

# Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words: SIPPS and IES/WWC Instruction (Part 2)

By Ann H. Leon | Categories: Reading Intervention and Acceleration

The IES: What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade includes four basic evidence-based principles for early literacy instruction. The suggestions for best practice are in line with the results-based Instruction found in all three levels of SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words). Part 3: Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words through three increasingly sophisticated levels. How might we meet the decoding needs of students? The panel identifies six instructional components:

- Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.
- Instruct student in common sound-spelling patterns.
- Teach students to recognize common word parts.
- Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.
- Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.
- Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

In this blog, I'll address how SIPPS Levels support components 4, 5, and 6.

## Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.

In both SIPPS Beginning and Extension Levels (and in SIPPS Plus-a decoding intervention for older students), students read decodable words in isolation every day. In this Phonics and Decodable Words routine, students learn and review spelling-sound relationships daily, and they immediately practice blending and reading decodable words.

- Beginning Level: all words focus on the spelling-sounds introduced in the lesson
- Extension Level/SIPPS Plus: a mixed list of words includes both the current lesson's spelling-sound relationships and previously taught phonics

One critical aspect of SIPPS is the correction routines that support students' thinking when they are uncertain about a pronunciation. Correction routines train the students' brains to think carefully about a word they are unfamiliar with. The daily phonics instruction and review, along with the correction routines, ensure that students master the lesson content. For more information, see the Daily Lesson Components section of the Introduction of the Extension Level Teachers' Manual.

# PHONICS AND DECODABLE WORDS

## Rationale

**Explicit and systematic instruction ensures that students thoroughly learn spelling-sound relationships and apply their growing knowledge to reading decodable words. Mastery, rather than exposure, is ensured through daily review and application and a varied pace in the introduction of new content.**

Another daily component of the SIPPS program is reading connected text. In Beginning Level and the first part of Extension Level, the day's story is composed of hybrid text: a combination of sight words and decodable words. Students' reading at this level focuses on accuracy and automaticity, which lead to fluency.

- In SIPPS Beginning Level sight words are underlined so that the students can easily recognize them. "Reading stories chorally and blending decodable words with teacher guidance helps the students move beyond context to using spelling-sound relationships as their primary reading strategy when reading connected text." (SIPPS Beginning Level Teacher's Manual, p. xiv).
- SIPPS Extension Level stories provide students with daily opportunities to read connected text using accumulated phonics and sight word knowledge. The practice prepares students to transition to reading easy-to-read trade books in Lesson 24 of the level.

## **Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.**

SIPPS Beginning and Extension Levels include a sight word strand in every lesson. Regular and irregular high-frequency words are introduced to students with the goal of mastery learning. Instruction includes both new sight words and daily review of previously taught sight words. "During the practice activity students orally spell as well as read each sight word. The spelling of each sight word is an important step because it focuses the students' attention on all the letters in a left-to-right sequence." (SIPPS Beginning Level Teacher's Manual, p. xiv)

## **Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.**

Prior to the Reading a Story routine, the teacher explicitly introduces content words that are beyond the students' decoding and sight word knowledge.

**DECODING SUPPORT**

**Chapter, kittens, everything, zigzag, Everyone:** Frame the parts (*Chap/ter, kit/ten/s, every/thing, zig/zag, Every/one*).

**Let's, That's:** Explain the meanings of the contractions.

parentheses: Point out the parentheses. Explain that these marks show that the sentence "A fern is a plant" is not part of the main story. It tells them what a fern is.

The SIPPS lesson components and routines, as presented above, demonstrate the inter-related instructional focus for students to attend to increasing the ease of word recognition, which will allow students to focus more on word meaning as they read. Stay tuned for the next blog, which will address Recommendation 4! To learn more about the first two recommendations in the report, see Part 1 and Part 2 of this blog series.