

VISION FOR QUALITY INSTRUCTION



K-2 English Language Arts

Introduction

The Kansas State Department of Education supports and encourages systemic efforts to improve early literacy, working to ensure that ALL Kansas learners become successful readers and writers. Learners should be equipped and empowered to read, comprehend, and analyze grade-level appropriate, complex texts independently and proficiently by the end of third grade. Through enriching literacy experiences across K-12, Kansas learners will see themselves as readers and writers who persevere in the face of challenging work and who are empowered to express themselves through language purposefully and creatively.

To that end, Kansas' youngest learners should have consistent access to strong structured literacy instruction aligned to the Kansas Curricular Standards for English Language Arts. Structured literacy is an evidence-based approach to teaching all students across PK-12 to read and write through instruction that is explicit, sequential, cumulative, multimodal, data-driven, interactive, and scaffolded. A structured literacy approach in the early grades (K-2) develops both students' foundational skills (i.e. decoding, spelling) and their meaning-making skills (i.e. comprehension, written expression).

All Kansas learners deserve K-2 ELA instruction characterized by:

- **Foundational Skills:** *Students* develop early reading skills such as phonological awareness, phonics, decoding, and fluency through a comprehensive instructional approach that includes:
 - **Standards-Aligned Tasks and Materials:** Reflects foundational skills appropriate for the grade level and time of year; and follows a systematic scope and sequence, with visible connections to previously taught skills.
 - **Teacher-Directed Instruction:** Delivers clear, explicit instruction using accurate pronunciation, visual aids, and modeling; and connects skills to comprehension where appropriate, with the use of meaningful texts and engaging, student-friendly activities.
 - **Student Practice:** Engages students in repeated, aligned practice of foundational skills through oral, written and interactive tasks; and includes both connected (e.g., decodable texts) and isolated skill practice to build fluency and accuracy.
 - **Assessment and Differentiation:** Uses formal and informal assessments to gather data on student progress, provide real-time feedback, and identify instructional needs; and responds to data by offering targeted small-group instruction and adjusting pacing, materials, or supports to meet diverse learning needs, including enrichment.

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

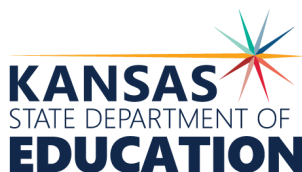
- **Complex, Developmentally Appropriate Texts:** *Students* engage in daily read-alouds of rich, complex literature. They listen to and discuss stories and informational texts that build vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension. *Teachers* select texts that are grade-appropriate. They guide students through text-dependent questions and discussions, modeling how to think deeply about texts and encouraging active participation in meaning-making.
- **Knowledge-Building Through Reading and Listening:** *Students* build knowledge about the world and expand their vocabulary by reading, listening to and discussing content-rich texts. They make connections across subjects and use new words in speaking and writing. *Teachers* choose texts that support interdisciplinary learning and embed vocabulary instruction in meaningful contexts. They design tasks that help students apply new knowledge and language in ways that deepen understanding.
- **Close Reading and Early Comprehension:** *Students* engage in repeated readings of texts to uncover key ideas, understand structure, and interpret meaning. They begin to use evidence from texts to support their thinking in both discussion and writing. *Teachers* lead reading experiences using explicit instruction and a gradual release of responsibility, asking scaffolded, text-specific questions that prompt critical thinking. They support students in identifying important details and model how to analyze text even before students can read independently.
- **Foundational Writing and Oral Language Development:** *Students* learn to express their ideas through writing and speaking, developing early composition and communication skills. They practice handwriting, spelling, and sentence formation while participating in conversations and storytelling. *Teachers* provide direct instruction in writing mechanics and structure. They create opportunities for shared, interactive, and independent writing and foster oral language development through structured dialogue and expressive activities.
- **Engaging, Child-Centered Instruction:** *Students* participate in joyful, interactive literacy experiences that build confidence and motivation. They learn through songs, movement, play, and exploration in a print-rich environment filled with meaningful text and student work. They have multiple opportunities to respond. *Teachers* design developmentally appropriate lessons that incorporate multimodal- activities and celebrate student voice. They create classrooms rich in print and literacy tools, helping students see themselves as capable and enthusiastic readers and writers.

Sources:

- International Dyslexia Association. Structured Literacy: An Approach Grounded in the Science of Reading. <https://dyslexiaida.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Structured-Literacy-Grounded-in-the-Science-of-Reading-SOR-V18.pdf>
- Kentucky Department of Education. Vision for Excellence in Early Literacy Instruction. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZfoFf5rnkLSeB0X85-hXGqo9RoiwKx0X/view>

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