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# Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

## About the video

Reading proficiency is important, not only for academic success, but also for successful participation in modern society. However, learning to read is not as natural as learning to walk or talk. When students encounter unfamiliar words, they may not be prepared to accurately decode the words. To decode words, students need systematic and explicit instruction. This video, developed with the [Midwest Early Childhood Education Research Alliance](#), defines systematic and explicit instruction for phonemic awareness and phonics.

Strategies in this video are based on the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#).

This video complements another REL Midwest video, [Literacy Instruction Strategies for Success: Multi-Tier Intervention in Primary Grades](#).

## Intended audience

This video is intended for teachers of beginning readers, school leaders, instructional and literacy coaches, administrators, and parents.

## What is systematic instruction?

Systematic instruction involves using a scope and sequence to teach phonemic awareness and phonics. The scope defines the skills that the teacher will cover. The sequence clarifies the order in which teachers should cover each skill.

## What is explicit instruction?

Explicit instruction in phonics and phonological awareness helps students become proficient readers; without this explicit modeling, scaffolded practice, corrective feedback, and checks for student understanding, many students will never learn to decode or read fluently.

Explicit instruction includes the following components:

Modeling	Practice
Setting a clear objective	Providing scaffolding for students while they practice skills
Modeling skills using clear instructions and planned examples	
Supporting Practices	
Providing immediate and specific corrective feedback	Checking frequently for student understanding

## ? Discussion questions

- What part of the video resonated with you and your experience?
- How is your classroom instruction systematic? Is there anything that you could do to make it more systematic?
- How is your classroom instruction explicit? Is there anything you can do to make it more explicit?
- What questions do you have about how to apply information from this video to your instruction?
- What types of supports and professional development do teachers need to increase their use of systematic and explicit instruction?
- How can you advocate for the use of systematic and explicit instruction for your child's classroom and school?

## Related resources

- Video: [Integrating play into literacy instruction: Strategies for your classroom](#)
- Video: [Literacy instruction strategies for success: Multi-tier intervention in primary grades](#)
- Blog: [Three concrete steps educators can take to accelerate reading growth for primary students during the 2021/22 academic year](#)
- Webinar: [Evidence-Based Literacy Interventions to Support Young Learners During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- Infographic: [On course for reading success: Best practices for teaching beginning readers](#)
- REL Southeast module: [Supporting Your Child's Reading at Home](#)

For more information, view the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#).

Foundational Skills  
to Support Reading



## About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. To learn more, visit the [REL Midwest website](#) and follow [@RELMidwest on Twitter](#).