

Preparing for Being a Reader Small-group Reading Instruction in Sets 1-5

By Lenora Forsythe | Categories: Being a Reader, Implementation

Congratulations! You have completed the early weeks of instruction. You and your students have established a classroom community where students feel safe and connected, and your students are learning what it means to be vibrant members of a literacy community.

During reading instruction, students have been:

- Making text-to-text connections.
- Answering questions to understand stories.
- Learning the expectations for independent work.
- Engaging in choral and echo reading of shared books, K-1.
- Using “Turn to Your Partner.”
- Using “Turn and Look at the Speaker.”
- Listening respectfully and responsibly.

Now, it is time to prepare for small-group reading instruction! First, reflect on your students’ engagement in the “Setting the Foundation” lessons during Independent Work to determine if they can work independently enough that there will not be constant interruptions when you teach small-group lessons. If you believe they can, let’s get started! If not, don’t rush! Instead of starting small groups, revisit the “Setting the Foundation” lessons, analyze the students’ work habits, and reteach or practice those habits.

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Students New to *Being a Reader*: Placement and Grouping

The Placement Assessment is designed to quickly and efficiently assess what your students know and to place them accurately in Small-group Sets 1–5. (It is NOT a pre- and post-test.)

1. Read the Placement Assessment directions, including “Preparing for the Assessment,” “Conducting the Assessment,” and “Interpreting the Assessment Results” sections located at the Small-group Reading tab of the *Being a Reader Assessment Resource Book*.
2. Administer the Placement Assessment. We recommend you jot down notes, including specific errors. This information may be helpful as you are creating small groups.
3. Group for instruction using the “Forming and Managing Small Groups” section in the *Assessment Resource Book*, including the bulleted guidance and the placement guidance in the “If the student does not pass...” suggestions at the end of each section of the Placement Assessment.

Students Continuing *Being a Reader*: Placement and Grouping

Do not re-administer the Placement Assessment to students who are continuing with Being a Reader instruction; the data from the previous year are enough to place them in the program.

To correctly place students who had *Being a Reader* instruction during the previous school year and did not complete Sets 1-5:

1. Look up the last passed Mastery Test of the previous school year to determine Set and Week.
2. Once the Set and Week are determined, identify the phonics, high-frequency words, and books associated with the previous weeks of instruction in the given Set.
3. For the first week of instruction, review the identified phonics and high-frequency words taught in previous weeks and provide opportunities for the students to reread the associated books. This review will give the students time to remember the routines and prepare them for new content.
4. Begin instruction.

After you start instruction, you may notice students who struggle after the first Mastery Test. These students may not have had strong instruction or sufficient reading practice the previous year. If you suspect that this is the case, you may wish to administer the placement assessment to confirm whether the students have mastered previously taught material.

For additional support, watch Session 2 of the *"Being a Reader, Small-group Reading Instruction, Grades K-2"* webinar series.

Planning for Small-group Instruction in Sets 1-5

Select a set and watch a recorded discussion of Collaborative Classroom colleagues sharing their planning considerations and how they use materials for small-group reading instruction. Each discussion addresses the Introduction, the Set Overview, and Week #, and suggests things to consider when planning for a week of instruction.

The following weeks are featured in the recorded discussions:

- Set 1, Week 5
- Set 2, Week 8
- Set 3, Week 3
- Set 4, Week 8
- Set 5, Week 9

Here's the phonics! As you are watching the recorded discussions and planning for instruction, keep in mind that the foundational skills are taught through Sets 1–5, not in the whole-class setting. In Sets 1–5, students receive explicit, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, spelling-sounds, and high-frequency words. As they learn to read accurately and automatically, the students also learn that understanding what they are reading is paramount. Sets 1–3 address kindergarten foundational skills. Sets 4-5 address first grade foundational skills.

For more information on planning for Sets 1 and 2, read the *"What is Continuous Blending and Why Is It Important?"* blog post.

For additional support, watch Sessions 3 and 4 of the *"Being a Reader Small-group Reading Instruction, Grades K-2"* webinar series.

For additional support, watch Session 4 of the *"Embarking on the Journey with Collaborative Literacy"* webinar series.