



How Decodable Readers fit into reading instruction



Word recognition and **language comprehension** are the two key components required for reading comprehension. Decodable Readers are designed to develop word recognition, whereas children's literature is ideal for developing language comprehension.

Use Decodable Readers for word recognition

Decodable Readers are short texts that only contain the phoneme-grapheme relationships students have been explicitly taught. Use Decodable Readers for whole-class modelled and shared reading, then have students read the books independently.

These books give students specific opportunities to apply their knowledge of **phoneme-grapheme relationships** and **phonemic awareness**, which over time leads to quick and accurate **word recognition**. Word recognition is *not* defined as recognising each word as a 'whole', but processing all phoneme-grapheme relationships within the word quickly so it does not consume conscious attention. This skill takes a lot of practice to develop in beginning readers.

Well-written and illustrated Decodable Readers like the Sound Waves Decodable Readers can also develop vocabulary and background knowledge, but this is not their main purpose.



Use children's literature for language comprehension

Children's literature includes a variety of text types such as narratives, poetry, plays, traditional tales and informative texts. Read children's literature aloud to students as they are unlikely to have the word recognition skills required to read the texts independently.

Reading children's literature aloud to students expands their **vocabulary** and **background knowledge**, which are required for **language comprehension**. It also familiarises them with different text types, models reading behaviours (e.g. monitoring comprehension) and establishes reading as an enjoyable activity.

It is important to understand that reading aloud to students will not generally teach them *how* to read. The optimal approach to reading instruction is to use children's literature alongside Decodable Readers.





How to use Sound Waves Decodable Readers

There are a number of ways you can use the Sound Waves Decodable Readers with students. Use a combination of instructional approaches to give students multiple opportunities to practise reading.

Instructional approach	Why and how	When	Extra information
Whole-class modelled and shared reading	<p>Use whole-class modelled and shared reading to teach focus phoneme–grapheme relationships and Special Words.</p> <p>Use the projectable Decodable Reader (available in the Sound Waves Literacy online teaching resources) to model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and decoding words with the focus phoneme–grapheme relationship and Special Words reading from top to bottom and left to right responding to full stops, exclamation marks and question marks re-reading and correcting when you make an error pausing to think about the meaning of words. <p>Re-read the book with students joining in, focusing on words containing the focus phoneme–grapheme relationship.</p>	Directly after you have introduced a focus phoneme–grapheme relationship in your Sound Waves lesson*.	Core books are ideal for whole-class teaching. However, you may like to start with <i>Support</i> or <i>Extended</i> books depending on the overall ability of your class.
Small-group reading	<p>Use small-group reading to practise focus phoneme–grapheme relationships and Special Words.</p> <p>Ensure each student has their own copy of the relevant Decodable Reader, then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Read the title and discuss what the book might be about. Revise the focus phoneme–grapheme relationship and Special Words using the Warm Up on the inside front cover. Have students read the text aloud. Help students decode unfamiliar words. Discuss unfamiliar and interesting vocabulary. Have students recall key facts and reflect on the text using the Book Chat questions at the back of the book. 	Regularly as part of your literacy block or anytime throughout the week.	Use <i>Support</i> , <i>Core</i> or <i>Extended</i> Decodable Readers depending on each student's ability.
Paired fluency reads	<p>Use paired fluency reads to develop students' reading fluency. Paired fluency reads are a highly effective and time efficient method of engaging all students in regular reading practice.</p> <p>Ensure each student has their own copy of the relevant Decodable Reader, then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have students sit in pairs with their own copies of the <i>same</i> Decodable Reader. Ask one student to read aloud for a designated amount of time (set a timer) while the other student follows along. Tell the students to swap roles. 	Regularly as part of your literacy block or anytime throughout the week.	<p>Use <i>Support</i>, <i>Core</i> or <i>Extended</i> Decodable Readers depending on each student's ability. Ensure each student in the pair has the <i>same</i> Decodable Reader.</p> <p>With this approach, use a Decodable Reader that features a previously taught phoneme–grapheme relationship as students should be able to read the Decodable Reader accurately on their own without teacher prompting.</p>
In-class independent reading	<p>Use in-class independent reading as an opportunity to revise taught phoneme–grapheme relationships and Special Words.</p> <p>Ensure each student has their own copy of the relevant Decodable Reader.</p>	Anytime throughout the week.	<p>Use <i>Support</i>, <i>Core</i> or <i>Extended</i> Decodable Readers depending on each student's ability.</p> <p>With this approach, use a Decodable Reader that features a previously taught phoneme–grapheme relationship as students should be able to read the Decodable Reader accurately on their own without teacher prompting.</p>
Intervention	<p>Use intervention sessions to reteach and reinforce phoneme–grapheme relationships and Special Words.</p> <p>Ensure each student has their own copy of the relevant Decodable Reader.</p>	As part of your one-to-one or small-group intervention sessions.	Use a <i>Support</i> or <i>Core</i> Decodable Reader depending on each student's ability.
Home reading	<p>Use home reading as an opportunity to revise taught phoneme–grapheme relationships and Special Words.</p> <p>Ensure each student takes home their own copy of the relevant Decodable Reader.</p>	Each week as part of your home reading routine.	<p>Use <i>Support</i>, <i>Core</i> or <i>Extended</i> Decodable Readers depending on each student's ability.</p> <p>With this approach, use a Decodable Reader that features a previously taught phoneme–grapheme relationship as students should be able to read the Decodable Reader accurately on their own without prompting.</p>

* You can use *Sound Waves Decodable Readers* even if your school doesn't use other *Sound Waves Literacy* resources. Simply refer to the *Sound Waves Reading Scope and Sequence* and compare it with your phonics teaching sequence to ensure students have been explicitly taught all relevant phoneme–grapheme relationships covered in each book.