITERACY BLOCK

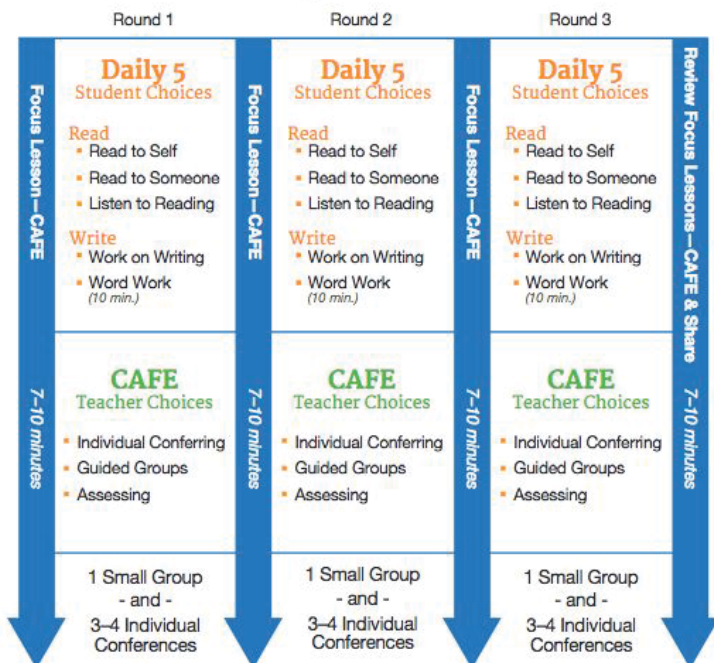
Approximate timeline	Component of Literacy Block
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin by book-ending the literacy block with two distinct times for direct instruction, beginning with Reading Time and ending with Writing Time.
Weeks 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add times for independent reading and writing, gradually increasing the time that students spend engaged in each task. Begin to use independent work times to meet with individual students for reading assessments or initial observations.
Weeks 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form initial instructional groupings and began to use AWARD time to conduct guided reading lessons and writing conferences, meeting with one group for guided reading during independent reading time and another group for a writing conference doing independent writing time. Introduce students to the tracking board, including literacy tasks to be completed during simplified AWARD time; independent reading, guided reading, independent writing, writing conference. Use direct instruction reading and writing times to introduce students to reading responses, peer sharing, and technology. At this point, it is best to keep it simple and include a limited selection of reading responses and a simple technology task; e.g., Writing a book recommendation for a friend or reading a specific text from an online source. <p><i>*AWARD Time - (Applying Writing and Reading Daily)</i></p>
Week 7 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add additional elements to AWARD tracking board, ensuring that students transition from one learning task to another in a way that intentionally connects independent learning task to small group learning opportunities: e.g., reading response follows guided reading writing conferences follows independent. Have students rotate through a four or five day cycle completing 2 to 3 learning tasks a day. Continue to revisit routines and expectations for all learning times, ensuring that students have opportunities to select reading text as well as writing topics. Continue to use direct instruction Reading and Writing times to introduce students to new learning task and to add to the selection of reading responses, writing ideas, and technology assignments revisit instructional groupings frequently and form a new groups as needed, focusing on various reasons for grouping students: ability, specific learning needs, interest, etc.

Lisa Donahue 2012. *100 Minutes Making Every Minute Count in the Literacy Block*

Retrieved from: www.region10

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Structure of Daily 5 and CAFE



Retrieved from <https://www.thedailycafe.com>

First Steps Reading Map of Development - This resource provides extensive information about the reading process from emergent to accomplished readers. Teaching strategies, data collection tools, reading behaviours and tips on where to emphasize instruction are provided for each phase of reading:

http://www.erc.ca/resources/resources/first_steps_in_literacy/documents/reading-map-of-development.pdf

3. Supporting Students With Significant Disabilities

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging for all learners. (Alberta Education)

With a variety of diverse needs in the classroom, our learning environments need to provide flexible and responsive teaching that can engage students and provide opportunities to foster literacy skills. By using the reading and writing structures highlighted in the learning guides, teachers can effectively differentiate instruction. For ideas on how to offer further literacy and communication support for students with significant disabilities, visit the Literacy For All website:

www.literacyforallab.ca

4. Designing a literacy-rich classroom environment

A literacy rich environment promotes a variety of authentic opportunities for students to engage in speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing. The environment acts as a third teacher. Walk into a literacy-friendly classroom and you are likely to find a reading corner with a classroom library that features a range of fiction, non-fiction and picture books; numerous items posted on the walls: pictures, labels, alphabet, word walls, anchor charts, bulletin boards and student writing; a rich array of writing materials (papers, pencils, pencil grips, whiteboards, reference materials); technology tools (Chromebooks, audio books, ebooks), creative materials (flannel boards, magnetic letters, stamps, sand, puppets); student notebooks/journals and reading boxes; as well as centres and word games. Materials should be engaging and accessible for all students. Design spaces to allow for a whole-group meeting area, small group instruction and independent student work areas.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/literacy-rich-environments>

http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/ta_pdf/SelfGuided_Module_LRE.pdf

5. Using assessment to guide instruction

A variety of formative and summative literacy assessments should be administered in order to identify student needs and inform planning and instruction. Assessment allows teachers to see what students can do and what they know. This data, both formal and informal, can guide decisions about whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one instruction.

Literacy assessments may include:

- basic literacy and writing knowledge - text direction, punctuation, formation of letters;
- phonemic awareness - segmenting sounds, working with nonsense words;
- phonics - alphabet knowledge, auditory discrimination, word identification in isolation and in context, reading short passages;
- fluency and effective oral reading;
- vocabulary knowledge, root words, affixes;
- retelling and comprehension questions; and
- reading behaviours, interests and attitudes.

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6. Modeling a love of literacy

Children learn from adults. If you don't read for fun, why would your kids? (Robert Munsch)

Read! Let students see you read every day. Read for pleasure, read for work, read for information. Include opportunities to share you thinking about the books you are reading, what you love, why you abandoned a book or what you are wondering about as a reader. Become a regular reader of children's literature.

Book, books, books! Fill your room with an abundance of books. Paperbacks, board books, magazines, electronic books - make books visible to students.

Write On! No matter what subject you teach it is important to write in front of students. This allows them to see and

hear the process along the way and it also offers students opportunities to provide feedback. If you want to be an effective writing teacher, you need to write and show students your interest, engagement and willingness to continually refine this crucial life skill.

Talk and more talk! Language and vocabulary represent the very foundation of learning to read and write. Use big words when talking with students. The more often they hear precise, rich vocabulary, the sooner they will be able to incorporate it in their writing and recognize it in their texts. Find frequent daily opportunities for students to talk and encourage rich conversations at home.

Be a model! Think aloud and model reading and writing for students so they can see the process in action. Also, model the value of sharing with others. Show how sharing their writing, providing feedback, working together and generating

