



ELA Observation Coaching Tools

This is one of three observation coaching tools to support K-12 literacy instruction:

K-2 Foundational Skills	K-2 ELA (Knowledge)	3-12 ELA
Can be used to observe instruction specific to foundational skills, including instruction on print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency. Though the tool is labeled for K-2, it may also be used to foundational skills blocks in later elementary grades.	Can be used to observe ELA instruction in grades K-2 that is <i>not</i> specific to foundational skills. Often, this is referred to as the "knowledge block", where students read, talk about, and write about grade-appropriate texts that build knowledge.	Can be used to observe any ELA instruction in grades 3-12 where students read, talk about, and write about grade-appropriate texts that build knowledge.

About the K-2 Foundational Skills Tool

The KSDE K-2 Foundational Skills Observation Coaching Tool illustrates the most important elements of quality foundational skills instruction as articulated in the [Vision for Quality Instruction in K-2 ELA](#). It provides a common language to articulate what instruction looks like in practice for each focus area and is made up of:

- **Focus Areas:** Core components, or elements, of quality instruction as defined by the vision
- **Indicators:** Brief descriptions of observable teacher actions that are most significant for the focus area (indicators are not exhaustive)
- **Look-Fors:** Student and teacher actions that can provide evidence for the indicator

This tool can be used in a variety of ways to support coaching, peer observations, and professional learning.

Please note that it is non-evaluative and should not be used for formal teacher evaluation. For recommended uses, refer to the Observation Coaching Tools Guidance document.

Best Practices

Observations should be no shorter than 10 minutes, though a minimum of **15-20 minutes** is recommended. Note that you may not observe evidence for all indicators in a single observation. Consider observing at different parts of the lesson to gather information across indicators. Many look-fors describe what students are doing or thinking; these should only be marked when there is evidence that a clear majority of students (over 70%) are participating in the identified action.

Use the note-taking templates to make note of the lesson's topic and objectives, target standard(s), number of students and curricular materials being used (if any). Take [low-inference notes](#) to reduce the influence of assumptions, opinions, and judgment on your ratings.

Additional Learning

For additional learning on content-specific terms and concepts embedded in the observation coaching tool, utilize the [ELA Standards Alignment Toolkit](#). For more information, contact Dr. Laurie Curtis, Early Literacy/Dyslexia Program Manager, at ELitDyslexia@ksde.gov.

Focus 1: Standards-Aligned Tasks and Materials

- 1A. The foundational skill(s) observed in the lesson reflect grade-level standards appropriate for the time of year.
- 1B. The foundational skill(s) observed in the lesson is part of a systematic scope and sequence.

Focus 2: Teacher-Directed Instruction

- 2A. Foundational skill(s) instruction is explicit, clear, and correct.
- 2B. When appropriate, instruction and materials provide opportunities to connect acquisition of foundational skills to making meaning from reading and listening.
- 2C. The lesson includes adequate time for intentional modeling and aligned teacher instruction and student practice of targeted skill(s).
- 2D. The elements of the lesson are presented in an engaging and child-friendly manner.

Focus 3: Student Practice

- 3A. Students practice with materials and written/oral tasks that are aligned to targeted content and skills.
- 3B. Students practice target skills in the context of a decodable text.
- 3C. Students engage in multiple opportunities to practice target skills out of context.
- 3D. All students actively participate and have multiple opportunities to respond within the content of the lesson.

Focus 4: Assessment and Differentiation

- 4A. The teacher collects student data (formal and/or informal).
- 4B. The teacher responds to data and adjusts instruction accordingly to support students.

LESSON CONTEXT			
Teacher:	Date/Time:	Grade/Subj:	# of Students:
Materials: ☐ Teacher-Created ☐ Adopted (name below)	Learning Target:	Standard(s) & Text(s)	
Components of Structured Literacy Lesson Observed: ☐ Phonemic Awareness ☐ Morphology/Vocabulary ☐ Letter Writing/Handwriting ☐ Phonics/Orthographic Mapping ☐ Read-Aloud or Whole Group Learning ☐ Small Group Instruction ☐ Fluency ☐ Decodable ☐ Independent Reading			
Focus 1: STANDARDS-ALIGNED TASKS AND MATERIALS			
Indicator	Look Fors		
1A. The foundational skill(s) observed in the lesson reflect grade-level standards appropriate for the time of year.	<i>All elements below may not be addressed in each lesson:</i> ☐ Phonological awareness ☐ Phonics and word recognition ☐ Print concepts ☐ Fluency		
1B. The foundational skill(s) observed in the lesson is part of a systematic scope and sequence.	☐ Classroom displays and/or student work that show past and current foundational skills foci ☐ Connections made by the teacher to previously taught skills		
Focus 2: TEACHER-DIRECTED INSTRUCTION			
Indicator	Look Fors		
2A. Foundational skill(s) instruction is explicit, clear, and correct.	☐ Clear, accurate teacher pronunciation of sounds ☐ Articulation of objective to students ☐ Visual aids ☐ Modeling of blending, segmenting or other content-specific tasks ☐ Explanation of rules for sound/spelling patterns		
2B. When appropriate, instruction and materials provide opportunities to connect acquisition of foundational skills to making meaning from reading and listening.	☐ Text-dependent questions used with decodable text ☐ Student-friendly definitions for unfamiliar words ☐ Use of newly decoded/blended words in meaningful sentences		

Focus 2: TEACHER-DIRECTED INSTRUCTION (continued)

2C. The lesson includes adequate time for intentional modeling and aligned teacher instruction and student practice of targeted skill(s).	☐ <i>Appropriate pacing for the task</i> ☒ <i>Multiple opportunities for students to practice through reading, writing, speaking and/or listening</i> ☐ <i>Teacher models accurate writing and provides accurate feedback when students engage in dictation</i>
2D. The elements of the lesson are presented in an engaging and child-friendly manner.	☐ <i>Print rich environment (Sound walls, labels)</i> ☐ <i>Writing activities</i> ☐ <i>Skills taught and practiced through movement, songs, chants</i> ☐ <i>Discussion and collaboration</i>

Focus 3: STUDENT PRACTICE

Indicator	Look Fors
3A. Students practice with materials and written/oral tasks that are aligned to targeted content and skills.	☐ <i>Practice of new and/or previously taught skills (i.e. word chains, blending lines, dictation, guided spelling)</i> ☐ <i>Letter writing and handwriting</i> ☐ <i>Choral reading</i> ☐ <i>Repeated reading and other fluency activities</i>
3B. Students practice target skills in the context of a decodable text.	☐ <i>Reading or rereading sentences and/or text containing previously taught high-frequency words and sound/spelling patterns for accuracy/automaticity</i>
3C. Students engage in multiple opportunities to practice target skills out of context.	☐ <i>Skill focused games or puzzles</i> ☐ <i>Music, movement, and/or manipulatives</i> ☐ <i>Other discrete oral/written tasks</i>
3D. All students actively participate and have multiple opportunities to respond within the content of the lesson.	☐ <i>Student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction with content</i> ☐ <i>Adequate support for students to participate in small groups and with independent tasks</i> ☐ <i>Students and teachers operate with a sense of urgency</i>

Focus 4: ASSESSMENT AND DIFFERENTIATION

Indicator	Look Fors
4A. The teacher collects student data by ensuring all students are (formal and/or informal).	☐ <i>Data collecting system in place and collection of student work</i>
4B. The teacher responds to data and adjusts instruction accordingly to support students.	☐ <i>On-the-spot feedback, corrections or confirmations of student answers</i> ☐ <i>Adjustments made to tasks based on observations of student work/practice</i> ☐ <i>Differentiated groups and materials based on student data</i>