R E S E A R C H
EVIDENCE
BASE

Saxon® Phonics and Spelling

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Learning to read is one of the most important steps in a child's educational development. Today, students learn to read across a variety of genres and formats, from environmental texts, to the classics, to graphic novels. With new formats come new opportunities and challenges, as students encounter and interact with traditional print and digital content in all aspects of their daily lives.

And yet, results from the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading exams showed that only 35 percent of fourth-grade students and 34 percent of eighth-grade students scored proficient or higher in reading. For both age groups, the 2019 reading scores show a decrease of 2 percent from the 2017 scores of 37 percent and 36 percent, respectively. Furthermore, for both age groups, the decline in NAEP reading scores from 2017 to 2019 was steeper for minority students than it was for white students (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Results from the 2016 administration of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessment, which provides a comparison of reading achievement of U.S. fourth-grade students and students from 57 countries around the world, showed similarly disappointing results (Warner-Griffin et al., 2017).

The most recent NAEP and PIRLS data highlight the great need to improve the reading skills of students from diverse backgrounds, especially racially and ethnically diverse students and students with disabilities. Persistent dismal performance by U.S. students on the NAEP and PIRLS illustrates the need for a strong foundational literacy skills base to be developed in the earliest grades through effective reading programs containing systematic, explicit instruction in foundational literacy skills. The results also emphasize the urgency for effective literacy interventions to differentiate instruction based on students' needs, ultimately developing all students into the confident and capable readers they deserve to become (Murphy, 2010).

There are many costs to the lack of reading proficiency. Research has shown that the inability to read proficiently in third grade is linked to difficulties learning in other subject areas, difficulties reading in later grades, and decreased likelihood of attending college (Tennessee Department of Education, 2016). Recent studies of college enrollment statistics have found that up to 60 percent of students in the United States are unprepared for college-level work in reading, math, or both. College-bound students and families across the country spend an estimated $1.3 billion on remedial coursework every year (Jimenez, Sargrad, Morales, & Thompson, 2016). An estimated 93 million adults in the United States read at or below basic levels and face challenges finding living wage jobs as a result (Tennessee Department of Education, 2016).

The interest in the challenge of teaching children to read is long-standing. In 1997, the United States Congress convened the National Reading Panel to review the scientific research evidence on reading and the resulting implications for reading instruction. In 2000, the experts on the panel produced a report based on decades of research evidence that highlighted five key pillars of early literacy and reading instruction: **Phonemic Awareness**, **Phonics, Fluency**, **Vocabulary**, and **Comprehension** (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Numerous independent studies and expert panels have concluded that phonemic awareness and phonics have a direct and positive impact on reading acquisition, and research has also shown that a foundation in phonemic awareness and phonics can positively affect other key elements of literacy, such as fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension (Ehri et al., 2001). The **5 Pillars of Literacy**– also known as the **Big 5**–remain widely accepted by researchers and educators as core elements of effective reading instruction.

In the decades since the National Reading Panel's report was published, reading researchers have continued to emphasize the importance of using rigorous gold-standard research methodologies to study essential elements of reading acquisition and to identify effective practices for reading instruction. Modern reading research includes empirical evidence from diverse disciplines such as cognitive psychology, educational psychology, neuroscience, and linguistics in order to better understand how humans learn to read.

The research evidence has demonstrated that learning to read is not like learning to speak–unlike speaking, which many (though not all) children are able to pick up naturally and without formal instruction simply by being immersed in a speech-rich environment, reading is unnatural and effortful to learn (Seidenberg, 2013). Evolutionary psychology shows that written language is a relatively new ability acquired only 5,000 years ago. Neuroscience researchers have identified specific brain regions that are active while reading and also demonstrated that learning to read actually changes the structure of the brain (Dehaene et al., 2010). Cognitive psychologists have provided evidence that learning to read proficiently requires explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction in the elements of written language (Seidenberg, 2017).

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 is a supplemental series that explicitly teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency in a way that is supported by scientific research and that has been proven effective by years of classroom success. Saxon's approach to teaching phonics and spelling concepts is based on solid foundational research in cognitive science and best practices in literacy instruction and has been found to be consistently effective for children of varying ability levels and socioeconomic backgrounds.

This document highlights the foundational research that supports *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2*. The foundational research includes studies that have been conducted to test and document the effectiveness of educational practices (such as the use of explicit instruction and continual practice distributed across the level). Foundational studies document proven educational practices that stand the test of time. Program efficacy studies, on the other hand, are research studies that have been conducted to test the effectiveness of a specific program or curriculum. As the document outlines, *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* is both research-based and evidence-proven.
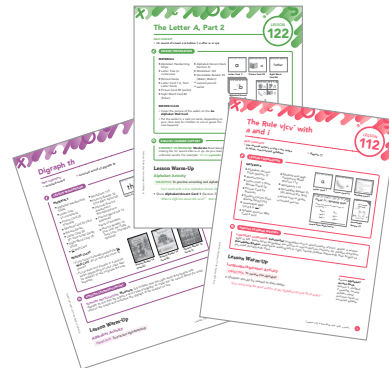
SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 PROGRAM MATERIALS

TEACHER MANUAL

BINDERS

LESSON BOOKLETS

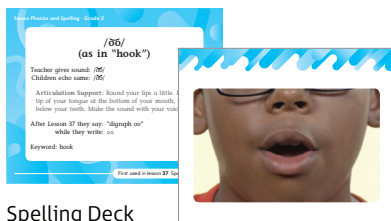Digital teacher materials are also available on the online platform.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

REVIEW DECKS

Letter Deck

Picture Deck

Spelling Deck
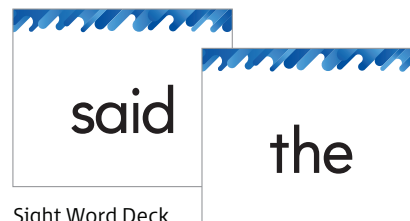
Sight Word Deck

KID CARDS

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

REVIEW DECKS

Alphabet Wall Cards

Syllable Division Wall Cards

Vowel Rule Wall Cards

Classroom Management Posters

Spelling Rule Wall Cards

Colors and Numbers Posters
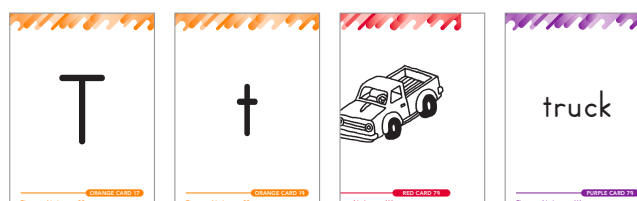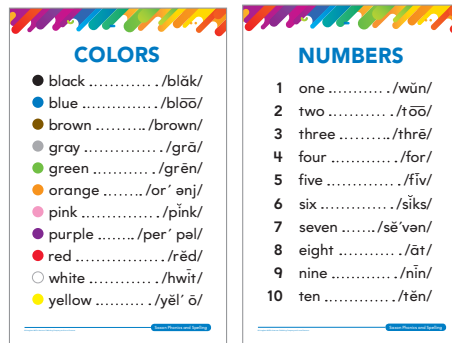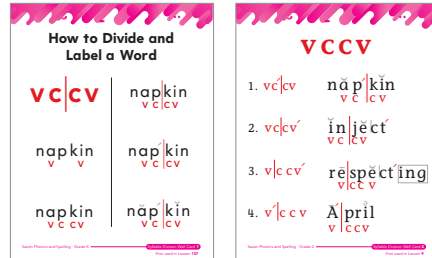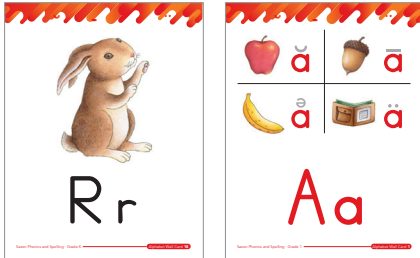
REVIEW DECKS

Alphabet Handwriting Strips

Letter Tiles

Decodable Readers

Worksheets/Homework

Fluency Readers

Homework Folders

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR
SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2

SIMPLE VIEW OF READING

According to the **Simple View of Reading**, a prominent and widely-accepted theory of reading development, reading comprehension is the product of word recognition and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). In order to read with comprehension, readers must simultaneously decode the words on a page while drawing on their knowledge of language to access the meaning of the text. **Decoding** involves connecting the spellings in words to their sounds and putting them together in order to read.
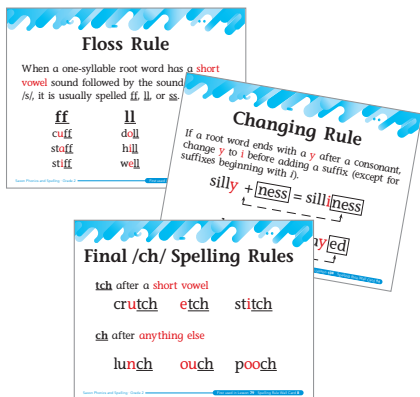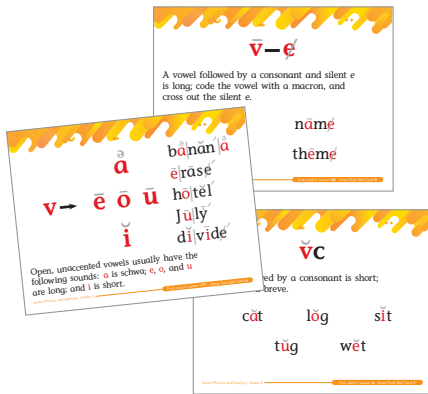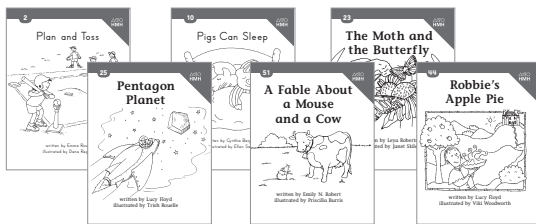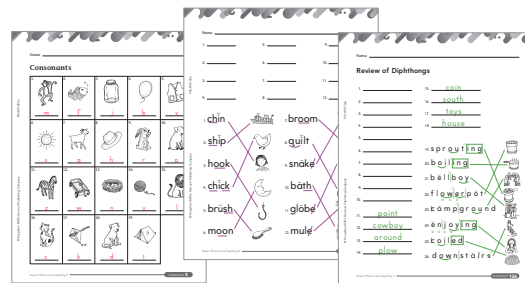
THE READING ROPE (SCARBOROUGH, 2001)

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

increasingly strategic

SKILLED READING:
Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING (alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)

increasingly automatic

The image, used with permission from the Publisher, originally appeared in the following publication: Scarborough, H.S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), Handbook of early literacy research (Vol. 1, pp. 97-110). Guildford Press. Permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

FIVE PILLARS OF LITERACY

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 primarily focuses on the decoding component of the Simple View of Reading. It is aligned with the phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency pillars identified by the National Reading Panel as essential elements of effective reading instruction (NICHD, 2000). However, it also incorporates the development of the vocabulary knowledge and comprehension pillars as the students establish a solid foundation in their early literacy skills.

Essential Elements of Literacy

Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Knowledge	Writing

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

POSITIVE LEARNING BEHAVIORS & HABITS

ASSESSMENT
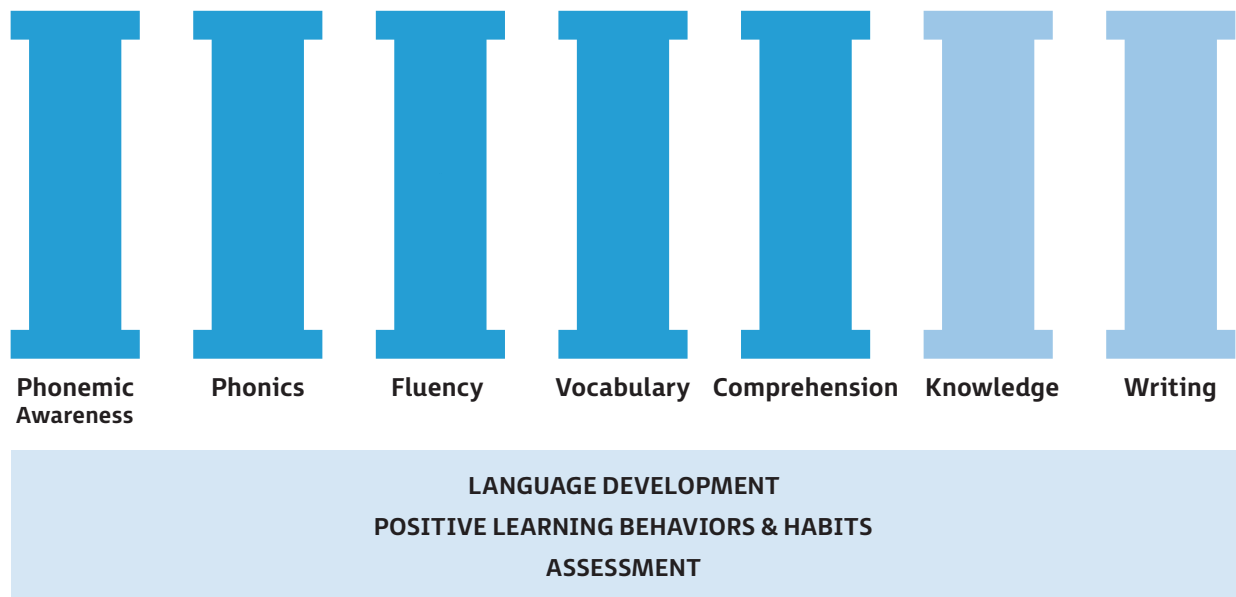
STRUCTURED LITERACY APPROACH

SYSTEMATIC, EXPLICIT, INCREMENTAL, AND CUMULATIVE INSTRUCTION WITH APPLICATION AND CONTINUAL REVIEW

Structured Literacy is a systematic, explicit, incremental, and cumulative approach to reading instruction that is based on evidence from research studies. **Systematic** means that the organization of material follows the logical order of the language. The sequence must begin with the easiest and most basic concepts and elements and progress methodically to more difficult concepts and elements. **Explicit** means that instruction includes the deliberate teaching of all concepts with continuous student-teacher interaction. It is not assumed that students will naturally deduce these concepts on their own. **Incremental** means that small amounts of information are presented each time. **Cumulative** means each step must be based on concepts previously learned.

SYSTEMATIC

Teachers following a Structured Literacy approach work to align instruction to a scope and sequence that reflects how students acquire new skills. Their lesson plans reflect the diversity of students in the class and include what research has documented as the best practices. Teachers incorporate language and examples that are appropriate for students' ages, vocabularies, attention spans, and needs, and provide students with meaningful opportunities for practicing new skills.

EXPLICIT

Research has shown that using a Structured Literacy approach that combines explicit literacy instruction with appropriate practice activities has significant, positive effects for beginning readers and writers, even those considered at risk for later struggles (Fien et al., 2015). Additionally, research has also demonstrated the value of differentiated instruction in improving literacy achievement for most students (Al Otaiba et al., 2009).

INCREMENTAL

Literature suggests there is value in a teaching method that uses small, easily digestible chunks of information (Brophy & Everston, 1976). Studies by Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) and Brophy and Everston (1976) demonstrate the importance of using incremental steps when teaching new information. Hirsch (1996) points out that the human mind can handle only a small amount of new information at one time: A child's mind needs time to digest the new information, fostering memory and meaning, before it can move on to a set of new information.

CUMULATIVE

Cognitive science research has shown that learning is cumulative. Complex cognitive skills can be broken into simpler skills, which can in turn be broken into even simpler skills, and lower-level skills must be mastered before higher-level skills can be mastered (Gagne & Briggs, 1974).

Reading research has demonstrated the effectiveness of teaching lower-level reading skills in a cumulative manner. The National Reading Panel reviewed 38 research studies and concluded that explicit and systematic phonics instruction—that is, instruction that was based on a clearly defined plan and sequence and that was directly taught to students—was more effective at helping children learn to read than responsive phonics instruction—individualized phonics mini-lessons provided if and when children need them—or no phonics instruction at all (NICHD, 2000). Based on their review of the research, the experts on the National Reading Panel reported that an estimated 60 percent of early readers need systematic, explicit, and cumulative phonics instruction in order to learn to read (NICHD, 2000).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 builds foundational skills with a unique, evidence-based method. The program provides **systematic, explicit, incremental, and cumulative instruction with application and continual review** across English language arts and early literacy with a specific focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, spelling, and fluency. Flexible implementation options allow the program to be used as a stand-alone or to supplement any core reading program.

SYSTEMATIC

Each grade level begins with lessons on the easiest concepts and progresses to more challenging concepts. For example, kindergarten begins with basic letter sounds and CVC words and later progresses to more complex sounds, including digraphs and r-controlled syllables. The program follows a research-based Scope and Sequence that orders the concepts into progressing levels of difficulty.

EXPLICIT

Every lesson at each grade level of the *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* program contains explicit instruction that the teacher delivers on foundational reading and spelling skills. The teacher uses direct instruction and modeling of the coding method for reading new words.

INCREMENTAL AND CUMULATIVE

New concepts are presented in small increments that are reviewed daily for the entire year. **New Increment** sections introduce a new concept to the students and provide adequate practice before moving students onto the next new topic. All content is cumulative and builds upon one skill to the next.

APPLICATION AND CONTINUAL REVIEW

The teacher also uses guided practice for each new concept, with program-provided scripting in each lesson. The **Application and Continual Review** section integrates the new skill with previously mastered skills, so these skills are taught and reviewed together. The program offers opportunities for independent practice in class and at home through worksheets. This method of reinforcement provides children with the practice they need to achieve mastery and success.

The Resources for Differentiation booklet suggests games of varying difficulty levels that children can play in small groups. These games use the **Kid Card Decks** to review letter names, sounds, keywords, blending, rhyming, and spelling. As with the **Review Decks**, children should use only those cards containing concepts they have been taught so it provides additional review of the concepts learned. The lesson number on each card indicates when its concept is introduced, and therefore allows the students to align their practice with the associated skill.

SYSTEMATIC, CUMULATIVE, AND RESEARCH-BASED SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

| LESSON | LESSON WARM UP | | | DIFFERENTIATION | |
LESSON TITLE	ALPHABET ACTIVITY	PHONEMIC/ PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	DAILY LETTER, SPELLING, AND SOUND REVIEW	OPTIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATION	
20 **Assessment**	• Review the alphabet • Identify vowels	**New Concepts:** • Blend sounds • Blend onset and rime	**Daily Letter and Sound Review** • Practice letter recognition • Practice affixes • Practice letter sounds • Practice sight words **Spelling Sound Review** • Spell letter sounds	Targeted remediation activities from the **Resources for Differentiation** booklet	
21 **The Letter _K_**	• Review vowels • Review the alphabet	**New Concepts:** • Identify syllables	**Daily Letter and Sound Review** • Practice letter recognition • Practice affixes • Practice letter sounds • Practice sight words **Spelling Sound Review** • Spell letter sounds • Spell words	**Support:** identify words with the /k/ sound **Reinforce:** code and read words with letter _k_ and blend _sk_ **Extend:** write dictated words	
22 **The Letter _C_**	• Name each letter in alphabetical order	**Review Concepts:** • Identify syllables	**Daily Letter and Sound Review** • Practice letter recognition • Practice affixes • Practice letter sounds • Practice sight words **Spelling Sound Review** • Spell letter sounds • Spell words	**Support:** identify the sound /k/ in words and tell what letter makes the sound **Reinforce:** read words with the letter _c_ and words with blends containing letter _c_ in context **Extend:** spell words	
23 **Spelling with _K_ and _C_**	• Name each letter in alphabetical order	**Review Concepts:** • Identify syllables	**Daily Letter and Sound Review** • Practice letter recognition • Practice affixes • Practice letter sounds • Practice sight words **Spelling Sound Review** • Spell letter sounds	**Support:** learn a visual trick to remember the K & C Spelling Rules **Reinforce:** identify which letter makes the /k/ sound in different words	

Image continued on next page

SYSTEMATIC, CUMULATIVE, AND RESEARCH-BASED SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

LESSON	NEW INCREMENT		APPLICATION AND CONTINUAL REVIEW	
LESSON TITLE	NEW CONCEPTS (PHONICS/PRINT AWARENESS)	SIGHT WORDS	REVIEW	READERS
20 Assessment				**Fluency Reader 2:** • Level A: <u>Who Is Fast?</u> • Level B: <u>A Sprint to the Frog Pond</u> • Level C: <u>Dog's Plan</u>
21 The Letter *K*	• syllable • reading and spelling consonant *k* • the blend *sk* • apostrophe	color	• read and spell words with suffix –*s* • code and read words with twin consonants • read v̆c and v̄′➔ words	
22 The Letter *C*	• reading and spelling consonant *c* • the /k/ sound of *c* • k–back • the blends *cl*, *cr*, *sc*, and *scr*		• read and spell words with suffix –*s* • code and read words with twin consonants • read and spell words with the blends *dr*, *fl*, *gl*, *pr*, *sk*, *sl*, and *st* • review punctuation • review apostrophe *s* • develop print awareness • read v̆c and v̄′➔ words	**Decodable Reader 5:** • <u>The Cat Cap</u>
23 Spelling with *K* and *C*	• spelling /k/ in initial and medial positions		• read and spell words with the blends *cl*, *pl*, *sk*, and *st* • code and read words with twin consonants • read v̆c and v̄′➔ words	

Saxon Phonics and Spelling 1

13

DIAGNOSTIC TEACHING AND THE USE OF ASSESSMENTS

Assessment and data are essential components of effective instruction. **Diagnostic teaching** entails continuously assessing students' progress, both informally (for example, through observation of students working alone and also in groups) and formally (for example, with standardized measures) and adjusting their instruction to meet the needs of the students. Teachers who want to maximize their students' learning need additional sources of data about how their students are doing (Al Otaiba et al., 2011). The right kinds of data inform teachers about the instruction that will most benefit their students, identify students who may need additional out-of-classroom help, and give thoughtful teachers feedback on how they are doing in meeting students' needs.

By measuring the key essential skills, assessment data can help teachers improve student achievement by providing a detailed description of each student's progress, as well as an aggregate portrait of how a class or grade has progressed. Thoughtful use of various formative, interim, and summative data ensures that all students receive instruction that meets these criteria (Pane et al., 2015):

- Instruction is appropriate for students' levels of development and needs.

- Instruction is efficient and seamless.

- Instruction provides students the time they need to master the skills and strategies that are taught.

- Instruction is sequenced flexibly, accommodates individual progress, and answers the critical question of "what next?"

Carlson and colleagues (2011) found evidence that, when implemented validly and reliably at scale, data-driven reform efforts can result in substantively and statistically significant improvements in achievement outcomes. For students with disabilities, it is particularly important to use student performance assessment data to monitor progress in order to determine ongoing instructional and interventional needs (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2008).

Not only do assessment data inform teachers the knowledge and skills that students have acquired and their level of mastery, but the practice of consistently taking low-stakes performance assessments, coupled with high expectations, and meaningful feedback help all students become assessment capable learners (Frey, Hattie, & Fisher, 2018).

HOW *SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2* ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Oral and written phonics assessments, sight word evaluations, spelling tests, and reading fluency assessments are built into the *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* program at regular intervals. Designed to meet screening, diagnostic, instructional, and evaluative objectives, these assessments gauge how well children are learning and retaining concepts to determine how best to adjust the pace of instruction. Assessments are both diagnostic and prescriptive in nature. Progress monitoring is also built into the program. Posttests allow schools to evaluate program effectiveness and track student performance.

If an assessment indicates a deficiency in concept knowledge, teachers can follow the recommended remediation activities that accompany the assessment. Teachers are encouraged throughout the program to conduct informal assessments on a regular basis. This may be through observation, while students complete worksheets in class, or by having students read their decodable readers aloud to the teacher.

The pace of the program can be adjusted to meet individual needs. The teacher may take two days to teach a lesson instead of one or may pause instruction to reteach a concept. The **Resources for Differentiation** booklet provided in the program offers activities to help reinforce skills while engaging students. Teachers can begin with administering

the **Phonological/Phonemic Awareness Assessments** to determine whether children's levels of phonological and phonemic awareness are adequate prior to phonics instruction. Phonemic awareness precedes effective phonics instruction, so identifying the class and students' individual knowledge in phonological awareness is important to determine where to begin in the program.

There are **Oral and Written Phonics and Spelling Assessments** to evaluate mastery of concepts and skills that have been practiced. Students are considered successful if they answer at least 80 percent of the questions correctly. If children do not achieve 80 percent accuracy on any given assessment, teachers can identify the concepts that students found difficult, and spend extra time reinforcing them. Each assessment lesson provides recommendations for practice and remediation activities to address specific issues. Directions for these activities, as well as additional information, are located in the Resources for Differentiation booklet.

Monitoring errors and providing prompt remediation are critical to ensuring each child's eventual success. Individual and classroom recording forms are included to help teachers track children's progress, identify their weaknesses, and share information with their parents.

Assessment

LESSON 40

LESSON PREPARATION

MATERIALS

- Review Decks
- Assessment 8
- Assessment 8 Recording Form
- Sight Word Evaluation Form
- ✦ Fluency Reader 6 (*Plant Some Seeds; optional*)
- Fluency Assessment Recording Forms
- ✦ Fluency Word List 6 (optional)
- Kid Card Decks
- ❑ handwriting paper (1 sheet per child)
- ❑ blank scratch paper (1 per child)
- ✦ Fluency Reader 6 (*Reed's Garden; What a Garden Needs; optional*)

Fluency Reader 6 (Level A)

Fluency Reader 6 (Level B)

Fluency Reader 6 (Level C)

BEFORE CLASS

- Add **Green Cards 47–58** to the **Kid Card Deck**.

PILLARS OF LITERACY

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Effective reading instruction in the early grades focuses on helping students understand the role that phonemic awareness plays in learning to read and write. **Phonemic awareness** refers to the ability to identify and manipulate individual speech sounds in oral language (NICHD, 2000). A **phoneme** is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds in the language. For example, the word cap has three phonemes (/k/, /a/, /p/), and the word clasp has five phonemes (/k/, /l/, /a/, /s/, /p/). Phonemic awareness is essential to reading because hearing the individual sounds in words is key to matching them with the letters when learning to decode.

The importance of phonemic awareness in learning to read has been well documented. The National Reading Panel reviewed decades of reading research and concluded that phonemic awareness and letter knowledge are the two best indicators of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of instruction. Recent research also shows that phonemic awareness is an essential precursor to reading, and that listening to and using language helps many, though not all, students gain this awareness prior to entering school (Brady, Braze, & Fowler, 2011).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 ensures that children develop the phonemic awareness that is critical to reading acquisition. The instruction found in the *Saxon* program places special emphasis on this critical skill throughout the grades. Kindergarten incorporates phonemic awareness instruction in all 140 lessons. Grade 1 integrates phonemic awareness instruction in lessons 1–70, and Grade 2 contains a booklet called **Phonological Awareness Instruction** that contains advanced phonological awareness activities for those students who need it. Activities progress from the most basic to the most complex in this comprehensive curriculum.

Early phonemic awareness instruction provides children with the essential foundation in the alphabetic principle; phonemic awareness is then reinforced throughout the remainder of *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* as a part of the daily lessons. Through regular play and oral activities that involve such skills as identifying sounds and syllables, rhyming, blending, phoneme segmentation, and phoneme deletion, children gradually develop phonemic awareness. A **Phonemic Awareness Assessment** is used in kindergarten to gauge children's readiness to learn phonics and is used in first grade to diagnose difficulties. With *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2*, all children are given ample opportunities to gain phonemic awareness, thus preparing them to become successful readers.

Interwined three-dimensional approach

PHONICS

Effective reading instruction in the early grades focuses on helping students learn letter-sound correspondences. After learning to hear the sounds of speech, the next step for students is to learn **phonics**– the relationship between written letters (called **graphemes**) and the individual sounds they represent (**phonemes**). As these understandings fall into place, students begin to decode. Initially, they may recognize familiar words by sight, but gradually they should apply what they know about letter-sound correspondences to decode words as they read and to encode words as they write.

Research has indicated that explicit and systematic instruction in phonics is a key element of effective reading programs, and an estimated 60 percent of early readers require explicit and systematic phonics instruction in order to learn to read (NICHD, 2000). The National Reading Panel reviewed 38 research studies and concluded that explicit and systematic phonics instruction—that is, instruction that was based on a clearly defined plan and sequence and that was directly taught to students—was more effective at helping children learn to read than responsive phonics instruction—individualized phonics mini-lessons provided if and when children need them—or no phonics instruction at all (NICHD, 2000).

In addition to teaching phonics skills explicitly with detailed explanations, modeling, and practice, effective reading teachers also include instruction in **syllable structure**, which can help guide pronunciation of a written word, and **morphology** (knowledge of word parts like roots and affixes), which can also provide reliable information about pronunciation and meaning. Mastering advanced decoding skills like syllable structure and morphology can facilitate reading multisyllabic words.

Effective reading instruction helps students master sound-symbol associations in two directions: visual to auditory (reading), and auditory to visual (spelling). Reading requires segmenting of whole words into the individual sounds, while **spelling** involves the blending of sounds and letters into whole words. As such, learning to spell reinforces learning to read; spelling and reading are the productive and receptive sides of the same coin.

Effective reading instruction in the early grades is often modeled on the Orton-Gillingham method of systematic, cumulative, explicit, and multisensory reading instruction. Dr. Samuel T. Orton and Anna Gillingham's pioneering scientific research in systematic phonics instruction demonstrated the importance of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements to what they termed the **language triangle**. Their studies spanned more than twenty years and drew on the fields of neurology, speech pathology, educational psychology, and public school teaching (Gillingham & Stillman, 1956).

Research also shows that teaching students to read by using decodable and strictly controlled text is highly effective for beginning reading success. Using controlled, high-frequency text provides practice with the words found in most beginning reading materials through third grade (Adams, 1990).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

The phonics instruction in *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* is explicit and systematic. Children are taught the sounds, the letter(s) that make the sounds, and how and why these letters come together to form words. In each lesson a single, accessible phonics increment, or concept, is introduced. These concepts are then continually practiced and reviewed in every subsequent lesson so that students are able to read and spell words of increasing complexity. Phonics instruction is reinforced—and each element of Orton and Gillingham's language triangle (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning) is incorporated—through a variety of engaging activities incorporating **multisensory instruction**. Children participate daily in fast-paced **flashcard** activities covering key phonics concepts such as letters, sounds, spelling, and sight words. Additional **card decks** provide individualized practice or remediation through games of varying difficulty levels. **Worksheets** allow children to apply what they have learned and allow teachers to track children's progress daily.

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2's instructional routines and practices build upon students' understanding from week to week. Students connect sounds and symbols auditorily by seeing the symbols that make the sounds (reading) on **Letter Cards**, **Picture Cards**, and **Wall Cards**, and reading each sound aloud. Students also connect sounds and symbols visually while writing the letters (spelling) by completing a spelling activity for each lesson. Students are expected to identify and write the symbols that make various sounds in these activities. Students begin blending sounds to form words, as well as segmenting words into individual sounds. The phonics skills are introduced from simple to complex in a cumulative and incremental fashion through *Saxon's* research-based **Scope and Sequence**.

PHONICS WORKSHEETS
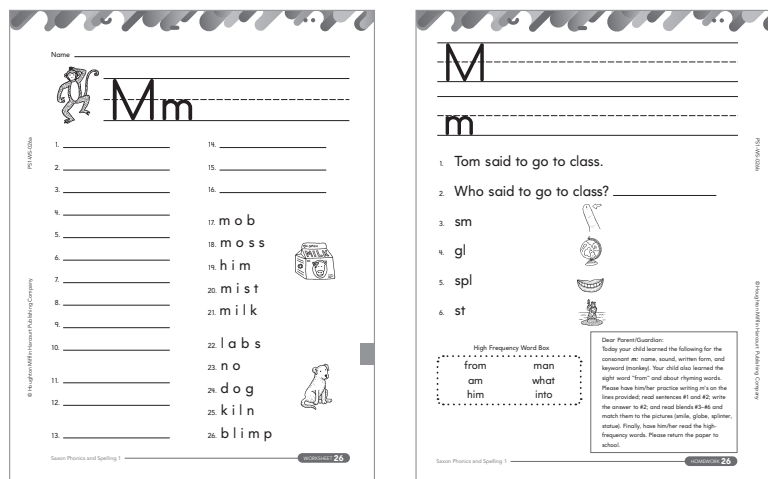
KID CARDS
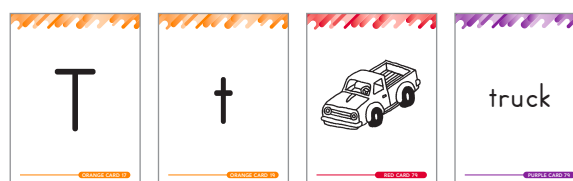
Decodable Readers motivate children to read and focus on the letters, sounds, sight words, syllable patterns, digraphs, diphthongs, and other phonics skills that they have learned. **Fluency Readers** consisting of three levels (Level A, B, and C) provide practice for all children—from the struggling student to the more advanced. By reading smoothly with high-frequency words, children gain confidence reading with expression and understanding.

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 includes teaching of the six basic **syllable types** in the English language: closed, vowel-consonant-e, open, consonant-le, r-controlled, and vowel pair. Knowledge of syllable types is an important organizing idea. By knowing the syllable type, the reader can better determine the sound of the vowel in the syllable. Syllable division rules heighten the reader's awareness of where a long, unfamiliar word may be divided for greater accuracy in reading the word. Students begin with one-syllable closed words such as *lit* and *pat*. Students are introduced to vowel pairs oo and ee. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* lays a solid foundation in phonics and fluency so that children are better able to enhance their vocabularies through independent reading. *Saxon's* **reading and spelling word lists** contain hundreds of decodable words and sight words, all of which are incorporated in lessons or student reading during the year.

The inclusion of **high-frequency words** in the program is informed by the Dolch® high-frequency word list. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* focuses on concepts such as morphemes, suffixes, and prefixes, allowing children to better assimilate into their vocabulary those words that are similar to words they have already learned.

Through regular play and oral activities that involve such skills as identifying sounds and syllables, rhyming, blending, phoneme segmentation, and phoneme deletion, children establish their phonemic awareness skills and gradually develop decoding skills. Children also read only those letters/letter clusters, sounds, and sight words that they have learned to decode so they are able to achieve **automaticity** without struggling over unknown sounds, letters, or words. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* enables children to have many successful reading experiences.

In *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2*, student text is both decodable and carefully controlled. The *Saxon* approach differs from most other programs in that students are exposed only to words with phonetic concepts that have previously been explicitly taught in the Saxon lessons, optimizing the potential for student success. By contrast, most other phonics programs ask students to read words with phonetic concepts they have not yet been taught.

Coding is one tool used to help create successful readers. Children are taught how to code words by marking common vowel sounds and patterns, variant sounds of consonants, silent letters, consonant combinations, final stable syllables, syllable division patterns, accented syllables, and voiced letters. This helps students identify the sound of each letter/letter combination and thus read the words. This method gives children the ability to approach new words confidently. Children should use coding as a tool only until the phonetic principles become automatic for them.

DECODABLE READERS
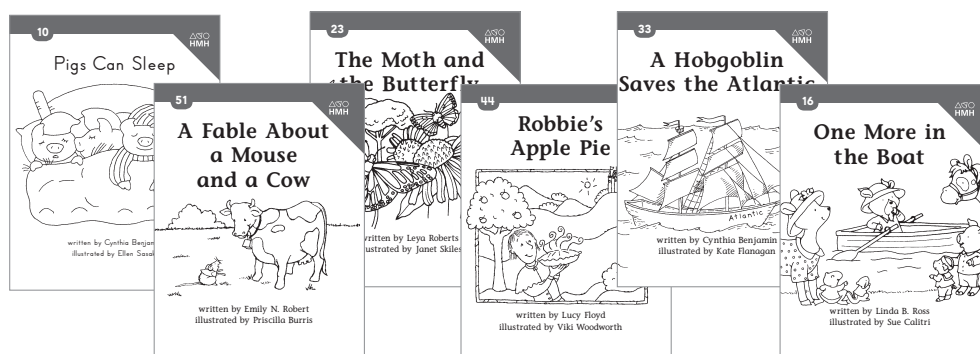
PHONICS

Once students know a few consonant and vowel sounds and their corresponding letters, they can start to sound out and blend them into words in isolation and in context. In this process, they must use their recognition of letter shapes, understand the order of letters in words, access the sounds of these letters, and put together the meanings of the words (and often illustrations) to create a basic understanding of the words on the page or screen (Adams, 1990; Cunningham & Allington, 2011).

Some students in this stage of literacy development will begin to experiment with so-called invented spelling to begin to express themselves in writing. These early efforts may include primarily consonants, but gradually, students' spelling moves toward more traditional formats. These early efforts at writing provide teachers a clear picture of how students are putting the letters and sounds together; savvy teachers can use students' work diagnostically to determine if more direct instruction is needed (Cunningham & Allington, 2011; Ehri, 2014).

Understanding how words are spelled allows for more efficient and proficient writing and reading. To read and write words appropriately and fluently and to appreciate fully how words work in context, instruction must balance authentic reading and writing with purposeful word study. In word study and spelling instruction, students examine the sounds of letters, word structure, and meaning. Students are taught the processes and strategies to understand the words they read and write. This knowledge, in turn, is applied to new words students encounter in reading (Templeton, 1998).

SPELLING RULE WALL CARDS

Floss Rule

When a one-syllable root word has a short vowel sound followed by the sound /f/, /l/, or /s/, it is usually spelled ff, ll, or ss.

ff	**ll**	**ss**
cuff	doll	boss
staff	hill	miss
stiff	well	pass

Final /ch/ Spelling Rules

tch after a short vowel

crutch   etch   stitch

ch after anything else

lunch   ouch   pooch

Changing Rule

If a root word ends with a y after a consonant, change y to i before adding a suffix (except for suffixes beginning with i).

silly + ness = silliness

play + ed = played

SPELLING DECKS

Saxon Phonics and Spelling · Grade 2

/o͝o/
(as in "hook")

Teacher gives sound: /o͝o/
Children echo same: /o͝o/

Articulation Support: Round your lips a little. Put the tip of your tongue at the bottom of your mouth, far below your teeth. Make the sound with your voice: /o͝o/.

After Lesson 37 they say: "digraph oo"
while they write: oo

Keyword: hook

First used in lesson 37 Spelling Card 39

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

The instructional routines and practices build upon students' understanding from week to week. Students connect sounds and symbols auditorily by seeing the symbols that make the sounds on Letter Cards, Picture Cards, and Wall Cards, and reading each sound aloud (reading). Students also connect sounds and symbols visually through an encoding process (spelling) by completing a spelling activity for each lesson. Students are expected to identify and write the symbols that make various sounds in these activities.

By learning the most common ways to spell specific sounds, children can successfully spell all words with regular spelling patterns and are not limited to merely memorizing words. A series of short, simple rules explaining typical spelling patterns will be taught and continually reviewed. Each spelling rule is posted on a wall card for children to refer to when needed. Words that do not follow the spelling rules, called irregular spelling words, are also taught and practiced.

The **Student Spelling and Dictionary Reference Booklet** is available for each student in Grades 1 and 2 and serves as a useful resource to help students master spelling rules and recognize irregular spellings.

Spelling Deck Spelling cards teach regular spelling patterns for common sounds. Each Spelling Card includes an Articulation Support photo of a child modeling the mouth position for the sound featured on the card, along with text instruction about how children should position their mouths to produce and properly articulate each sound.

Spelling Rule Wall Cards Spelling rule wall cards explain rules for spelling specific sounds and serve as reference tools.

STUDENT SPELLING DICTIONARY AND REFERENCE BOOKLET
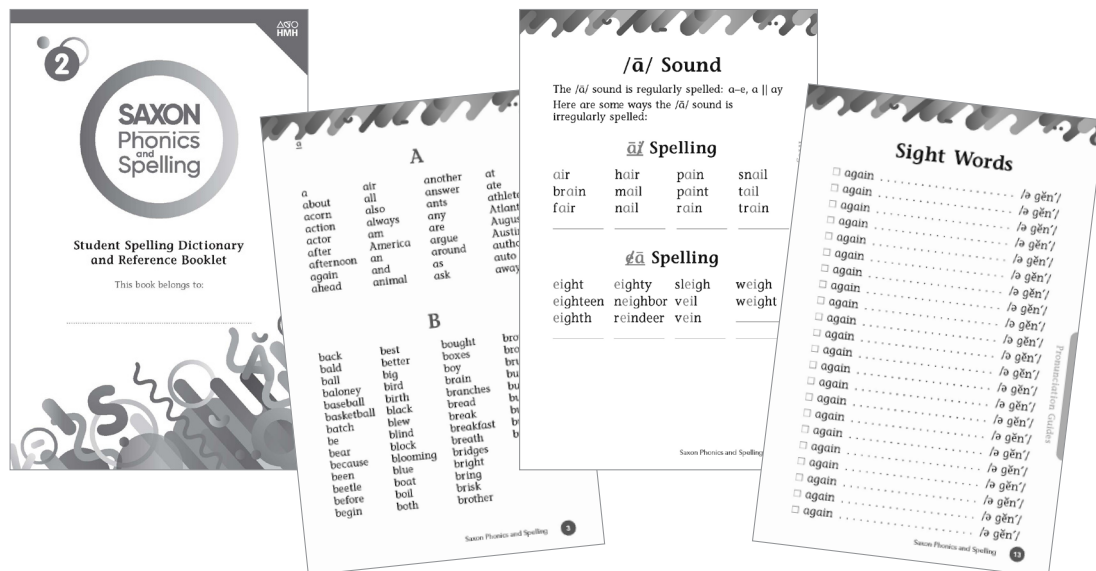
FLUENCY

An important ability underlying surface literacy learning and contributing to deeper literacy learning is **fluency**, or the ability to read connected text smoothly and easily (Denton et al., 2013). Fluency is a reading skill that acts as a bridge between decoding and comprehension (NICHD, 2000). When students' word identification becomes fast and accurate, they have freed up some "cognitive space" to draw on their broader knowledge of language and to comprehend what they are reading. The three key elements of fluency are **accuracy** (pronouncing the words in a text correctly), **rate** (being accurate and reading at an appropriate speed to support comprehension), and **prosody** (reading with appropriate phrasing, intonation, and expression). **Accuracy monitoring** and **self-correction** are also key skills that connect fluency with comprehension, as good readers pay attention to whether what they are reading makes sense and apply strategies to make corrections as needed.

Automaticity In order to become a fluent reader, readers must master lower-level reading skills to the point of automaticity. Cognitive science research has demonstrated the importance of automaticity to expertise. Anderson's theory explains the development of expertise through three stages: cognitive, associative, and autonomous (Anderson, 1983). During the cognitive stage, learners rehearse and memorize facts related to a particular domain or skill that guide them in problem solving. During the associative stage, learners detect errors and misunderstandings through continual practice and feedback. During the autonomous stage, learners have practiced a skill to the extent that it becomes automated, so the amount of working memory needed to perform the skill is reduced. At this point, the learner has developed expertise.

Strong readers are those who have developed expertise and automaticity in word identification. When readers are able to recognize letters and words effortlessly, they can devote their attention to making sense of what they read (Laberge & Samuels, 1984). When word identification becomes automatic, readers have freed up some "cognitive space" to draw on their broader knowledge of language in order to comprehend what they are reading (Baker et al., 2017). Strong readers pay attention to whether what they are reading makes sense and apply strategies to make corrections as needed.

For many teachers, fluency means primarily the ability to read orally, at a natural pace, and with expression. However, this definition, while accurate, is limited. Fluency is so much more and is intricately linked to reading comprehension because strong readers demonstrate silent reading fluency as they recognize words and their meaning automatically and can attend primarily to making sense out of what they read (NICHD, 2000). Students may not read quickly; they may have to go back to reread sections or to look up the meanings of some words. Students' ability to read longer text and increase their time reading and rereading passages demonstrate their reading stamina, that is, perseverance and flexible application of the strategies needed to comprehend what the author is communicating (Trainin, Hiebert, & Wilson, 2015).

Effective reading teachers model fluent reading when they read aloud, especially as they pause for punctuation or change their voice to show expressiveness. Teachers demonstrate prosody in their oral reading and can explicitly explain what they are doing as they read by asking how the change in inflection changes the meaning implied by the words on the page. As teachers help students to become fluent readers, they need to reassure them that fluency means reading with comprehension, not merely saying the words as quickly as possible. Teachers model this distinction in their oral reading by pausing to question the meaning of words, the implications of word choice, or other aspects of the texts they are reading.

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Through the use of leveled **Fluency Readers** and **Fluency Masters**, *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* provides explicit, systematic practice for children to develop reading fluency. In addition, the **Fluency Instruction** booklet provides guidance for teaching fluency, including modeling fluent reading, guiding children through repeated readings, and providing opportunities for independent reading. Instruction is also included for administering assessments and tracking progress. Finally, tips for at-home support are provided.

The **Fluency Readers** in *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* provide explicit, systematic practice to help children develop reading fluency. These readers come in three distinct reading levels (Level A, Level B, and Level C) that allow children to practice reading at their independent reading level. Beginning in Lesson 31, Fluency Readers are introduced and may be read independently or in small groups. Lessons include instruction for teaching print awareness, previewing story vocabulary, and checking children's understanding. All levels of each fluency reader discuss the same theme, but they have differences in sentence complexity, syntax, and number of words per page. Understanding the specific differences between the levels can help teachers meet the individual needs of the children in their class.

Fluency Masters To improve children's word recognition skills and to facilitate fluent reading, Fluency Word Lists are provided in the Teacher's Resource Binder. **Fluency Word Lists** promote automaticity with high-frequency words and are designed for use with the Fluency Instruction Booklet. Each list corresponds to a set of Fluency Readers and may be photocopied and used as often as necessary in whole-class, small-group, or tutorial settings.

They may also be sent home for children to practice reading to their parents. **Fluency Passages** feature short excerpts from the Fluency Readers. They can be used throughout the year to provide focused practice with reading prosody and expression.

Formal and Informal Fluency Assessments Conducting formal and informal reading fluency assessments will help teachers measure children's reading abilities, identify areas for reinforcement, and monitor their progress. Teachers may assess children informally at any time by listening to them read and recording their observations on the form provided. Teachers can administer formal fluency assessments using the sets of **Fluency Assessment Masters**, which feature excerpts from the Fluency Readers. Each set of assessments consists of selections with three levels of difficulty that support, reinforce, and extend the content for the students. Three sets are provided, so teachers can assess children at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.

Teachers use the results of this ongoing assessment to guide instruction as teachers help children work toward fluency benchmarks.

Tracking Charts Fluency Readers Tracking Charts, located behind the Recording Forms tab in the Teacher's Resource Binder, facilitate classroom management and help track children's progress.

FLUENCY READERS
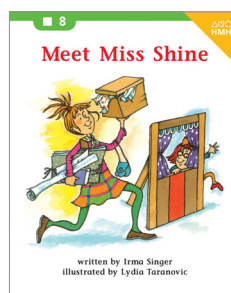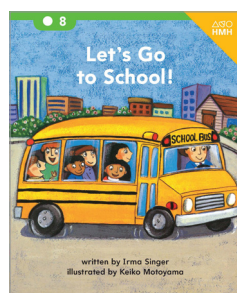
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Vocabulary knowledge includes knowing the meanings of words and phrases and also their relationships to other words and phrases (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, words from the same category). Because written vocabulary tends to use different types of words than oral vocabulary, knowledge of written vocabulary must be gained through a combination of explicit instruction and reading new words in context. Additionally, because the brain stores words in conceptually related networks, multiple exposures to a word are important to building vocabulary; each time a word is read and its meaning is accessed in the brain, the exposure enriches the entire network.

It is not just the breadth of a student's vocabulary knowledge, but also the depth of that knowledge that supports reading comprehension (NICHD, 2000).

Research has shown that from third grade on, vocabulary knowledge is a stronger predictor of academic achievement than decoding skill (Biemiller, 2012). Vocabulary knowledge refers to more than words and their definitions; it also refers to one's ability to understand language in different ways and to use language well. Students need to become flexible word users—able to understand and use rich, full vocabulary to describe, explain, ask, critique, make requests, show

emotions, and do myriad of other things. They need to be able to understand connotative and denotative meanings; idioms, metaphors, synonyms, and antonyms; and the meanings of words that are implied by body language, tone of voice, and other means (Biemiller, 2012). As students move through elementary school, they must enrich their oral speaking, listening, reading, and writing vocabularies.

Effective direct instruction in vocabulary should include explicitly teaching some vocabulary (for example, as a pre-reading activity) and teaching specific vocabulary-learning strategies, including use of print and digital dictionaries and online thesauri (Graves, 2000). Strategies include learning words for comparing and contrasting, classifying, and creating metaphors and analogies—and so much more. To complement direct instruction, teachers also need to fill their classrooms with activities that develop "word consciousness" and the sorts of language play that encourages students to challenge themselves and others to learn new words and to think deeply about language (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2014; Graves, 2000; McKeown, Beck, & Sandora, 2012).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 lays a solid foundation in phonics and fluency so that children are better able to enhance their vocabularies through independent reading. Research shows that phonics instruction makes children better readers and that better and more frequent readers have more extensive vocabularies. *Saxon's* reading and spelling word lists contain hundreds of decodable words and sight words, all of which are incorporated in lessons or student reading during the year. The inclusion of high-frequency words in the program is informed by the Dolch® high-frequency word list. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* focuses on concepts such as morphemes, suffixes, and prefixes, allowing children to better assimilate into their vocabulary those words that are similar to words they have already learned.

A controlled vocabulary is used throughout this program. Children read only those words containing letters, letter combinations, and sounds that have been taught. This provides immediate reinforcement of concepts learned and also ensures that children experience continued success as they learn letter names and sounds. The worksheets begin with single words and then progress to adding new letters and sounds as they are taught. The decodable and fluency readers follow a similar pattern of incremental development.

COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is the ability to make sense of what you read (NICHD, 2000). According to the Simple View of Reading, reading comprehension is the product of word recognition and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Comprehension is the ultimate goal of learning to read, and even beginning readers benefit from instruction that introduces them to a variety of strategies to help them understand different kinds of texts and their text structures (Duke, 2000).

Research on effective reading instruction has shown that part of beginning comprehension instruction is teacher modeling of the comprehension strategies that mature readers use automatically (Duke & Pearson, 2002). The daily read-aloud period is an ideal means for this instruction—so long as teachers remember that merely reading aloud isn't enough. Students need to be actively involved in asking and answering questions, making predictions, or explaining characters' motivations or other actions in what they are hearing. Researchers have found positive relationships between students' reading growth and the extent to which they have engaged in "analytic talk" during the back-and-forth with teachers during read alouds (McGee & Schickendanz, 2007).

This makes sense because the listening comprehension of young learners far surpasses their emerging reading comprehension skills.

Of course, this kind of instruction is most effective when teachers have access to high-quality children's literature in a variety of genres and representing different cultural backgrounds and experiences. It is especially important that students experience high-quality informational books in addition to narrative literature representing different cultural backgrounds and experiences (Duke, 2000). One of the great advantages of introducing students to reading comprehension skills by giving them opportunities to read on their own in books at the right level is that the experience reinforces that the students themselves do indeed have the capacity to become successful readers (Sisk, Burgoyne, Sun, Butler, & Macnamara, 2018).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 provides children with the skills and practice they need to become fluent readers, thus opening the door to increased comprehension. *Saxon* lessons include instruction in print awareness and previews of story vocabulary to prepare children to comprehend what they read. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* provides children with many opportunities to read for meaning through the use of decodable student readers and worksheets that have been carefully written to support the phonics instruction. **Fiction** and **nonfiction** decodable student readers are provided at each grade level so that children practice reading with confidence. **Controlled vocabulary** is used throughout the series. Children read only those letters/letter clusters, sounds, and sight words that they have learned. The controlled vocabulary reinforces the concepts that students have learned and allows them to approach and tackle new words confidently. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* enables students to have many successful reading experiences without struggling with unknown sounds, letters, or words.

The sections entitled **"Understanding the Story"** enhance the children's understanding of the story during whole-group instruction time. Fluency is cultivated through explicit, systematic practice of high-frequency words, and as children achieve or increase fluency, they are better able to read for understanding. Decodable student readers and fluency readers include comprehension questions so that parents and teachers can determine whether children understand the stories they are reading. Worksheets, homework, and assessments in Grades 1 and 2 include decodable passages with decodable comprehension questions to allow students to independently access the meaning of the stories they read. The program helps students shift the focus from learning and applying skills to reading a variety of literature. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* provides a wealth of reading opportunities and a foundation in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary that is critical to comprehension.

HANDWRITING

The relationship between reading and writing is powerful, from the early stages of literacy learning (Ehri & Roberts, 2006; Gehsmann & Templeton, 2011/2012) and throughout the elementary grades, when students should be writing in all their content areas (Donovan & Smolkin, 2011). Handwriting skills from the early years are considered to be a critical factor of academic success, and difficulty with handwriting can interfere with academic achievement (Feder & Majnemer, 2007).

Handwriting studies of typically developing elementary children have found that the quality of handwriting develops rapidly during Grade 1 and reaches a plateau by Grade 2. By Grade 3, students' handwriting skills become more automatic, organized, and a means through which to develop ideas (Blote & Hamstra-Bletz, 1991).

The youngest learners may have very poor handwriting, use invented spelling, and ignore grammar rules. However, across the grades, students in classrooms where writing is a daily practice will learn these essentials through a combination of systematic and direct instruction, practice in applying them, and corrective feedback (Graham et al., 2012).

As students' handwriting skills increase and their foundational literacy skills are established, students' writing can become more expressive; and students' written work provides teachers insight into their mastery of spelling and language structures.
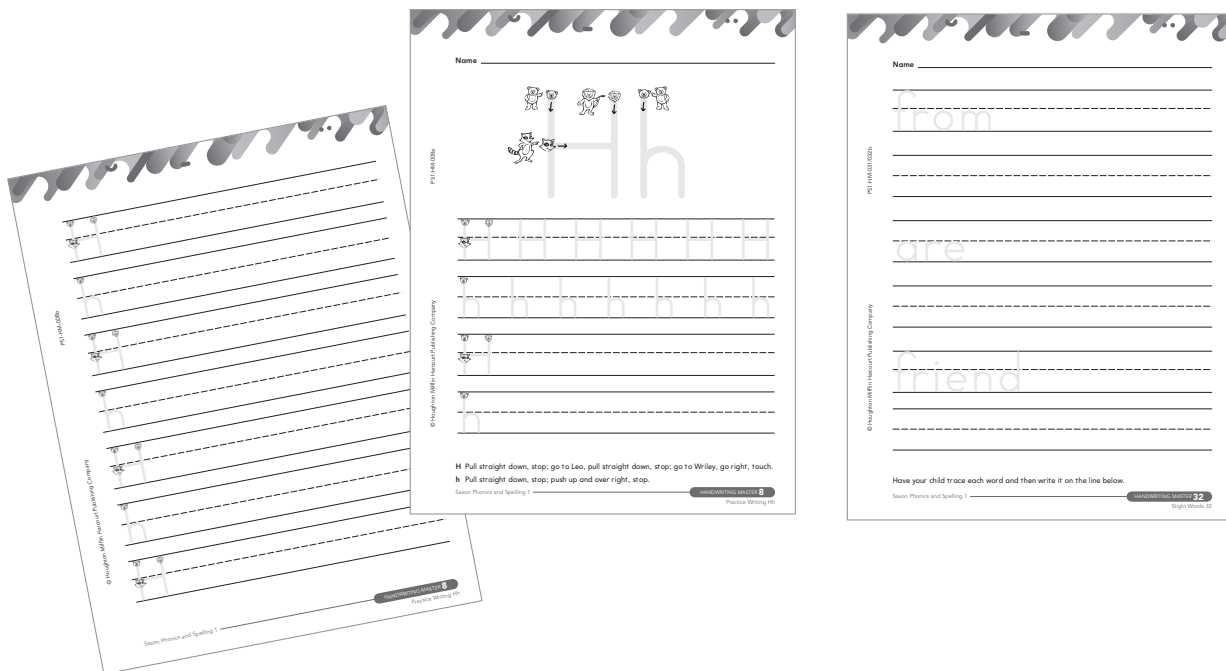
HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

To facilitate the teaching of handwriting, a **Handwriting Instruction** booklet and accompanying **Handwriting Masters** are provided. The booklet offers explicit instruction for teaching children how to write, and the instruction is easily adaptable to handwriting styles other than the one provided on the masters.

Three kinds of masters are provided:

- **Pre-handwriting masters** teach children how to form the eight strokes essential to forming all letters of the alphabet.

- **Letter Template and Practice Writing masters** give children opportunities to practice forming capital and lowercase letters. In Grade 2, the handwriting masters include cursive options as well.

- **Sight Words masters** reinforce the correct spellings and recognition of those non-phonetic words that must be memorized.

Letters are chosen based on how frequently they appear in English and how easy it is to make short words with them. Particularly in Grade K, students practice how to write all of the strokes of the letter. The block-style letters used in the handwriting program provide the best handwriting style for all children. This style of writing ensures children rarely have to lift their pencils off the paper (thereby losing their spatial orientation) before completing a letter.

Alphabet Handwriting Strips Each child is given a laminated Alphabet Handwriting Strip, featuring the alphabet in both Saxon block-style and continuous stroke-style lettering. In Grade 2, cursive letters and appropriate instruction on letter formation are included with the block lettering format. As on the Alphabet Wall Cards, vowels appear in red and consonants in black to help children distinguish between the two. The strips feature the keyword illustration that corresponds to the most common sound of each letter. They also display illustrations of a right hand and a left hand for orientation.

ALPHABET HANDWRITING STRIPS
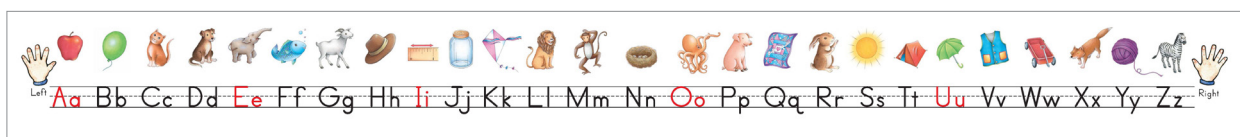
Saxon's Block Style Lettering

Continuous Stroke Style Lettering

MULTISENSORY INSTRUCTION

ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (2000)

According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000), using a multisensory approach is one of the most effective ways to teach children to read. It is essential to the learning process that students use as many of their senses as possible (Gardner, 1999). In particular, a combination of visual, auditory and kinesthetic elements enhance children's success in reading (Neumann et al., 2012). By combining the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements with instruction that is direct, systematic, sequential, and cumulative, teachers can better equip struggling students to learn basic language skills (Birsh, 2011). Many students learn best when they participate in activities that involve physical movement (Gardner, 1999). Kinesthetic learners can use natural movements to explore concepts, solve creative problems, and transfer ideas from one curriculum area to another (Zaxxai, 1997).

The use of multisensory games to introduce, practice and review skills is particularly motivating to students (Bisso & Luckner, 1996). Multisensory games can facilitate instruction and create variety in teachers' instructional delivery (McCarthy, 2000), which helps keep students actively engaged in the learning process (McCarthy, 2000; Birsh, 1999). Games build students' curiosity, help make learning to read fun (Gould & Stern, 1994), and can be an incentive for rapid and accurate decoding (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg, & Beeler, 1998). Metalinguistic games can be especially effective as an early intervention for children with reading problems (Blachman, 1991).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 provides various opportunities for multisensory instruction.

Throughout the year, students recite the alphabet and actively play games to practice letter recognition and the alphabet sequence. Other games in the series, such as Letter Tile and Kid Card activities, help students practice word recognition and spelling concepts while physically manipulating the placement and order of the tiles and cards.

Students frequently engage in an activity called skywriting—tracing a letter in the air. This activity requires students to use the larger muscles of their upper arms, which helps form muscle-brain interactions that connect the physical motions of skywriting a letter with the impression of those motions on the brain. The large motion can then be mimicked by the smaller muscles in the hand that are used for handwriting.

Other recommended activities that incorporate multisensory learning while forming letters are using sandpaper letters, constructing letters with kinetic sand or wax sticks, and tracing the letters on a tray with glitter, sand, or salt. Activities for using manipulatives such as magnetic tiles, wooden blocks, and letter-building shapes and instructions on how to make build your own multisensory project are incorporated in the Resources for Differentiation booklet.

Teachers can also lead the class with whole-body movement while forming letters such as Letter Yoga or Jumping Jack Letter Sounds.

Skywriting

Objective: to practice forming letters using gross motor skills

Directions

› Have children stand facing you, each standing an arm's length apart.

› Tell children what letter they will skywrite. On the board, draw a two-foot-tall capital and lowercase form of this letter.

› Stand or sit with your back to the children and demonstrate skywriting the capital letter, using your pointer finger and keeping your arm straight without bending the wrist or elbow. Use the letter talk through in the **Handwriting Instruction** booklet on pp. 8–10 to narrate as you form each stroke.

› Have children skywrite the capital letter with you as you do this several times.

› Repeat for the lowercase letter. Then alternate between having children skywrite capital and lowercase letters.

› **Optional extension:** Turn off the lights and have children take turns using flashlights to skywrite the capital and lowercase letter.

DOUBLE-DOSING APPROACH

Research indicates that children who are poor readers lack understanding of core reading skills. Several studies have found that children who have difficulty reading lack the ability to structure words phonetically and be able to recognize and transfer words from print to speech (Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 1994; Stanovich, 1988). The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (Lyon, 1998) reported that for 90 percent to 95 percent of poor readers, early prevention programs that combine instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, and reading comprehension can increase reading skills to average levels.

Research has shown that an extra 30 to 40 minutes of reading instruction and practice per day—a technique called "double-dosing"—can improve the abilities of below-level readers, thus helping to close the achievement gap. A study by Simmons et al. (2002) found that providing 30 extra minutes of daily, explicit reading instruction and practice on phonological awareness, alphabet understanding, and spelling taught in an explicit manner was highly effective. This study also provided evidence that children who begin a double-dosing program in kindergarten are less likely to leave first grade as below-level readers. According to Simmons et al., "Attaining proficiency in phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding allows the instructional focus to shift to the next high-order skill (e.g., blending, word reading, etc.) to optimize reading development and get students to gaining meaning from text as soon as possible."

National education committees have also supported programs that give children extra reading instruction that focuses on phonological awareness and alphabet understanding. The American Federation of Teachers (2001) has encouraged schools to use double-dosing to help students become better readers. In addition, the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) has stressed the necessity of providing quality reading instruction on phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding as early as possible to prevent later reading problems in children.

Many schools have used double-dosing to decrease the number of below-level readers and increase reading scores on standardized tests. The Bethel School District in Eugene, Oregon, implemented a double-dosing program providing at-risk kindergartners with 30 extra minutes of phonics instruction every day, along with bimonthly reading assessments. Before the district implemented the instruction, 15 percent of students left the first grade unable to read. Since implementation, only 2 percent have left as nonreaders (Paglin, 2003). A school official attributed student success to the addition of different instructional materials that are used for double-dosing reading instruction.

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2
ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 provides explicit instruction in the three areas research has shown to benefit from a double-dosing approach: phonemic awareness, alphabetic understanding (including phonics), and spelling. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* in conjunction with a core reading program is a structured and effective way of providing a double-dose of instruction in essential foundational skills.

User guides correlated with core reading programs are available to help teachers seamlessly integrate *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* with the core reading program used in their school. Concepts taught in the core reading program can be reinforced with the *Saxon* program through the use of explicit daily instruction, practice, and review. The *Saxon* technique and materials complement the core instruction, incorporate multisensory teaching, and foster assimilation, mastery, and complete understanding of concepts and skills.

Diagnostic assessments, accompanied by remediation activities, assist the teacher in monitoring student progress and individualizing instruction as needed. The kit format of the programs minimizes the time a teacher spends preparing, and the scripted dialogue maximizes time spent teaching.

The research underlying *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* is supported by improved standardized-test scores and other measures reported by classroom teachers. A purposeful double-dosing approach that incorporates *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* into core reading instruction increases the potential for all students to become more successful readers.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Increasingly, educators are becoming aware of the neuroscience factors that influence students' learning trajectories and are emphasizing the importance of classroom environments that acknowledge these differences and allow students to help shape their own learning. Approaches that allow for students' individual biology, experiences, background knowledge, and relationships to converge in dynamic ways optimize the likelihood that all students will learn. For this convergence to be effective, students must be supported as they actively engage with new concepts, build new knowledge, and augment their existing knowledge. This process will take different amounts of time for each student, but the social nature of elementary classrooms—the collaborative interaction of students—supports all learners (Melnick, Cook-Harvey, & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Students will differ in what they have experienced prior to school entry and what they experience outside school, and these factors contribute to their learning, no matter how positive their classroom environment may be (Sheppard, 2017). Even in the most welcoming and supportive classrooms, students will likely differ widely, and teachers need to be prepared to differentiate to meet their needs (Opitz & Ford, 2008). Today's classrooms are diverse, with some students reading above grade level, others at grade level, English learners (ELs), students with disabilities (SWDs), and students who have been diagnosed with dyslexia. These students may pose challenges to teachers, but teachers have a responsibility to teach all students, including those who may be striving readers.

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 is designed to support all types of students across the curriculum. Instruction is flexibly paced to optimize individual growth, with an emphasis on using assessment and observation to inform each student's path (move back, stay on course, accelerate). Teachers can use the **Resources for Differentiation** booklet in order to adjust the pace of instruction to meet the needs of each individual and the whole class.

ADJUSTING THE PACE:

Typically, four or five lessons and an assessment (assessments appear at the end of the fourth lesson in each series in kindergarten and after every five lessons in Grades 1 and 2) should be completed each week. It's usually best to teach one lesson per day, using the suggested reinforcement activities to strengthen weak areas. The fifth or sixth day (assessment day) may also be used to reteach a difficult lesson, remediate, or meet special school-district objectives. Teachers might find it necessary, however, to adjust the pace of the program.

TO SLOW THE PACE:

- Teachers present new material only when they have a full week (five school days) in which to do so.

- During the short weeks (four or fewer school days), teachers review previously taught information and play games to reinforce skills that are weak, which are incorporated in the Resources for Differentiation booklet.

TO ACCELERATE THE PACE:

- Teachers cover two lessons at once by combining the Lesson Warm-Up from one lesson with the New Increments from both. This is best accomplished with two lessons whose new concepts are similar, such as two new consonants. Children may then complete the entire worksheet from the second lesson or only the front sides of both worksheets.

- Although two lessons may be combined as one, it is recommended not to skip an entire lesson or change the order of lessons in order to accelerate the pace.

OPTIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATION:

Small-group activities designed to support children at three different skill levels are provided at the end of each lesson to review and/or build on the focus skill of the lesson. The activity levels are Support, Reinforce, and Extend. It is important to remember that each child grows and learns at their own pace and that the pace at which any given child learns can vary over time. Teachers can evaluate children's skills to determine which **Options for Differentiation** activity best suits each individual at the end of every lesson.

OPTIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATION: LEVELS EXPLAINED		
● SUPPORT	■ REINFORCE	▲ EXTEND
For children who are **struggling to learn** a particular skill or concept, or who show signs of dyslexia.	For children who demonstrate **on-level** comprehension of a concept or acquisition of a skill.	For children who demonstrate **above-level** mastery of a concept or skill.

STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin that is characterized by an "unexpected difficulty in reading for an individual who has the intelligence to be a much better reader, most commonly caused by a difficulty in the phonological process, which affects the ability of an individual to speak, read, and spell" (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020, p.100). Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (IDA, 2020).

Early identification, remediation, and providing accommodations where necessary are critical for minimizing these secondary consequences and others such as the detrimental effects of experiencing repeated failure. Developing a dislike for reading can make problems worse if students avoid reading and thereby fall further behind. Therefore, providing systematic, explicit instruction and multiple opportunities of practice and review are effective instructional strategies for students with dyslexia and critical to implement from the early grades.

Research indicates that students with dyslexia perform worse in reading irregular and nonsense words compared to regular words, suggesting that impairments in decoding are characteristic of dyslexia (Ziegler et al., 2008). Recent research has highlighted the importance of rapid naming skills in fluent reading. The ability to quickly and automatically process, identify, and name familiar text and objects is related to reading (Georgiou, 2013), and this skill is impaired in students with dyslexia (Jones et al., 2010).

Moreover, students who struggle with reading may lack the "reading stamina" needed during a literacy block that requires independent work in addition to working with teachers and students. Students with reading difficulties need extra practice, extra time, and books aligned with their proficiency that engage their interests.

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 provides systematic, explicit, incremental, and cumulative instruction with application and continual review with foundational literacy skills that benefit all learners, particularly those students with dyslexia. The program was originally developed for the program author's child, who had dyslexia and was struggling to read. The best practices from reading science and research base from the Orton-Gillingham approach helped guide the development of the program components to specifically address the needs of striving readers. The flexible implementation options found in the **Resources for Differentiation** booklet allow teachers to tailor the program and instruction for students at all levels in their reading journey.

Differentiated Instruction To further meet individual needs, teachers can use the **Options for Differentiation** activities, located at the end of each lesson. The recommended activities within the Options for Differentiation specifically call out additional supports teachers can provide to students showing signs of dyslexia. Teachers can focus on multisensory reinforcement of letter shapes and sounds, as well as phonemic awareness activities and other pre-reading activities for striving readers. Working with children in small groups organized by skill level enables teachers to tailor activities to the skills each child needs to improve. The Options for Differentiation activities are optional, small-group activities designed to help children learn and practice the concepts from each lesson at their own skill level. Activities are leveled according to the amount of support children need to help develop or strengthen a given skill. Children with learning difficulties can be read to and assisted with the worksheets individually, but they should continue to participate in all activities so that they are presented with the same vocabulary and concepts as their peers. Thus, as their reading skills improve, other areas of learning will not be neglected.

The **Fluency Readers** in particular are designed to meet children's individual needs. Through methods outlined in the Fluency Instruction booklet, children are matched to books at their independent reading level. The three levels of fluency readers have been carefully designed to correlate with one another so that all children can read about a common topic, such as ants or farms, at their independent reading level.

If assessment results indicate that children require remediation, consider offering a "Kid Card Day" using the **Kid Card** Activities. These Kid Card games offer additional practice and repetition that students with dyslexia may need in order to master a phonics concept. Teachers can review the decks as usual; then divide the class into small groups that need work in specific areas. During this time, teachers may work with specific groups or walk around the room to ensure that children are playing correctly. In these cases, teachers are encouraged to group children according to their learning abilities and by the skills that need strengthening. Children who require more practice should not compete with those who might quickly know the answers unless teachers are able to adjust the level of difficulty for each child's turn.

The program also provides various opportunities for **multisensory learning** by incorporating recommendations of activities that use manipulatives, skywriting techniques for letter writing, and letter formation activities on sandpaper or trays with sand, salt, or glitter. These activities can be done with individuals, with a small select group of children, or with the whole class to give all children extra practice.

ENGLISH LEARNERS

The best practices included in the report "Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School" published by the Institute of Education Sciences outlines four recommendations:

- Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities.

- Integrate oral and written English instruction into content-area teaching.

- Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.

- Deliver small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English development (Baker et al., 2014).

English learners may have difficulty mapping standard English phonology, conventions, and syntax due to differences between English and their primary language. The research on effective instruction for English learners points to three important principles: 1) generally effective practices are likely to be effective with English learners; 2) English learners require additional instructional supports; and 3) the home language can be used to promote academic development. Additionally, English learners need plenty of opportunities to develop proficiency in English (Goldenberg, 2013).

Teachers can accelerate the language proficiency of English learners by explicitly teaching the conventions, vocabulary, and structures of academic language in specific domains (Dutro & Kinsella, 2010). Many English learners need to acquire new phonemes or orthographic patterns as well as new matches between phonological segments and orthographic patterns (Durgunoglu, Nagy, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993). Additionally, teaching vocabulary as it is used in specific genres prepares English learners to succeed with academic writing tasks (Schleppegrell, 1998).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

To help English learners keep pace with the rest of the class, teachers can use the **English Learner Support** tips that appear at the beginning of every lesson. Before starting each lesson, teachers preview the English Learner Support tip for a helpful strategy or activity that they can incorporate when teaching the lesson to help English learners access lesson content or practice skills. Most of the support tips can be seamlessly integrated into each lesson and include suggestions for when to define words, demonstrate skills, or model how to do a task.

Some examples of these include sound articulation practice and vocabulary-building activities. Each tip is leveled by whether it offers light, moderate, or substantial support for English learners.

Additionally, there is a **Resources to Support English Learners** booklet which includes best practices and instructional strategies that support English learners, as well as information about second language acquisition.

The Letter *P*

LESSON 22

✏ LESSON PREPARATION

MATERIALS
- Alphabet Handwriting Strips
- Letter Tiles (in containers)
- Review Decks
- Worksheet 22
- Handwriting Master 50 (optional)
- Kid Card Decks (orange, purple)
- ❏ tokens

BEFORE CLASS
- Gather the **Orange Kid Cards 1–24** and the **Purple Kid Cards 1–8**. (These cards now form the **Orange** and **Purple Kid Card Decks**.) In the **Orange Deck**, separate the capital and lowercase letter cards. Only the lowercase letter cards will be used in this lesson.

🅔🅛 ENGLISH LEARNER SUPPORT

CONNECT TO MEANING **Moderate** As you read aloud words so children can identify blends, give a brief meaning or context sentence for any unfamiliar words. For example: *"There is **plenty** of cake for everyone at the party."*

Lesson Warm-Up

Alphabet Activity

OBJECTIVE: To review vowels and the alphabet

- Children should have their **Alphabet Handwriting Strips** available.

  "How many letters are in the alphabet?" 26

  "What two kinds of letters make up the alphabet?" vowels and consonants

  "Name the vowels." a, e, i, o, u

  "Let's touch and name the vowels."

- Point to each vowel as children name it.

  "What are all of the other letters called?" consonants

  "Put your pointer finger on A, and point to each letter as we say the alphabet."

- Set a steady pace so children cannot sing the alphabet.

Review vowels and consonants using the **Alphabet Handwriting Strips**.

Together, touch and name the vowels on the **Alphabet Handwriting Strips**.

Together, touch and name all the letters on the **Alphabet Handwriting Strips**.

Lesson 22 • The Letter *P* 1

SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS

Teachers of young students model the difference of not only socially appropriate speaking voices (e.g., "indoor" and "outdoor" voices), but they also begin to introduce the concept of "academic" and "conversational" or "formal" and "informal" speech. It is essential to stress that the goal of instruction in speaking is to expand students' range of speech patterns so that the conventions of effective speaking in different contexts become almost second nature to the young learners.

Kinsella (2015) advises teachers to talk to their students about different "registers," although teachers may not use this term that is common in texts on rhetoric. This means that they will be teaching their students to speak and listen with comprehension to academic or formal language, without giving up on their vernacular conversational modes of speaking. She reminds teachers that students do know about this—they most likely speak to their grandparents or the principal in ways that are highly different from how they talk to peers, and they probably listen to these grownups more carefully than to friends on the playground. Spoken and written language in an academic register is marked by more technical and precise word choices, sentence styles, and grammar and is produced for various formal situations.

Students also benefit from guidance on how to interact productively in pairs or small groups. Efforts to have students collaborate easily derail if students do not understand the give-and-take of speaking and listening or the subtle cues of body language in group situations where they work toward a common goal (Palmer, 2011).

Teachers have a responsibility to help their students learn how to listen, as well as speak, in school and other formal settings. Students need to learn to listen in different contexts as their teachers, peers, and others speak. "Learning to listen" may seem like an unimportant educational goal, but there are specific strategies that students need to learn. For young learners, active listening is a full-body experience in which listeners utilize various techniques to help them focus on a speaker in order to learn from them or to understand what the speaker is saying.

Although most students seem to know intuitively how to listen while their teacher reads an engaging story to them, they may not know how to listen attentively in other formal settings. Teachers can provide them with guidelines about being polite and quiet. However, embedding direct instruction on speaking and instruction seems to be less important than teaching academic language or reading and writing conventions such as using context clues to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar terms or attending to logical connectors (such as "because of this . . ."), claims and counter claims (such as "on the other hand . . ."), or the general logical flow of what a speaker is saying.

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

It is important for children of all ages to develop good listening and speaking skills so that they are able to comprehend material, express themselves clearly, and collaborate with others. The **Speaking and Listening Guide** offers techniques and activities to teach children how to listen actively, build understanding, speak clearly, answer questions, and engage effectively in discussions in both whole-class and small-group settings.

Speaking Tips At the beginning of the school year, or before teachers begin the first lesson of *Saxon Phonics and Spelling*, instructional tips are incorporated to discuss and model techniques for speaking. Students are taught that speaking means "what we say and how we say it."

Dos and Don'ts of Speaking Chart Teachers can lead children to write their own set of rules, or guidelines, for how to speak well in the classroom by filling out the Dos and Don'ts chart. Doing this will help teach them that good speakers use certain skills or techniques when speaking. It will also help them integrate these concepts as well as identify them.

Good Listener Dos and Don'ts Chart Teachers can lead children to write their own set of rules, or guidelines, for how to be good, active listeners in the classroom by filling out a Dos and Don'ts chart. Doing this will help teach them that listening is an active, rather than a passive, activity. It will also help them integrate and identify the techniques of being a good listener.

Active Listening Activity Once students have filled out the Good Listener Dos and Don'ts chart, teachers can play a movement game to help children practice their listening skills.

The Listening, Speaking, and Discussion Skills Assessment Rubric is included to help teachers monitor children's growth throughout the year. Teachers can also work with children to set goals and have them use the **Child Self-Assessment Card** to monitor their own progress.

GOOD LISTENERS...	
Do	**Don't**
Look at the speaker.	Don't make noises, sing, or hum.
Listen carefully.	Don't interrupt.
Sit or stand facing the speaker.	Don't fidget.
Sit or stand quietly.	Don't whisper or talk to a friend.
Think about what the speaker is saying.	Don't look at something or someone else.
Nod your head to show you agree.	
Shake your head if you do not agree.	
Ask questions to help you understand.	
Restate directions to show you understand.	

The Listening, Speaking, and Discussion Skills Assessment Rubric

Listening, Speaking, and Discussion Skills Assessment			Does the child demonstrate mastery of this skill?								
			First			Second			Third		
Mark responses to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd assessments in the appropriate columns.			Yes	Some-times	Not Yet	Yes	Some-times	Not Yet	Yes	Some-times	Not Yet
Speaking	1	faces the listener or audience when speaking									
	2	makes eye contact with the listener or audience when speaking									
	3	speaks clearly, enunciating words									
	4	speaks loudly enough to be heard and understood									
	5	answers questions using full sentences when possible									
	6	speaks using sentences with (age-level appropriate) proper grammar, vocabulary, pronouns, and verb tenses									
	7	can give oral directions that involve a short, related sequence of actions									
	8	uses appropriate language when speaking									

Good Listener Dos and Don'ts Chart

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

For many students, experiences at home and preschool contribute to their learning to love books, and students enter kindergarten ready for the challenge of becoming fully literate themselves. They know they can do this! For other students, mastering reading skills and strategies poses many challenges. Researchers have shown that the absence of books and rich language in children's preschool lives can be detrimental because they lack the vocabulary and the "word knowledge" they need to thrive in kindergarten (Wolf, 2007). As instruction becomes more and more advanced and assigned texts more difficult, they may decide that the cognitive energy needed to learn to read well and the embarrassment of mistakes are not worth their effort.

Teachers need to attend to students' social and emotional needs, including feelings students have about themselves as learners (Farrington et al., 2012). They also need to attend to the climate in the classrooms that teachers and students share (Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013). Teachers need to not only provide instruction on skills and content knowledge but also build strategies for perseverance, resilience, and effort.

For those where the learning to read process may become difficult, the students may identify themselves as somehow different from peers for whom academics come easily (Learned, 2016).

Research has shown that this identification can change the dynamics in a classroom. Some students who mastered the so-called reading "fundamentals" of letter-sound correspondence may begin to falter as their reading tasks become increasingly difficult and they need to read more deeply and critically (McNamara, Jacovina, & Allen, 2016). For many of these students, initial challenges in school expand as low reading skills lead to difficulty in other content areas (Master, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2017), thereby affecting their own self-efficacy. Therefore, carefully attending to the social and emotional needs of each child is integral for future success.

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 teaches students not only the reading skills they need to become confident readers, but the program integrates classroom management behavioral support, which helps students manage their own behavior to enhance their learning. Demonstrating appropriate behavior and providing children with a clear idea of what is expected are essential elements for teaching the program.

The program comes with **Classroom Management Posters** that provide age-appropriate visuals of expected learning behavior of the students. For example, the Leo Poster features Leo the Lion, who demonstrates the proper "listening position." Two Wriley Posters, featuring Wriley the Raccoon, demonstrate the proper "writing position" for both right-handed and left-handed children. These posters promote classroom management by demonstrating how teachers expect children to sit and look when listening and writing.

Expectations and Routines To help children transition smoothly from one activity to another with few interruptions or distractions, teachers establish expectations and routines early in the year. This will improve not only classroom organization but also children's sense of independence and level of responsibility. Routines include teaching children how to use and care for materials, follow directions, work cooperatively, and listen to others. When children know what teachers expect, it eliminates wasted time and confusion. *Saxon's* lesson activities provide a balanced, daily approach to the different learning modalities that children bring to the classroom while establishing a systematic routine to their learning that allows children to attend to the new tasks of each day.

Specific **classroom management strategies** are also embedded in the lessons to help teachers maximize children's time on task.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT POSTERS

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The history of the English language spans thousands of years, and various historical events contributed to the structure of the English language that we use today. Understanding this history provides a glimpse of the influence of the Anglo-Saxon, Romance, and Greek/Latin languages.

There has been evidence that once students learn the structure of the English spelling based on historical factors of word origin, students can use the knowledge of the language structure to analyze unfamiliar words. This application of using the historical origins of the English language and knowledge of word structure when decoding unfamiliar words has shown to improve students' reading and writing (Henry, 1987, 1988). Instruction in word origins such as patterns and rules regarding Latin, Greek, and Anglo-Saxon words is also used in morphological instruction (Abbott & Berninger, 1999; Henry 1987, 1988, 2010).

HOW SAXON PHONICS AND SPELLING K–2 ALIGNS WITH THE RESEARCH

Saxon Phonics and Spelling Grade 2 content includes a booklet that offers a comprehensive look at the history and evolution of the English language. Learning about the influences different languages have had on the English language and the way the language changes over time can help children understand the complex spelling rules and patterns they will encounter as they strengthen their reading and spelling skills. As an enrichment activity, teachers can use this booklet during the Lesson Warm-Ups to enhance children's background knowledge of the history of the English language and help them make connections between historical events and influences and the words and spellings we use in English today.

Lesson 101

> *Use this content during the Lesson 101 Warm Up to build children's background knowledge about how the English language changed and expanded during the 1700s when travel and trade with other countries increased.*

OBJECTIVE: To extend knowledge of the history of the English language

- Children should be seated at their desks.

"Our language began changing and expanding again during the 1700s. English people began exploring other countries and trading with other merchants."

"The English ports, which were cities located by the ocean, became crowded with ships containing new items from other countries. The crews of these ships also brought back new words from other countries, and these words were gradually added to the English language."

"Let's see if we can think of some words that may have come from other countries."

Explain that the English language expanded as travel and trade with other countries grew.

"If a ship captain visited Italy, where they speak Italian, he might have brought back some Italian words. Who can think of some words in our language that came from the Italian language? When you eat at an Italian restaurant, you see many of these words."

Discuss the history and meanings of words that English traders might have brought back from Italy.

- Allow time for children to respond. Some words they might suggest include the following: *spaghetti, lasagna, pasta,* and *pizza.*

"Good! Let's talk about a few other words that came from the Italian language."

- If time permits, discuss the word history and/or definition of some or all of the following words:

  › **piano**: shortened from pianoforte, meaning "soft/loud" when referring to music; name given to a harpsichord invented to play either soft or loud

  › **carnival**: originates from the time when a celebration was held before the religious observance called Lent

  › **umbrella**: originally meant "a little shadow"; British people interpreted this to mean "protector against rain"

  › **bandit**: comes from the Italian bandito pepperoni: a hard, highly spiced Italian sausage

  OPTIONAL: *If desired, copy some of these and other words onto tiny flags and stick the flags on the world map in the country from which they originated.*

22 Saxon Phonics and Spelling 2

History of English Language

DEMONSTRATING STRONG LEVELS OF EVIDENCE

Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2 has been rigorously field-tested to ensure that the efficacy of the instruction, design, and classroom management is maintained, and as such, it meets ESSA "strong" evidence criteria. A recent study of first graders found that low-skilled readers who received *Saxon Phonics* made significant gains in reading scores (Day, 2017). Another study involving first graders found that students who were taught with *Saxon Phonics* made significant gains in decoding and pronouncing words (Showalter, 2006).

In a study conducted by PRES Associates, researchers implemented a randomized controlled trial (RCT) study with six elementary schools from Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Texas during the 2006–2007 school year. Teachers within schools were randomly assigned to either use *Saxon Phonics and Spelling* (treatment group) or continue with their "business as usual" instruction (control group) over the course of the year.

The student sample included 682 students in Grades 1–2. The schools were located in rural, urban, and suburban areas with participating schools having a higher percentage of students receiving free/reduced-price lunch (60.4%) than the national norms.

The results of the hierarchical linear modeling indicated that students randomly assigned to use *Saxon Phonics and Spelling* had significantly greater growth on two reading skills, Word Analysis and Spelling, than control students, as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Study findings consistently demonstrate *Saxon Phonics and Spelling*'s effectiveness in raising the literacy achievement of young learners.
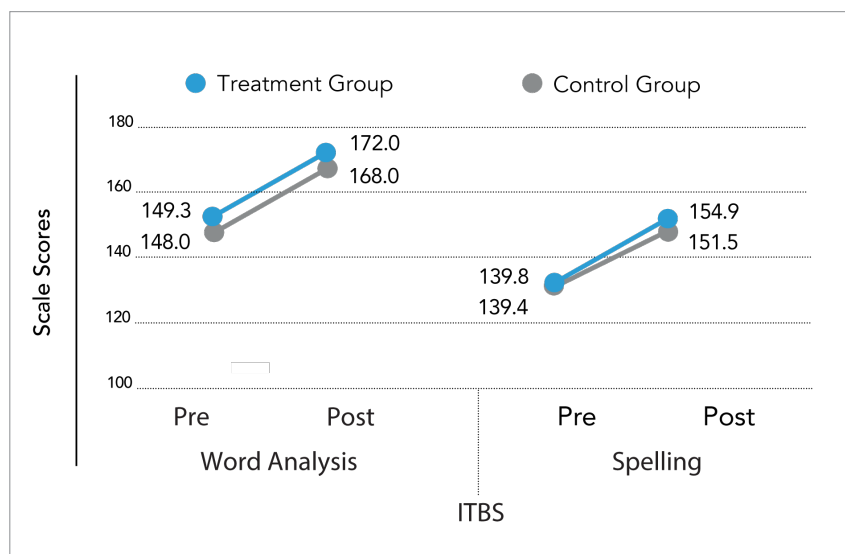
CONCLUSION

The basic pillars of reading instruction used in *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* have long been shown to be effective. The *Saxon* pedagogy and its instructional methods are sound, supported by a variety of scientifically-based foundational research studies, independent program efficacy studies, and documented test-score increases. *Saxon Phonics and Spelling K–2* provides systematic, incremental instruction, continual practice, and cumulative assessments—all of which are distributed throughout the school year and across grade levels. This unique approach is highly effective with students of varying ability levels and allows students to gain and retain critical reading skills essential for lifelong learning.

Saxon Phonics and Spelling

RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS PAPER

EVIDENCE & EFFICACY

Browse our library of research at **hein.pub/saxon-phonics**