



Integrating Letterland with Existing Tier I Reading Curriculum, K-2

Schools Using a Published Core Reading Program

(e.g., *Reading Streets, Journeys, Wonders, Open Court*)

- Typically, the phonics components of core reading programs are not sufficiently robust by themselves, especially for children who struggle to become fluent readers and writers.
- Letterland can be integrated in two ways with a core program:
 1. To replace the phonics portions of the core resource
 2. To enhance the phonics portion of the core resource

Option 1: Replace the phonics portion of the core resource with Letterland

We highly recommend that schools choose option 1. There are several reasons for this:

- Letterland is designed to be a complete Tier I program for phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, handwriting, and fluency within decodable text. Additionally, the intervention strand material included at each grade level is tightly aligned with the content of the core lessons.
- Letterland has an evidence-based, systematic scope and sequence for teaching phonics concepts.
 - It introduces letter-sound relationships at a reasonable pace, teaching high-utility relationships first, permitting students to start reading and spelling earlier.
 - It avoids simultaneous introduction of auditorily or visually similar sounds and letters.
 - It introduces single consonant sounds and blends separately.
 - It teaches upper and lower case simultaneously.
 - It directly teaches handwriting within letter-sound instruction at the Kindergarten level.
 - It embeds phonemic awareness practice as well as high-frequency and irregular word instruction K-2.
 - It teaches all six syllable types of the English language.
 - It teaches word structure, specifically the concept and function of basewords and suffixes.
- When taught in order, Letterland lessons provide a strong system of review, constantly spiraling back to previously learned concepts as new concepts are introduced.
- Letterland directly integrates spelling instruction in a manner unlike typical core reading programs; all spelling practice is a reflection of the phonics concept being taught in that lesson or unit as is identified as best practice by research.
- In order to benefit from the use of all the multisensory activities in Letterland lessons, teaching Letterland with fidelity will require all or most of the time allotted for phonics instruction.

FAQ's:

Q: What should I do if reading material used in my core program to teach vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills includes words with phonics concepts not yet explicitly taught in Letterland?

A: If students come across a concept that has not been addressed yet in Letterland, the teacher can "introduce" students to the concept by sharing the related Letterland character story as well as some of the practice words from the corresponding lesson or unit. The students will learn the concept in more detail in a later Letterland lesson or unit. It may also be helpful to provide students with a visual reference of the story to use independently until they have obtained mastery of the concept.

Q. Can I use the decodable text provided in my core reading program to provide fluency practice of the concepts taught within a Letterland lesson or unit?

A. Each unit in grades 1 and 2 includes decodable text aligned to the phonics concepts introduced in the lesson as well as patterns previously learned. Kindergarten has several *Take-Home books* that are for decodable practice as well. The decodable text from a core reading program can be used for additional practice as long as it doesn't contain too many unfamiliar phonics concepts. Since most research-based, systematic sequences follow a similar pattern, it usually isn't too difficult to share across resources. Teachers should aim for at least 80% decodability of any text used for accuracy or fluency practice. Decodable text from other sources such as the *Reading A-Z Decodable Text* website (<https://www.readinga-z.com/books/decodable-books/>) can also be used this way.

Option 2: Enhance the phonics portion of the core resource with Letterland

If a school requires teachers to use the phonics portion of their core reading program, Letterland can be used to enhance that instruction. The more robust cueing system, multisensory activities, and story metaphors will provide additional support for developing phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Suggestions for integration include

- Set aside time at the start of the school year to introduce students to the basic Letterland characters:
 - For Kindergarten: Use *Section 1: Phonemic Awareness Fast Track* from the Kindergarten Teacher Manual to introduce the Letterland characters. In *Fast Track*, teachers provide early, rapid, multisensory exposure to all 26 letters and their sounds, shapes and capital letters, as well as integrated phonological awareness instruction. This is designed to take place in the first 18-25 days of school. This introduction will enable you to make references to Letterland characters during core reading program phonics lessons as suggested below.
 - For Grade 1: Use Unit A (formerly known as Letterland Express) to introduce the first 13 sounds encountered in the Grade 1 sequence. Students will familiarize themselves with the characters and their stories as well as learn key strategies used in every unit of the program. Subsequent characters and their stories will be reviewed or introduced throughout the units.
 - For Grade 2: Use Unit A similarly to Grade 1, but teachers may want to focus on newer or difficult concept stories rather than all of the Letterland characters since students begin to phase out their use at this grade level.
- Prior to teaching a core program phonics lesson, identify the phonics concepts that are the focus of the lesson. Then go to the Letterland Teacher Manual (same grade level as the core) and find the lesson that is aligned with that concept.
- Try to use as much of the Letterland lesson as time allows. If you have minimal time, you may only be able to share the Letterland character story and alliteration using the ABC books and/or the software. If you have more time, use the multi-sensory Letterland activities/procedures detailed in the Teacher Manual (e.g., Sound/Action Trick, Quick Dash, Rollercoaster Trick, Rubber Band Trick, Live Reading, Live Spelling, Story/Capital Letter/Handwriting Songs).
- For Grades 1 and 2, provide additional fluency practice using the Letterland decodable text provided for that unit.

Schools Using a Guided Reading Model, No Core Reading Program

(e.g., guided reading using a leveled books system, phonics taught incidentally such as when using Fountas and Pinnell)

- Typically, there is minimal explicit, systematic, and multisensory instruction for phonics in this model.
- Letterland should be used to provide a specific curriculum and time for teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling.
- The decodable text provided in the Letterland materials should be used to provide the fluency practice related to both previous and current phonics concepts being taught. This decodable text can be supplemented with text from additional text sources (see reference above to *Reading A-Z*).
- Leveled books and guided reading will continue to be used to teach vocabulary and comprehension skills.

Letterland and Tier II or III Intervention

While Letterland is designed to be used as a complete program for core, Tier I instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, and handwriting, there are several ways that Letterland can be used to provide Tier II supplemental and Tier III intervention instruction for students who struggle to read and spell fluently.

- Letterland lessons and units include activities that are designed for small group instruction. These activities can be used to provide additional, Tier II supplemental support to individuals or small groups of students within a classroom that is using Letterland for core instruction. These activities are tied to the phonics focus of the core lesson or unit
- All grade level manuals contain an additional, separate set of small-group intervention lessons designed for Tier III instruction. They are called the Intervention Strand and can be found at the back of every grade level Teacher's Manual. This instruction can be provided within the classroom, or in a pull-out setting. These lessons are designed to provide intensive intervention support targeted to the individual needs of students. These lessons align with the phonics focus of the core lessons, but at this level of intensive need, teachers are expected to teach at the student's instructional level regardless of where the student's class may be in the sequence.
- A placement process that includes a reading and spelling assessment, guides teachers on where to start along the K-2 scope and sequence. Pacing is determined by student progress and mastery of concepts taught with a focus on accuracy first, then automaticity. Teachers may need to have access to all grade level manuals, depending on the needs of the students.

FAQ's:

Q. Can Letterland be used only as an intervention in a pull-out setting? That is, does it also have to be used as the Tier I core program?

A. Struggling readers benefit from a model of instruction that uses a consistent cueing system, terminology, and activities across all tiers of their instruction. That is why Letterland is best used as both a core program in the classroom and for intervention instruction in a pull-out setting. However, if necessary, Letterland can be used in just an intervention setting. For example:

- In classrooms that choose to use a less explicit approach to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling for core instruction, struggling students will benefit from participating in Letterland's systematic, multi-sensory lessons in a pull-out setting even if Letterland is not being used in the core classroom.
- In classrooms that rely on the phonics materials in a core reading program, Letterland's lessons and units can be used in a pull-out setting to revisit phonics concepts that were not sufficiently learned through classroom instruction.

Q. Can Letterland be used as the core program in the classroom, and a different program used to provide intervention instruction in a pull-out setting?

A. As noted above, students who struggle benefit from instruction that is consistent as they move between classroom and intervention settings. Given that Letterland includes intervention lessons, it is highly recommended that schools also use it for intervention instruction rather than adding a different intervention that is not tied to classroom instruction, unless data demonstrates that the student requires a different approach.