

# Structured Literacy and the *Being a Reader*<sup>™</sup> Program

The International Dyslexia Association® identifies Structured Literacy as an effective instructional approach for meeting the needs of students who struggle with learning to read. The Structured Literacy approach specifies systematic, explicit instruction to teach decoding skills, including phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics (International Dyslexia Association, 2015). The Structured Literacy approach has been in use for almost a century but has been labeled in different ways, such as systematic reading instruction, phonics-based reading instruction, Orton-Gillingham, or synthetic phonics (Hamman, 2018).

The *Being a Reader* program is an early reading curriculum that supports students in learning to read well and developing a love of reading. The program combines whole-class and small-group instruction to address the full range of literacy competencies. Small-group instruction is specifically designed to address foundational skills, and is aligned with the Structured Literacy approach. *Being a Reader* small-group instruction relies on the scope and sequence and instructional model developed by Dr. John Shefelbine. Dr. Shefelbine's work is embodied in the *SIPPS*<sup>®</sup> (*Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words*) program, which is published by Center for the Collaborative Classroom.

The scope and sequence for whole-class instruction is provided in Appendix D of the *Being a Reader Teacher's Manuals*. A comprehensive scope and sequence for each Set and Week of small-group instruction is available on the Learning Hub and at the following link: <http://bit.ly/BARSets1-12>.

## Structured Literacy

The table below demonstrates the alignment of *Being a Reader* instruction with the elements of Structured Literacy.

Elements of Structured Literacy	<i>Being a Reader</i>
<b>Phonology</b> The study of sound structure of spoken words; includes rhyming, counting words in a spoken sentence, clapping syllables in spoken words, and phonemic awareness (manipulation of sounds).	<p>During Shared Reading, students actively engage in reading a text chorally with the teacher. The instruction often explores patterns and rhyme.</p> <p>Phonological awareness activities appear in every week of small-group instruction in Sets 1–5. Blending and segmenting are emphasized in early sets, and more sophisticated skills are emphasized in later sets.</p>

	<p>Lesson-specific examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1, pp. 48 &amp; 144</li> <li>• <i>Being a Reader, Set 3 Small-group Teacher's Manual</i>, pp. 7, 12, &amp; 19</li> </ul> <p>Citation(s): <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1: Shared Reading, pp. xxvi–xxvii; <i>Being a Reader, Set 3 Small-group Teacher's Manual</i>, p. xii</p>
<p><b>Sound-Symbol Association</b> Connecting sounds to print, including blending and segmenting. This should occur two ways: visual to auditory (reading) and auditory to visual (spelling).</p>	<p>Students learn new spelling-sound correspondences and apply their growing knowledge to words in isolation and in specially written texts. Weekly sound sorts reinforce spelling-sound knowledge.</p> <p>Lesson-specific examples: <i>Being a Reader Set 3 Small-group Teacher's Manual</i>, pp. 25–26, steps 2 and 3 (visual to auditory), and p. 32 (guided spelling-auditory to visual)</p> <p>Citation: <i>Being a Reader Set 3 Small-group Teacher's Manual</i>, pp. xii–xiv</p>
<p><b>Syllable Instruction</b> Includes teaching of the six syllable types.</p>	<p>Students explore syllabication orally in Shared Reading, grades K–1. As early as Small-group Reading Set 4, students begin to read words by syllable (beginning with consonant-l-e syllables and inflectional endings) rather than letter by letter. In grade 2, Word Study develops students' understanding of how words are constructed and explores the meanings of common affixes. The six syllable types are included in the word analysis. The focus in grade 2 is on developing strategies needed to decode polysyllabic words.</p> <p>Lesson-specific examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1, pp. 158–159 and 143–144</li> <li>• <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 2, Volume 2, pp. 296–298, steps 1–5</li> </ul> <p>Citations: <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1: Shared Reading, pp. xxvi–xxvii; <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 2, Volume 1, Word Study, p. xxvi.</p>
<p><b>Morphology</b> The study of the smallest unit(s) of meaning (i.e., base words, affixes).</p>	<p>Students develop strategies needed to decode polysyllabic words, including seeing the whole word, recognizing known parts, and assembling parts to see the whole word.</p>

	<p>Lesson-specific examples:  <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 2, Volume 2, pp. 520–522, steps 1–3, and pp. 523–524, steps 1–3</p> <p>Citation: <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 2, Volume 1, Word Study, p. xxvi.</p>
<p><b>Syntax</b>  Sequence and function of words in a sentence (grammar, sentence variation, and the mechanics of language).</p>	<p>Shared Reading in grades K–1 supports students' ability to use language patterns and syntax. Cooperative Structures allow students to practice language as they talk about their thinking and hear the thinking of others.</p> <p>Lesson-specific example:  <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1, pp. 9–11, steps 1–5</p> <p>Citations: <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1: Cooperative Structures, p. xxxi; Shared Reading, pp. xxvi–xxvii</p>
<p><b>Semantics</b>  Meaning (comprehension of language).</p>	<p>The purpose of teaching foundational skills is to facilitate comprehension. Students read and discuss books during Shared Reading and during every Small-group Reading lesson. Cooperative Structures allow students to talk about and deepen their thinking and as they hear the thinking of others.</p> <p>Lesson-specific examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1, pp. 256–258, steps 1–5</li> <li>• <i>Being a Reader, Set 3 Small-group Teacher's Manual</i>, pp. 52–53, steps 4–5</li> </ul> <p>Citations: <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 1, Volume 1: Cooperative Structures, page xxxi; Shared Reading, pp. xxvi–xxvii; Small-group Reading Sets 1–15, p. xxviii; <i>Being a Reader Teacher's Manual</i>, Grade 2, Volume 1, Word Study, p. xxvi</p>

## Teaching Principles

The table below shows the alignment of the *Being a Reader* program to the teaching principles of Structured Literacy.

Teaching Principles of Structured Literacy	<i>Being a Reader</i>
<p><b>Systematic and Cumulative</b>  Material must follow the logical order of the</p>	<p>Coordinated instructional routines guide progression on</p>

language, and sequence must progress from easiest to more difficult concepts that gradually build upon one another.	a developmental scope and sequence of foundational skills.  Citations: <i>Scope and Sequence; Being a Reader, Set 3 Small-group Reading Teacher's Manual</i> , pp. xvi–xx
<b>Explicit</b> Deliberate, clear teaching.	Coordinated instructional routines provide consistent instruction that allows students to move through a developmental scope and sequence of foundational skills.  Citation: <i>Scope and Sequence</i>
<b>Diagnostic</b> Informal and formal assessment that informs the teacher of specific student needs.	A placement assessment provides the data that allows the teacher to form differentiated groups of students for Small-group Reading. Mastery Tests for Sets 1–5 assess individual students' progress through the spelling-sounds, phonics patterns, and high-frequency words instructed. Formative Group Progress Assessments occur every other week and support instructional decision-making. Other assessments, both formative and summative, help teachers make informed instructional decisions and track and evaluate student growth.  Citation: <i>Being a Reader Assessment Resource Book</i> , pp. xi–xviii

## Multisensory Instruction in the *Being a Reader* Program

Modality	<i>Being a Reader</i>
Visual; “look”	As new skills are introduced (i.e., phonological awareness tasks, sounds, high-frequency words), the teacher points to target spellings or words and sweeps under them to provide a visual cue to prompt choral responses.  Evidence: <i>Small-group Reading Sets 1–5</i>
Auditory; “listen”	As a new skill is introduced (phonological awareness task, sounds, high-frequency words), the teacher models as the students listen.  Evidence: <i>Small-group Reading Sets 1–5</i>
Kinesthetic-tactile, vocal; “say”	As students practice and review skills, the teacher elicits choral responses.

	Evidence: <i>Small-group Reading Sets 1–5</i> (i.e., “Read-Spell-Read” and “Sound” routines)
Kinesthetic-tactile, movement; “move”	Students are prompted to move pictures, word parts, and word cards in sorting activities. Students are prompted to clap to support phonological awareness activities.  Evidence: <i>Small-group Reading Sets 1–5</i> , Word Study (grade 2)
Kinesthetic-tactile, feeling; “touch”	Students are prompted to trace new sounds on the table top.  Evidence: <i>Small-group Reading Sets 1–5</i>
Kinesthetic-tactile, writing; “write”	In the Guided Spelling portion of each lesson, students become strategic spellers as they spell decodable words and high-frequency words with teacher support. This provides an opportunity for students to directly apply their growing knowledge to writing.  Evidence: Guided Spelling

## References

International Dyslexia Association. 2015. “Effective Reading Instruction.” Accessed April 2019. <https://dyslexiaida.org/effective-reading-instruction/>.

Cowen, Carolyn D. (2016). “What Is Structured Literacy?” Accessed April 2019. [https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/ April 2019](https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/April-2019).

Hamman, Jessica. 2018. “A powerful approach to reading instruction: A research-based method of instruction that helps struggling readers is appropriate to use with all students.” Accessed April 2019. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/powerful-approach-reading-instruction>.

Spear-Swerling, Louise. 2018. “Structured Literacy and Typical Literacy Practices: Understanding Differences to Create Instructional Opportunities.” Accessed April 2019. <http://www.readingrockets.org/content/pdfs/structured-literacy.pdf>.