UNITS OF STUDY IN READING

Supporting All Readers

High-Leverage Small Groups and Conferences, K-2

LUCY CALKINS WITH UNITS OF STUDY COAUTHORS

Heinemann
DEDICATED TO TEACHERS™

Supporting All Readers

High-Leverage Small Groups and Conferences, K–2

Lucy Calkins with Units of Study Coauthors

Photography by Peter Cunningham and André Martins

Heinemann ■ Portsmouth, NH

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Contents

Introduction • *v*

Chapter 1 ✦ Supporting Kids as They Build Their Reading Lives • *1*

1 ✦ Developing a Readerly Identity • *2*

2 ✦ Bolstering Engagement, Stamina, and Volume • *9*

3 ✦ Developing Strong Partnerships • *18*

Chapter 2 ✦ Supporting Emergent Readers • *28*

4 ✦ Bridging Emergent Storybook Reading and Concepts about Print • *29*

Chapter 3 ✦ Supporting Phonics, Word Recognition, and Decoding • *40*

5 ✦ Decoding, Monitoring, and Checking • *41*

6 ✦ Phonological Awareness and Phonemic Awareness • *58*

7 ✦ Alphabetic Knowledge • *66*

8 ✦ CVC Words, Short Vowels, Blends, and Digraphs • *75*

9 ✦ Long Vowels, *R*-Controlled Vowels, and Other Vowel Patterns • *91*

10 ✦ Word Endings and Multisyllabic Words • *105*

11 ✦ High-Frequency Words • *118*

Chapter 4 ✦ Supporting Reading with Fluency • *131*

12 ✦ Reading Fluently • *132*

13 ✦ Reading with Pace and Accuracy • *136*

14 ✦ Reading with Prosody • *140*

15 ✦ Phrasing Words Meaningfully • *148*

Chapter 5 ✦ Supporting Oral Language and Vocabulary Development • *154*

16 ✦ Developing and Expanding Oral Language • *155*

17 ✦ Acquiring Vocabulary While Reading • *167*

CHAPTER 6 ✦ Lifting the Level of Fiction Comprehension • *176*

18 ✦ Orienting to Texts • *177*

19 ✦ Retelling to Support Comprehension • *185*

20 ✦ Envisioning and Predicting to Understand Books • *193*

21 ✦ Making Inferences • *204*

CHAPTER 7 ✦ Lifting the Level of Nonfiction Reading • *216*

22 ✦ Orienting to Nonfiction Texts and Topics • *217*

23 ✦ Determining Main Topics, Main Ideas, and Supporting Details • *226*

24 ✦ Envisioning and Questioning to Learn More • *242*

25 ✦ Growing Ideas • *250*

26 ✦ Cross-Text Synthesis and Knowledge-Building in Text Sets • *257*

Introduction

Why do you need this book?

Your Units of Study in Reading books are filled with daily minilessons, which form the backbone of your whole-class teaching. These minilessons are designed to rally readers around the shared goals and storyline of each unit so that they are swept up with enthusiasm for rigorous reading work. These minilessons are where you share the bulk of your whole-class phonics and decoding teaching, and how you lift the level of your students' reading comprehension. It's through your minilessons, as well as your accompanying read-alouds and shared reading lessons, that you'll introduce kids to some of the most powerful literature you can get your hands on, books you're sure they'll fall in love with and remember for years to come. It's here that all your kids will engage with grade-level texts. We feel confident that your grade-level units of study books will provide you with significant support in this area.

As you send your kids off to read independently and with partners, we know you'll be busy trying to meet the wide range of needs in your classroom. You might have a handful of first-graders solidifying sound-letter correspondence and a few who are ready to decode multisyllabic words. You might have some students who need support with phrasing and others who need coaching to read with expression. You might have students who need regular phonics support during a unit that spotlights comprehension, as well as students who need support thinking deeply about their books as your whole-class teaching focuses on decoding words.

Responsive instruction, delivered during work time, is a key way to ensure that all kids are equipped with the skills they need to decode and comprehend texts.

That's where this book comes in handy.

How are these work times organized?

This book is a curated collection of work times from across kindergarten through second-grade units. We've organized the components into seven categories that represent key areas where you will probably want to spend time leading conferences or small groups across the year:

- Supporting Kids as They Build Their Reading Lives
- Supporting Emergent Readers

- Supporting Phonics, Word Recognition, and Decoding
- Supporting Reading with Fluency
- Supporting Oral Language and Vocabulary Development
- Lifting the Level of Fiction Comprehension
- Lifting the Level of Nonfiction Reading

We've outlined some key skills that comprise each major category. So, if your assessments reveal that a student needs further support with long vowels, you'll find a series of voiceovers, conferences, strategy groups, and more that will help you meet that need. Or, if you notice during a running record that a reader is not monitoring for sense and self-correcting, you'll find resources to help you support that child.

These work times are sequenced roughly from more accessible work to more complex work. We say *roughly* because while we've outlined one predictable pathway by which kids' reading habits and skills might progress, different kids will have different starting points on the progression, and some kids might skip over parts of a progression entirely. It's certainly not necessary for a child to work through each suggestion in a progression before proceeding to the next. Study your assessment data and look for signs that might signal a child is ready to skip ahead or that a child might benefit from repeating a group with more support.

How should you use this resource?

We've designed this book to be used in tandem with the Units of Study books. As you grow increasingly familiar with your grade-level curriculum, we hope that the time you spend planning will shift so that you spend a majority of your time anticipating how you'll support students during work time. Your Units of Study books and this book support your work time teaching in complementary ways. For example:

- Your unit of study book will be especially useful when you want to lead conferences and small groups that are closely aligned to your minilesson from a given day.
- This work time book will be particularly beneficial when you want to target the wide range of needs you see based on your assessment data and your classroom observations, and when you want to highlight skills that aren't focused on in that particular unit, or at your particular grade level.
- This book will also be a tremendous support for designing your own units to supplement our grade-level curriculum; for instance, when developing your own fiction reading unit, you might use this book to locate conferences and small groups that will make a world of difference to your young readers.

- If you teach a multi-age classroom, with students from multiple grade levels working within the same units of study, you'll find this book especially useful for supporting the range of students in your classroom.

Teachers piloting these units found it helpful to plan with both resource books open, drawing from them flexibly based on their students' needs. You'll find some of their tips below.

Is this book useful for intervention?

Yes! In fact, when we envisioned this book, we especially pictured intervention teachers, reading specialists, and special educators pulling up alongside one student or a small group, using these work time components to target their specific needs.

These work time components can help you give kids access to the grade-level comprehension curriculum. For instance, if a second-grade teacher teaches a minilesson on retelling informational texts, you can study the progression of teaching around retelling informational texts and choose a related work time component that will give the children you are working with more access to that skill. Perhaps instead of retelling using an awareness of text structure, a student is ready to retell the main topic and key details. Or, perhaps a student needs to zoom out and retell only the major chunks of the text. You can use these work time progressions to choose the conference or small group that meets a student precisely where they are.

You can also use these work times to target foundational needs that were addressed in a previous grade-level's curriculum. For instance, kindergarten units especially target alphabetic knowledge. If you're working with a first-grader who continues to need support in these areas, you can draw on the resources in the "Alphabetic Knowledge" progression for support in teaching letters, letter formation, and sound-letter correspondence.

Tips from Pilot Teachers: Using the Units of Study Books and Work Time Books to Plan

- Yessenia, California: "**Use color!** I use five colors of sticky notes to mark up my books, one for each day of the week. As I'm planning for Monday's work time, I use purple notes to flag the voiceovers, small groups, and conferences I want to use for that day. I jot the kids' names I especially want to check in with directly on sticky notes, and leave them sticking out of both books. For me, it's a super simple way of keeping track of my plans. Plus, it reminds me that it's totally okay to reference the books as I teach."

- Thomas, Michigan: "I **use a planning template**. When I plan for the week, I start by jotting the minilesson I'll teach each day. Then, I look through the work time sections for that minilesson, and I flag the ones I think will be especially useful for my kids. After that, I turn to the work time book, and I go through the same process. I think about the major goals my kids are working toward, and then I jot the conferences, groups, and tips I want to use to help them meet those goals."

- Sarit, New York: "I **mark up my work time book as I study my assessment data**. If I do a high-frequency word assessment that shows a few kids need support with a handful of high-frequency words, I'll find the word group that meets their needs in the work time book and flag it with a sticky note. I also carry the work time book with me as I meet with readers. If I'm coaching a reader as he reads, and I notice something I want to follow up with, I'll just add that kid's name to the sticky note so I can follow up with him later."

These work time components can also be used by paraprofessionals working inside classrooms, summer school teachers, and tutors who support students outside of the school day.

What assessment data might you draw on to match kids with responsive teaching?

Our biggest recommendation is to study the assessment pages at the end of each unit. Across these gold assessment pages, we've outlined the most useful assessments to administer and made suggestions for how to keep those assessments as brief as possible. These recommendations include ways to continually monitor progress for kids who are decoding and reading below benchmark levels, as well as suggestions for how to teach responsively based on your data. Your district will have additional suggestions for what assessment tools to use to monitor your readers' progress, including a district-wide screener for dyslexia.

These useful assessments include:

- Letter-Sound Identification
- Concepts About Print Assessment
- High-Frequency Word Assessment
- Phonemic Awareness Assessment
- Phonic Decoding Assessment
- Reading a Decodable Text or a Leveled Text
- Formal or Informal Running Records
- Nonfiction Reading Assessment

CHAPTER 1

Supporting Kids as They Build Their Reading Lives

Progression 1

Developing a Readerly Identity

Helping Kids Get to Know Themselves and Each Other as Readers

1. Lead a Group to Help Readers Develop and Share Their Readerly Identities • 3
2. Name What Readers Are Doing in Ways That Develop Positive Readerly Identities for Individuals and the Class • 4
3. Support Readers to Bookshop in Ways That Help Them Develop Readerly Identities • 4
4. Channel a Group to Share Places in Books That Are Mirrors and Windows • 5
5. Help Readers Invent Ways to Share Who They Are as Readers • 6

Finding Nonfiction Books That Reflect and Enrich Kids' Sense of Themselves

6. Help a Group Draw On Their Identities to Choose Nonfiction Books for Themselves and Each Other • 7
7. Coach Readers to See that Nonfiction Reading Fits into and Enriches Their Passions and Projects • 8

Helping Kids Get to Know Themselves and Each Other as Readers

1. Lead a Group to Help Readers Develop and Share Their Readerly Identities

RALLY

Initiate an activity that helps kids share—and form—their readerly identities.

I pulled up to a table of readers and said, "Can I stop all of you?" Once I had their attention, I said, "I want to know *so* much more about what's in your mind and your heart as you read. I'm eager to know you as readers—and I bet you are wanting to know each other as readers too. So—will you do something that will show me and each other things about you as a reader? Would you go to the library and build a short stack of two or three books that shows us the sort of books that you love to read, and another stack that shows us the sort of books that don't interest you *at all?* Make two piles of books: your 'yup' and your 'yuck' books. Meet back here with those books in five minutes."

TRY IT

Set kids up to share and then watch and listen. Respond. Ask questions.

Set kids up to share with each other—probably in twos—and listen in, saying things like, "So you are the type of reader who really likes stories that make you laugh aloud? I love those too. It would be cool if another kid in this class loved funny books. What about you, Marco? Are you the same way?"

Help kids feel seen by you and each other and help them come to know themselves and each other as readers.

Channel kids to share. Ask, "What are you noticing about each other as readers?" and say, "Will you tell your partner what you see? Start by saying something like, 'What I notice about what you like best when you read is . . . Can you tell me more about that?' 'I'm noticing that you are the kind of reader who . . .'"

2. Name What Readers Are Doing in Ways That Develop Positive Readerly Identities for Individuals and the Class

When you see . . .	You might say . . .
Two partners, immersed in reading while others are still choosing books	"Look! Do you see Darron and Miles, against the back wall? Their noses are already in their books, right? Avid readers for sure!"
Kids having trouble deciding which book to read	"Rico and Reni are having a hard time choosing. That's just like me when I'm at the library. It's hard to choose which books to check out because they all look so good!"
Kids reading with a small stack of books in waiting	"I'm noticing readers around the room who have a stack of books at their elbow and are digging into their reading. Avid readers set themselves up to read and to learn lots of information from their books!"
Kids reacting to books (laughing, looking closely, questioning)	"Readers, I can *see it*. I don't even have to talk to you to know that you are understanding what you're reading. You know how I can tell? I see you reacting to your books. I saw one of you looking super closely at a picture. I saw one of you kind of laughing to yourself at something you read. I can actually *see* you reacting to your books, and it is so cool!"

3. Support Readers to Bookshop in Ways That Help Them Develop Readerly Identities

Most of the time, book-shopping won't take place during reading workshop, but there are times you might want to book-shop with a student or a table of students to help them build readerly identities. Here are some questions you can ask students to help make book-shopping a way to pump up kids' identities as readers.

- "What were your favorite books this week? Will you choose books like that next week?"
- "It seems like you really like books with kids who are friends. Let's find more!"
- "Think about what you like to do—play, celebrate, eat. That can help you find books you might like."
- "Are there books with characters who look like you and your family that you want to read? Are there books with characters who do not look like you and your family, that you are curious about and want to read?"
- "Is there anything you've been wanting to learn about? See if you can find a book on it! Maybe check the _____ bin!"
- "Which books were you able to talk a lot about with your partner? Why? Oh! Maybe I can help you find another book like that so you can talk a lot again."
- "Which bin are you most excited to book-shop from? Why?"
- "What bin do you *wish* we had in our library? Maybe we can make one!"
- "What was your partner's favorite book this week? Maybe you could surprise them and find a book you think they'll love!"

4. Channel a Group to Share Places in Books That Are Mirrors and Windows

For this small group, you'll need a mirror and window sticky note for each student.

RALLY

"Remember when you reread your books and noticed more, you thought more? You and your partners had great talks about that. I thought of another way that partners can have reading-talks. Can I teach it to you?

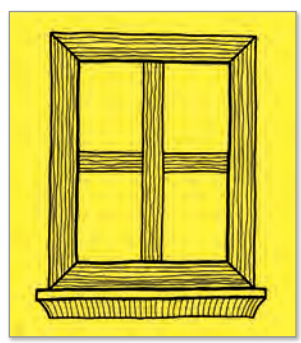
"When you get to know the characters in a book, you can notice ways the character is like you. Maybe the character has a friendship that is a lot like a friendship you have, or you notice the character gets into trouble in ways that you do as well. Maybe the character has hair like yours, or a family that feels similar to yours. People say that when you notice the character is a lot like you, then the book is like a mirror. You look in it, and you see yourself."

TRY IT #1

"Right now, look through the books in front of you and find a page where you think, 'This character is kind of like me!' Mark that page with a mirror sticky note. I'll give each of you a few of those."

TRY IT #2

"Often in books, you read about a character whose life, or personality, or age, or family seems different than yours. Then the beautiful thing is that the book gives you a peek, like looking into a window, that helps you begin to understand someone's experience that is different from yours. Will you search through your books and find a window page, a page that helps you get an understanding of a person who is different from you? Use one of these window sticky notes to mark that page."



LINK

"Now, when you talk with your partner, you can talk about ways that one of each of your books helps you to see yourself and you can talk about how other books help you to learn about other people. When your partner shares things that are different than your life, you can say, 'Tell me more so I can learn!' I'll leave you to talk about your windows and mirrors—about the ones you've marked and others you have yet to find."

5. Help Readers Invent Ways to Share Who They Are as Readers

RALLY

Initiate an activity that helps kids share their preferences, quirks, tastes, as readers.

"Readers, do you remember making little piles of books you wanted to read and ones you didn't in first grade? That's important work! In fact, you're sort of doing that now as you decide where to place your self-portraits—the book that matches you is your 'yup' book. If there are books you don't want to read, you can just place them to the side. Take a look at the books in your table bin right now and start to make these two piles."

TRY IT/LINK

Set kids up to share. Then watch and listen, being responsive.

"If you talk to another reader about what you like and don't like as a reader, that other reader might convince you to rethink your ideas or might have a book to recommend for you. Will you talk with each other about your 'yup' books? You might say, 'I really love this one because . . .' or 'You have to see this part . . .' or 'Look at this . . .'"

As kids talked, I listened, saying things like, "So, you are the type of reader who really likes stories that make you laugh aloud? I love those too. Maybe there's someone in this class who loves funny books too. What about you, Marco? Do you like similar books or different ones?"

Help kids feel seen by you and each other and help them come to know themselves and each other as readers.

I convened students and asked, "What are you noticing about each other as readers? Start by saying something like, 'I'm noticing that you are the kind of reader who . . .'"

After students shared, I said, "As you go off to finish your self-portraits and to read your 'yup' books, be on the lookout for other friends who like similar books. You might also be on the lookout for friends who like different books because their books might become favorites for you in the end."

Finding Nonfiction Books That Reflect and Enrich Kids' Sense of Themselves

6. Help a Group Draw On Their Identities to Choose Nonfiction Books for Themselves and Each Other

For this small group, you'll need the "Readers Can Choose Texts with Identity in Mind" chart.

RALLY

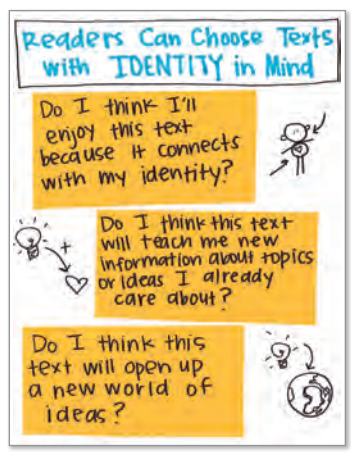
Recruit students to bring all they know about identity to the task of choosing nonfiction books from the bins.

I gathered kids near the library. "Readers, you have thought so much about your identity today, and about nonfiction texts. It's the perfect time to look through the nonfiction bins in the library to choose books that you're eager to read."

"You can draw on your knowledge of who you are as you choose books. These questions will help." I shared the "Readers Can Choose Texts with Identity in Mind" chart.

TRY IT #1

Set readers up to browse and choose books for themselves by asking themselves questions.



"Make a pile of a few books that you'd like to read that either connect with your identity or that open you up to brand-new ideas. You can make a pile of each."

TRY IT #2

Now that readers have picked books for themselves, ask them to consider the same questions for their partner, and make a few book recommendations.

"You know, readers, I'm also realizing that we are a reading community! One thing we do as a community of readers is recommend books to one another. I love it when someone, a student or a friend, recommends a book to me either because they know who I am—they know my inside and outside identity—or because they want to help me open up a brand-new world.

"I once had a student, Ngoc, who knew me so well and said, 'I read a book over the weekend that I know you'll love! It's called *Be You* and it's by Peter Reynolds. I know you'll love it because you're the kind of teacher who teaches kids to be who they are.' That made me feel so good! Ngoc understood my identity.

"Can you keep looking through these bins, but this time, can you look for a book you might recommend to your partner since you've been coming to know their identity well? Or another kid in the class? See if there's a book (or books) that you might recommend to make them feel really special, because you understand their identity."

LINK

Send readers off, encouraging them to keep in mind why they choose books for themselves and others.

"Readers, what you just did is a big deal. Considering who you are and what you want to open your mind up to when you choose books is a really important way to make book choices. *And* thinking about who the people around you are to recommend books is something that you can do for the rest of your life to make people feel special. Head off to give books to classmates, let your partner know why you chose the books you did, and see if there's one you could read together."

7. Coach Readers to See that Nonfiction Reading Fits into and Enriches Their Passions and Projects

Encourage nonfiction reading identity . . .	Then help them bring their expertise to new text . . .
■ "Wow, you're becoming quite the botanist; I bet your reading is helping you see the plants around you in a whole new way." ■ "How has your reading about predators already changed the way you think about the world? I bet you're looking at the animals in our community in a whole new way." ■ "I remember that you play soccer, don't you? All the expertise you have about that is definitely going to be a huge help when you read your books about chess! What? You don't think it relates? Absolutely it does. Tell me some of the things you work on in soccer and I'll show you what I mean. . . ."	■ "I see you are about to read about growing vegetables. Hmm . . . I'm just looking at this part you read. What did it teach you about growing vegetables? Nothing? What about gardens? Let's look back and see if it said something about gardens that might relate. . . ." ■ "What do you already know about tigers? Remember, it can't be nothing. If you don't know about tigers, what do you know that is sort of related?" ■ "Those strategies you plan in soccer are so cool. So how are the strategies chess players use the same—and how are they different?"

Bolstering Engagement, Stamina, and Volume

Supporting Engagement in Reading

8. Help Readers Get Started Reading Productively • 10
9. Help Readers Read with High Levels of Engagement • 10
10. Ways to Help Readers Sustain Work with Greater Independence • 11
11. Tips for Helping Readers Read with More Engagement • 12
12. Tips for Helping Kids Do More Thoughtful Book-Shopping • 13
13. Channel Readers to Find Books That They Love • 13

Finding Success in the Face of Challenges

14. Set Readers Up to Persist Through Difficulty with Self-Talk • 14
15. Use Language That Helps Develop Agency and Independence • 15
16. Coach Readers Who Freeze When They Encounter a Tricky Word • 16
17. Tips for Supporting Readers to Set and Achieve Goals • 17

Supporting Engagement in Reading

8. Help Readers Get Started Reading Productively

Voiceovers to support productivity and engagement:

- "Wow readers, you are getting started right away. I see so many of you taking a sneak peek!"
- "I see two tables of readers already reading! . . . Oh, three! This is such a class of readers!"
- "I see you smiling as you read. Some of you are even giggling at the funny parts. Readers like you have so much fun when they read!"

Voiceovers to support reading stamina:

- "Read all the way through a book, then pick up another. Keep yourself going."
- "Whoa, friends—you've already been reading for eight minutes. Let's set the timer and see if you can all keep reading for another eight."
- "Readers, I love that you're using every minute of your precious reading time. When you're finished with one book, go right back to the basket and find another."

9. Help Readers Read with High Levels of Engagement

Start by thinking of what actions you'll dramatize.

As I watched two kids flip through the pages in a book about bears, I thought about how engaged readers would do that.

Act as an engaged reader. Spy on yourself, so you can name what you are doing.

I then sat down in between the kids and acted as the model reader I had just rehearsed being. Pointing to a picture in one child's book, I said, "I think this must be the mama bear and this is her baby. Oh look! They both have the same soft fur." I looked some more, my finger moving on the page. "I wonder if this is their home," I said. "I think it is called their den.

"Let me think about this page," I said, and looked at it, quiet. "The baby bear is kind of big for a baby. Human babies are so much smaller. And look at those teeth."

Then debrief.

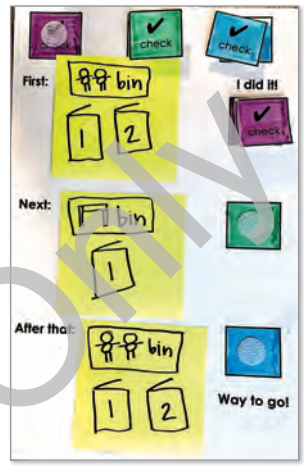
"Do you see how I said words for what I see on the page: the mama, her baby? And I noticed things about what I saw, like I noticed about the fur. I moved my finger around the page to get myself looking at everything. That helped me see the bear's den. The other thing I did was I squeezed my brain and tried to have some ideas, some thoughts, like when I said the baby is a *big* baby."

Rally kids to do similar work.

"How about you try some of that? Talk about everything on the page by moving your finger around the page. Remember to squeeze your brain to have some thoughts."

10. Ways to Help Readers Sustain Work with Greater Independence

How important it is that the reading workshop is a joyful place for kids, especially as they build reading endurance. This isn't something we can take for granted, because reading is hard work for beginning readers. Here are some easy ways to empower readers.



- **To-Do Lists:** To-Do lists can be as helpful for children as they are for adults. You can co-create a To-Do list, like the one here, so children can plan how their independent reading time will go. You can help them choose from a mix of options: reading from their partner bin, reading from their table bin, a break for a phonics activity like a sort or something with snap word cards. Eventually, students will be able to make their own to-do lists.
- **Book Stacks:** Independent reading can begin by readers making a small stack of books they plan to read. They might choose three books from their partner bin to read and reread. Alternatively they might also make a stack containing a mix of partner-bin books and table-bin books. This supports students in making and moving through a plan.
- **Timers:** So often, adults control kids' time all day long and that can feel difficult for some children. To help these children feel some sense of control, it can help to invite them to use a sand timer to organize their time. You might teach them to use a five-minute sand timer to set their time for reading and then take a break after the five minutes have passed. Then they can read again, and then take a break. You can also give timers to each set of partners and then voice over, "Flip your sand timer. Read privately until your timer says it's time to shift to partner time." That gives kids an illusion that they are in control of time.

- **Breaks:** All people need breaks. It can be effective to teach young students how to take a productive break. You can teach students to take breaks that help their reading muscles—like using a pointer to read the alphabet chart in fun ways (whispering, singing, making words for each letter, in order, out of order, with Mabel as audience . . .). Similarly, they might use a pointer to read a shared reading book or poem at your easel, or listen to a recorded book on a device. These breaks support reading, but are breaks from the task children had trouble sustaining—a bit like when adults take a break to check our emails. Similar to when you make another cup of tea, these can also be important, too: getting a drink of water or moving around the perimeter of the classroom, deep breathing, meditation, or a few moments of coloring. Once taught, children will be excited by the novelty and take lots of breaks, yes. But, the novelty wears off and students begin taking what they need. You can help kids who continually take lots of breaks to make a To-Do list, planning their breaks ahead of time.
- **Check-In:** Find out how kids are feeling and ask what they need. It's important for students to know that we are here and listening to how they're feeling and want to help them problem solve. When you set students up with a system—To-Do lists, stacks, timers, or breaks—it can be helpful to make space for kids to reflect and think about what helped them feel safe and powerful and what didn't, so that plans can be revised as needed.

11. Tips for Helping Readers Read with More Engagement

Engaged readers giggle as they read or tune you out when you ask them to put their books away. They don't typically need much instruction around monitoring their reading. When a text is confusing, they *want* to reread to clarify what's happening. If a word is unknown, they'll make the effort to solve it so the text makes sense.

1 Make Sure the Reader Is Set Up to Read Successfully

Check for underlying causes that might contribute to disengagement. Is the text at an appropriate level? Aim to have readers spend most of their time with texts they can read with fairly high accuracy, while still providing a bit of challenge. Are children transferring their phonics instruction to read more complex words? Have you had conversations to ask children what the problem might be? Perhaps the environment is distracting, or readers would love to have more choice in what to read.

2 Tap Into the Power of Play

In one study, researchers asked kids to pretend to be detectives as they read, staying on alert for when things didn't make sense (Sousa and Oakhill 1996). For the kids who were already monitoring their reading, this did not make a difference, but for the kids who struggled in this area, taking on a playful role helped. They better attended to the text and were more successful at noticing errors.

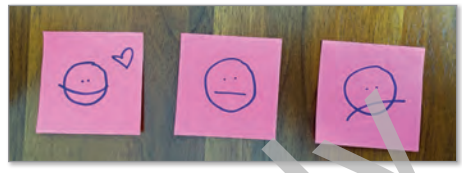
3 Leverage Partnerships

You might decide that some readers would benefit from having more time to partner read. Reading with someone helps to keep children on track and accountable for what they're reading. Alternatively, you could set kids up to read independently but check in with each other to talk about their books. This is especially supportive if kids have the same book to read, or if partners get to swap books after reading them, giving each other a little teaser for the text.

4 Give Readers a Purpose

You might say, "Kaeden is having a hard time book-shopping. Will you read these books and find a few you think he'll like? You know Kaeden really well, so you'll be better at this job than me!" Sometimes giving kids an authentic reason to dig into a book increases engagement. You might ask the child to record a little video review of a book and email it to someone, or to go ask the librarian about a book to see if the school should order another copy.

12. Tips for Helping Kids Do More Thoughtful Book-Shopping



- **Sort Your Books**—Invite students to sort the books in their table bins into three piles: a "favorite" books pile, an "okay" books pile, and a "no thank you" books pile, meaning I tried them out, but "no thank you," they are not for me. Ask the students to talk about how they decided which book belongs in which pile. Channel students to use what they know about their "favorites" to help them select other books.
- **Recommend Books ("If You Liked . . . Then You'll Like . . .")**—Explain that readers can help one another find books they'll love if they know what a reader likes to read. You can partner readers to talk about what they like to read, and then partners can look at books together to support those preferences or interests.
- **Make Text Sets**—Invite students to lay out their books and to think about how their books go together. Students can create little stacks of books that go together in some way and then name what makes them the same. Maybe students will notice they have a bunch of books about helping others. Students can then seek out books that would add on to these developing collections.
- **Notice What's the Same and What's Different**—Encourage students to look for ways they are the same as the people in their books and ways they are different. Keep in mind that what may be a similarity for one student may be a difference for another student. Students can then decide whether they want to seek out new books that are the same or different from their own lives.

13. Channel Readers to Find Books That They Love

It's very likely that you may have some children who struggle to 'get into' books enough to really fall in love with them. If children don't gravitate toward books, they won't immediately identify as "someone who reads." It can help to have conversations with these students to guide them toward genres and books they are excited about.

- "Think of a book in which you've had a big reaction (funny, gross, sad, happy, scary?)."
- "Think of a book that taught you something (informational texts, parts of books?)."
- "Think of a book that you remember for some reason. What's the significance? Why?"
- "Think of a character you remember well. What is it about that character?"
- "Close your eyes and picture a book. What book is it? Why?"
- Broaden from single book to genre. "What's a genre you love? Like the most?"

Another helpful approach is to gather and remind children of some of the books you've read aloud this year. This takes the pressure off them, as readers, to examine their reading history. Invite them to look through a stack of picture books and chapter books that you've read to the class to make a pile of books they love, books that matter, or books they like (at the very least), and to say something about why they selected these particular books.

Finding Success in the Face of Challenges

14. Set Readers Up to Persist Through Difficulty with Self-Talk

Research and observe by pulling alongside a child who is reading.

I pulled up to Forrest as he was reading. He looked up at me expectantly, and I quickly nudged him: "You just keep on reading, I'm going to watch."

As I watched Forrest read, I took notes on a few different aspects of his reading: He previewed the book and read in mostly three-word phrases, and he reread when he noticed his reading becoming dysfluent. On the second page, he ran into the word *breathed*. He frowned, raised his eyebrows, and went back to the beginning of the sentence to reread, but got stuck again at the same word.

Engage in some questions.

"Forrest, it looks like you're stuck on this word." I pointed to *breathed*. He nodded, and I continued: "What do you do when that happens? What is your plan for right now?"

He replied, "I guess I need to figure it out so I can keep on reading."

"Okay," I said. "And how will you do that?"

"I guess I need to start over here and say the sounds of the word until I get to here." As he spoke, Forrest moved his finger over the word from left to right.

Compliment the reader in a way that is transferable.

"Before you do that, I want to give you a high-five for something else you did. I noticed you rereading when your reading wasn't smooth, which is such a big-kid thing to do. You made it sound almost like read-aloud time!"

Give a tip on how to handle similar trouble.

"You mentioned that you were going to read through this word left to right to figure it out. I think that's a great way of doing that—but it's going to be hard work. If it gets hard (now or ever), will you also remember that you can give yourself a little pep talk? It turns out it actually helps people if you say things to yourself like, 'Forrest, you can do this. It might be tricky, but you've done tricky things before.'"

Set up the reader to get started doing this work, and perhaps stay to coach as the reader does that.

"First you say it to yourself . . ." I gave Forrest a quick moment to give himself a pep talk. "Then you do that hard thing!"

Once Forrest had practiced, I said: "Don't forget about this. Whenever you're about to do something tricky, you can do exactly what we just tried. You can give yourself a little pep talk and tell yourself that you can do it before you actually do it!"

15. Use Language That Helps Develop Agency and Independence

Move quickly from student to student, celebrating even the smallest signs of independence and perseverance. Don't underestimate the power of your words. Use them to create a narrative for your classroom community, sending the message that even though everyone runs into trouble from time to time, the kids in this class are the kind of readers who can have fun solving these problems.

If you notice readers . . .	You might say . . .	Why?
Monitoring their reading and stopping at an unknown word	"There are other kids who might just mumble past that word, or take a guess and keep reading, but *you* stopped. Wow! You're the kind of reader who takes charge of your reading. I can't wait to see what you do next."	It may well be that this is a reader who has the tendency to stop and get stuck or ask for help. With this interaction, you reinforce the child's ability to notice an error, while communicating that you fully expect the reader to take action independently.
Making an error and then continuing to read	At first say nothing. It may be that the child does not yet realize she's made a mistake. Resist the temptation to jump in. Given the chance, readers often do notice the error by the end of the sentence. If the reader does stop, then say, "What careful reading! Why did you stop? What did you notice?"	If someone else consistently points out errors, then in the child's mind this becomes the job of the listener, not the reader. Allow kids the opportunity to catch their own mistakes and then praise them for that effort, giving them the chance to explain their thinking. Just one or two positive interactions like this can make all the difference.
Making multiple attempts to solve a word	"You're the kind of reader who doesn't give up! You know that the letters in words don't always work the way we expect them to. Sometimes it takes a few tries to solve a word." You might then name a helpful strategy the reader used, "You noticed the vowel team in this word and tried the vowel sound another way, checking that it made sense."	Children will run into words where the same letters represent different sounds such as the EA in *head* and *bead*. You'll want to normalize the problem solving that the English language sometimes requires so that children understand that it's okay to not know and have to try a few times. This will happen to all readers.
Struggling to solve a word	"Could it be _____?" If the word includes a grapheme that the child has not yet learned, you might tuck in this information, perhaps saying: "Could it be *light*? These letters, *IGH*, often stand for the sound /ī/."	There may be times when you just need to tell readers a word in their books. By framing this as a question, you still ask the reader to initiate some action. They'll have to consider your suggestion by checking to see if the letters match and if the word makes sense—all work that helps readers practice monitoring their reading.

16. Coach Readers Who Freeze When They Encounter a Tricky Word

As students read today, you'll want to support their decoding guided by the blueprint **"Coaching Conferences to Support Decoding."** However, you may have some students who freeze and stop decoding when they encounter tricky words. Here's how to proceed if the reader freezes instead of decoding.

Ask the reader to try something

IF SO → "Look at the word, not me. You can do it!"
"Try something."
"What could you try?"

IF NOT

Nudge the reader to use a transferable, high-leverage approach

IF SO → "Slide across the sounds. That's it, now put them together."
"Great! Now slide across the sounds faster. What word is it?"

IF NOT

Prompt the reader to notice a specific phonics element in the word

IF SO → (Point to the vowel.) "What's the vowel? What's the sound?" (If necessary, provide the sound.) "Now slide through the word."
"Look at the blend here." (Point to the blend.) "Read both letters. Now slide through the whole word."
(Point to the digraph.) "What sound do these two letters stand for?" (If necessary, provide the sound.) "Now slide through the word."

IF NOT

Demonstrate how to decode the word

IF SO → "Watch me!" Slide your finger underneath the word, saying each sound, then slide again, faster, and blend the word together. "You try!"

IF NOT

Help the student when the word is not entirely decodable for that child

IF SO → "That word is *said*. Let's break it into sounds, /s/ /ĕ/ /d/. What letter stands for /s/ in *said?* What letter stands for /d/? What letters stand for /ĕ/? Yes, *AI*. That's the tricky part of *said*. Now read the word."

17. Tips for Supporting Readers to Set and Achieve Goals

	What it looks like . . .
Setting and Establishing a Goal	**Providing Choice and Purpose.** The teacher introduces several options of goals, curated to best support students, and coaches them to choose a goal they'll feel proud of accomplishing, but one they think they can do without much teacher assistance. Have students name why that goal will work for them here.
	Defining Time. Give a clear time frame for when the goal needs to be accomplished. If the goal is a large one, you might define check-in points and coach students to break the goal into parts, then guide students to think how long it will take to accomplish those parts.
	Naming Product. Students need to be able to name what it looks like to be "done" with their goal—to achieve what they set out to accomplish. Is it a conversation? A jot or part of a topic map? Will they sketch or draw their understanding? Get students thinking about what's appropriate for the goal at hand.
	Brainstorming How to Handle Trouble. Inevitably, something will be tricky when accomplishing the goal, especially if it is a strong choice that won't come easy. Brainstorming ways to tackle issues before they arise will prevent students from coming to you when there is trouble, freeing you up to address student learning more easily.
Following Up with Goals	**Creating a Culture of "Check-In."** Ask students daily or weekly where they are at along their process, and ask them to show you the result of that process. Rather than holding students accountable if they get off task, brainstorm how they might realign themselves.
	Timing Reminders. Give students quick reminders of time to help them keep pace. Especially in the beginning of goal-setting, you'll want to develop students' concept of time passing by announcing it frequently.
	Finding Tools and Support. Students will likely need tools and support. Create space in your classroom where students can retrieve tools that have been introduced across the year. Make space too in your routine for students to ask for assistance from other students. Make achieving a goal a community effort and allow kids to work together.
Accomplishing Goals	**Celebrating Success.** At the end of the journey, praise the students for working toward something hard and staying with it until the end. Name the impact achieving their goal had on their performance and how it benefited them and their club, if applicable.
	Reflecting on the Process. Asking students what made achieving the goal tricky or easy and asking them what they'd do the same or change for next time sets students up for greater success on their next goal-searching adventure.