




# The Grades 3–5 Elements of Aligned ELA Instruction

Students (Ss) need repeated exposure to a large amount of text — across a wide variety of genre and topics — to acquire a deep inventory of words that are instantly recognized or efficiently decoded. This exposure to text and reading also deepens the reader’s knowledge and vocabulary, in turn supporting fluency, comprehension, and ability to read even more.

	Foundational Skills Phonics & Word Recognition	Fluency Accuracy, Automaticity, Expression	Language Grammar, Syntax, Morphology, Spelling	Read Aloud Fiction and nonfiction 2-3 levels above grade level	Conversation Collaborative speaking and listening that support meaning making	Writing Response to Text, Culminating Task
 <b>Ongoing Development of Word Recognition</b> Instruction and practice reading texts that are targeted at building and strengthening decoding skills and word recognition  30+ MINUTES DAILY IN ADDITION TO THE ELA BLOCK <b>Remediation</b> For Ss who are not reading with automaticity and reliability provide additional instruction and practice that includes fluency work and word attack skills (spelling patterns, morphology, syllabication)	<b>Always:</b> Use frequent assessment to determine needs, monitor progress toward mastery of discrete skills and inform differentiated groupings for practice and support  <b>Often:</b> Explicit instruction and decoding practice of syllabication patterns and multisyllabic words; both within a text and decoupled from the text  <b>Often:</b> Explicit instruction and practice with grade-appropriate irregular words	<b>Daily:</b> Provide reading practice with texts and word lists (decodable and/or high frequency) to support decoding and word recognition  <b>Weekly:</b> Provide opportunities for partner reading (aloud)  <b>Weekly:</b> Conduct repeated oral reading  <b>Often:</b> Monitor and track automaticity, accuracy, and expression of Ss reading	<b>Often:</b> Provide explicit instruction of spelling patterns and morphology, with practice combining these with decoding knowledge, to read multisyllabic words, both within a text and decoupled from the text  <b>Often:</b> Explicitly provide explanation of sentence structures encountered in text and provide students with practice creating their own sentences with the same structure	<b>As Needed:</b> Model what fluent reading of unfamiliar multi-syllabic words, new syllabication patterns, and new word parts (roots and affixes) sounds like in the context of a text	<b>Often:</b> Engage Ss in collaborative, text-based discussion to ensure Ss are accountable for comprehending what they are reading	<b>Daily:</b> Provide opportunities for writing aligned with instruction (spelling of taught sounds, word parts, and words)  <b>Often:</b> Engage Ss in writing of words, phrases, or sentences comprised of taught spellings and words  <b>Often:</b> Engage in shared writing that models new genres as they are introduced (various genres)
KNOWLEDGE and VOCABULARY: Use texts that are as rich with content and vocabulary as decoding skills will allow, encouraging students to use known words and word parts to understand new						
 <b>45-60 MINUTES DAILY</b> <b>Working with Texts of Grade-level Complexity or Beyond</b> Supported reading, shared reading, close reading and read-aloud paired with discussion to build students’ knowledge, vocabulary, and understanding of text meaning, using texts of grade-level complexity or beyond (read aloud)	<b>As Needed to Support Learners:</b> Discuss syllabication patterns and irregularly spelled words in the text, providing Ss practice and support reading unfamiliar multisyllabic words and words with irregular spelling	<b>Daily:</b> Include at least one form of oral reading: fluent read-aloud; choral reading; repeated reading; reader’s theater  <b>Often:</b> Analyze and discuss sentence structure (juicy sentences) during read-aloud and shared reading of complex texts  <b>Often:</b> Discuss spelling patterns and morphology, providing Ss practice reading unfamiliar multisyllabic words within the text	<b>Often:</b> Model fluent reading, particularly for new genres and more complex text or to model unfamiliar, multisyllabic words	<b>Daily:</b> Include at least one form of text-based discussion aimed at pushing students to think and make, and discover meaning from the text: rereading; text-dependent questions; evidence-based questions, deconstruction of juicy sentences	<b>Often:</b> Have Ss respond to text, in writing using complete sentences  <b>Often:</b> Engage in shared writing that models new genres as they are introduced (various genres)	
KNOWLEDGE and VOCABULARY: Read sets of texts (fiction and nonfiction), intentionally selected to build knowledge and vocabulary related to a topic						
 <b>AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE</b> <b>Volume of Engaged Reading Beyond Instruction</b> Additional reading (guided, independent, or shared) within the ELA block and across all content areas to support all aspects of reading, including engagement and motivation, using texts at a variety of levels	<b>Daily:</b> For struggling readers, select texts to provide practice with taught spellings and words, occasionally allowing students to challenge themselves reading beyond what has been taught	<b>Weekly:</b> Provide opportunities for partner reading (aloud)  <b>Weekly (content areas):</b> Include at least one form of oral reading: fluent model (read-aloud); choral reading; repeated oral reading; reader’s theater	<b>As opportunity arises through the texts:</b> Draw Ss attention to sentence structure, word origin, and spelling patterns	<b>Often:</b> Model what fluent reading sounds like, particularly for new topics, genres, and more complex text	<b>Often:</b> Engage in text-based discussion to ensure Ss are accountable for comprehending what they are reading	<b>Often:</b> Have Ss respond to text in writing to ensure they are accountable for comprehending what they are reading
KNOWLEDGE and VOCABULARY: Allow Ss to read sets of texts compiled to build knowledge and vocabulary based on topics of student interest or selected to scaffold knowledge required for grade-						

## Using the “Elements of Aligned ELA Instruction” Tables

The questions of what an ELA/Literacy block should look like and how much time should be spent on various aspects of instruction are adaptive challenges – unique to each situation. This document highlights essential (and often intertwined) elements of aligned instruction to help you to identify gaps, strengthen instruction, and improve alignment as you consider structure and time for your classroom(s) and curricula.

To dive deeper on the elements of aligned ELA instruction, see:

- [‘Both and’ Literacy Instruction K-5: A proposed Paradigm Shift for the Common Core State Standards ELA Classroom](#) by Meredith and David Liben
- [Advancing Our Students’ Language and Literacy: The Challenge of Complex Texts](#) by Marilyn Adams
- [Why a Structured Phonics Program is Effective](#) by David Liben (Draft)
- [Letting the Text Take Center Stage](#) by Timothy Shanahan