

# The Science of Reading & **RedThread** Literacy



By **K12** Coalition

*From Foundations to Knowledge:*  
**The RedThread Advantage**

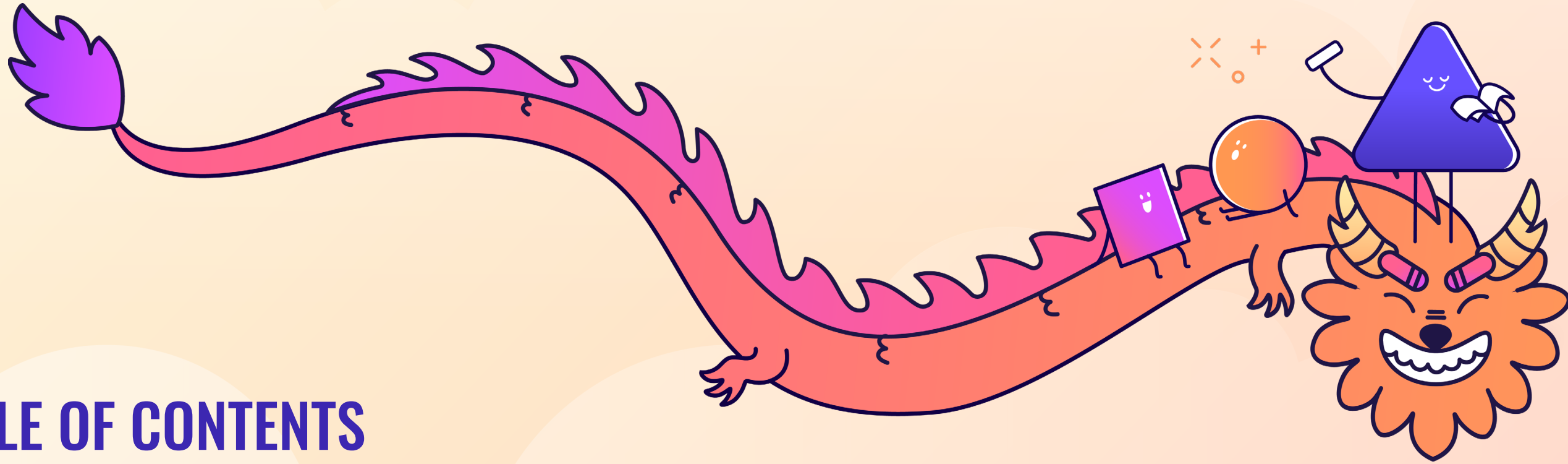
# Red Thread

By K12 Coalition



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# INTRODUCTION

**At Lavinia Group**, a K12 Coalition company, we believe that every student deserves the opportunity not just to read but to think, comprehend, and express themselves with confidence. Our mission is rooted in collaboration with educators, ensuring that every classroom is a place where students thrive as readers, thinkers, and communicators.



## The Science Behind Student Success

The Science of Reading (SOR) is not a single program or trend—it's a vast body of research grounded in evidence across cognitive psychology, education, linguistics, and neuroscience. It explains how students learn to read and how effective instruction must respond (National Reading Panel, 2000; Fletcher et al., 2018).

RedThread Literacy brings this science to life through structured, systematic, and joyful instruction. This includes core instructional practices such as:

**Structured Literacy:** Explicit teaching of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

**Scarborough's Reading Rope:** A research-based framework that weaves together word recognition and language comprehension to build skilled readers.

**Multisensory Instruction:** Engaging visual, auditory, and kinesthetic pathways to deepen learning.

## Meeting Today's Literacy Challenges

We developed RedThread in direct response to the persistent challenges teachers and students face in classrooms every day:

- 1. Equitable Access to Foundational Skills:** Recognizing that multilingual learners and students with unfinished learning often lack sufficient access to systematic, high-quality reading instruction, RedThread is designed to provide these essential opportunities.
- 2. Content That Reflects Students' Experiences:** The program includes texts and instructional practices that allow students to see themselves and their diverse experiences reflected in what they read, fostering engagement and deeper comprehension.
- 3. Enduring Academic Success:** By building both foundational skills and complex comprehension abilities, RedThread prepares students not only for grade-level achievement but for advanced thinking and effective communication throughout their educational journey.

**By combining the best of reading science with classroom-proven practices, RedThread accelerates outcomes and fosters a love for learning.**

# PILLARS OF THE SCIENCE OF READING



**The Science of Reading** identifies five essential pillars that contribute to proficient reading. RedThread Literacy is intentionally designed to provide systematic, research-based instruction in all five areas. These pillars are the foundation for developing skilled readers who can decode text, build vocabulary, and comprehend complex ideas.

## Phonemic Awareness: Tuning In to the Sounds of Language

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds—phonemes—in spoken words (National Reading Panel, 2000; Scarborough, 2001). It is a foundational skill that supports the development of phonics and word recognition. In RedThread Literacy, students engage in daily, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness starting in kindergarten, focusing on sound isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation.

This instruction builds students' ability to connect sounds to letters and enhances their decoding and encoding skills.



# PHONICS: CRACKING THE CODE



As you continue to read, **recognize different parts of words, including base words and affixes, to help you read, write, and understand words.**

Remind students to use the “Common Suffixes Review” and “Common Prefixes Review” anchor charts whenever they read and write to help them read and spell words with **suffixes** and **prefixes**.



Phonics instruction teaches students the relationships between letters and sounds (National Reading Panel, 2000; Ehri et al., 2001). RedThread Literacy offers explicit, cumulative phonics instruction covering:

- Letter-sound relationships
- Spelling patterns
- Syllable types
- Morphology

Students apply these skills in decodable texts in K–2 and increasingly complex texts in grades 3–5.

ANALYZE TO READ		
How do we mark the word parts? What is the whole word?	What do the word parts tell us about the whole word's meaning?	Based on the word parts and sentence, what does the whole word mean?
Yesterday, she <b>walk</b> ed to the store. <i>This word is in paragraph 15.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffix <b>-ed</b>: Happened in the past.</li> <li>• Base word: walk</li> </ul>	To walk, in the past tense.
Right now, he is <b>un</b> pack <b>ing</b> his backpack.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefix <b>-un</b>: Not; the opposite of.</li> <li>• Suffix <b>-ing</b>: Continuing to happen.</li> <li>• Base word: pack</li> </ul>	To unpack, or remove, contents from a container, in the present tense.

For the following word:

1. Dictate the bolded word and the sentence. Then, repeat the bolded word.
2. Have students work independently to spell the word, mark the word parts, and use the word parts and the sentence to determine the meaning of the word. Prompt students to reference all affixes and roots anchor charts, as needed.
3. Facilitate a discussion of students' independent work using the prompts in the chart. As students share their ideas, spell and mark the word accordingly.
4. Provide students with the definition of each word if they have not arrived at an accurate definition through morphology analysis alone.

## Morphology Routine

For each of the following words and for one word incorporating teacher-identified challenge spots:

1. Display the sentence with the bolded word.
2. Have students work independently to mark the word parts in the bolded word, read the whole word, read the sentence, and use the word parts and the sentence to determine the meaning of the word. Prompt students to reference all affixes and roots anchor charts, as needed.
3. Facilitate a discussion of students' independent work using the prompts in the following chart. As students share their ideas, mark the word accordingly.
4. Note that while morphology is very helpful in understanding the meaning of words, some words will need to be formally defined for students after they have analyzed the word parts. Provide students with the definition of each word if they have not arrived at an accurate definition through morphology analysis alone.



Facilitate a discussion of students' independent work using the prompts in the following chart. As students share their ideas, mark the word accordingly.

**Think Aloud:** In this word, I notice the **suffix** -ing, and I recognize the **base word** “talk.” I remember that the **suffix** -ing makes the /ing/ sound. Now, I can put those two parts together to read the whole word: “talking.” The word “talking” has two parts: the **base word** and the **suffix**. In the word “talking,” the suffix adds another syllable to the word. The **base word** “talk” means “to speak,” and the **suffix** -ing means “continuing to happen.” So the whole word, “talking,” means “continuing to speak.” Let’s practice recognizing word parts in another word and use those word parts to read and understand the whole word.

talk(ing)

Display the word “refilled.” As students share key ideas, mark the word parts.

### Ask:

What are the word parts in this word? What is the whole word? Does the suffix add a syllable to the word?

### Key Ideas:

- There is the **prefix** re-.
- There is the **suffix** -ed.
- The **base word** is “fill.”
- The whole word is “refilled.”
- The suffix **-ed** does not add another syllable because the **-ed** makes the /d/ sound and becomes part of the second syllable, “filled.”

For the following word:

1. Dictate the bolded word and the sentence. Then, repeat the bolded word.
2. Have students work independently to spell the word, mark the word parts, and use the word parts and the sentence to determine the meaning of the word. Prompt students to reference all affixes and roots anchor charts, as needed.
3. Facilitate a discussion of students' independent work using the prompts in the chart. As students share their ideas, spell and mark the word accordingly.
4. Provide students with the definition of each word if they have not arrived at an accurate definition through morphology analysis alone.

ANALYZE TO WRITE		
How do we spell the word? How do we mark the word parts?	What do the word parts tell us about the whole word's meaning?	Based on the word parts and sentence, what does the whole word mean?
She is the <b>fast</b> est runner in our school. <i>This word is in paragraph 9.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffix <b>-est</b>: Most.</li> <li>• Base word: fast</li> </ul>	The most fast.

# ENCODING

Through encoding, students learn to spell by connecting sounds to graphemes. RedThread's instructional routines help students internalize spelling patterns and strengthen their understanding of the sound-symbol relationship.



# DECODING

Decoding instruction teaches students to convert written language into spoken words. RedThread provides scaffolded support, helping students practice and apply decoding strategies in both isolated and connected texts.

# FLUENCY: FINDING THE FLOW

Fluency is the ability to read with accuracy, appropriate rate, and proper expression (National Reading Panel, 2000). It serves as a bridge between decoding and comprehension, allowing students to focus on meaning rather than the mechanics of reading.

RedThread Literacy introduces fluency instruction early, beginning with high-frequency sight words. As students develop proficiency, instruction advances to more complex sentence structures and phrasing. Instructional routines include repeated readings, marking syllables, scooping phrases, and reading aloud with expression.

Students engage with a variety of texts, applying fluency skills in both isolated word reading and connected text. This dual approach supports orthographic mapping, promotes automaticity, and enhances comprehension.



**Aa**

a - apple - /ă/

**Jj**

j - jug - /j/

**Cc**

c - cat - /k/

**Ii**

i - itch - /i/

**Pp**

p - pig - /p/

**Bb**

b - bat - /b/

**Dd**

d - dog - /d/

**Gg**

g - gate - /g/

**Hh**

h - hat - /h/

**Kk**

k - kite - /k/

**Nn**

n - net - /n/

**Ee**

e - edge - /ē/

**Ff**

f - fish - /f/

**Oo**

o - dog - /o/

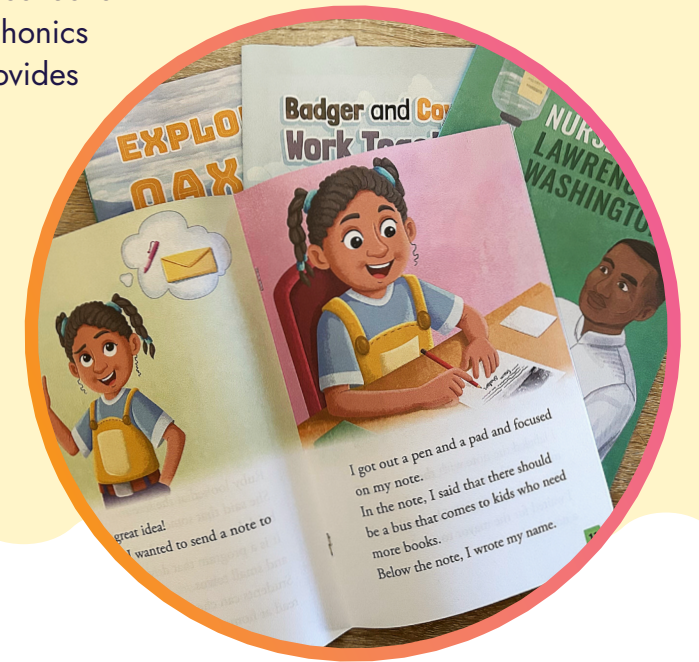
# REDTHREAD READERS

RedThread Readers, part of the RedThread Literacy suite from K12 Coalition, provide:

**K–2:** Thematically connected decodable texts

**3–5:** Complex, grade-level texts aligned to Knowledge units

RedThread Readers offer a carefully sequenced collection of decodable books designed to reinforce the phonics skills students are learning in class. Each text provides meaningful, authentic content while maintaining the controlled phonetic structure necessary for early readers' success. The stories are culturally relevant, engaging, and designed to build confidence as students apply decoding strategies in context.



## Kindergarten Collection:

52 fiction and informational titles, totaling 1,300 books.



## 1st Grade Collection:

58 fiction and informational titles, totaling 1,450 books.

## 2nd Grade Collection:

60 fiction and informational titles, totaling 1,500 books



As students progress, the Readers introduce increasingly complex sentence structures, high-frequency words, and content-rich vocabulary. This approach ensures students not only practice decoding but also build fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension skills.

Request a sample and see for yourself how RedThread Readers bring phonics to life through meaningful, engaging texts.



# VOCABULARY: BUILDING WORD POWER

Vocabulary development is essential to reading comprehension and academic success (Scarborough, 2001; Ehri et al., 2001). RedThread Literacy integrates robust vocabulary instruction across all grades, emphasizing:

- **Direct instruction of content-specific, academic, and text-based vocabulary**
- **Morphology lessons** that teach students how prefixes, suffixes, and root words form meaning
- **Contextual application** through writing, speaking, and reading activities

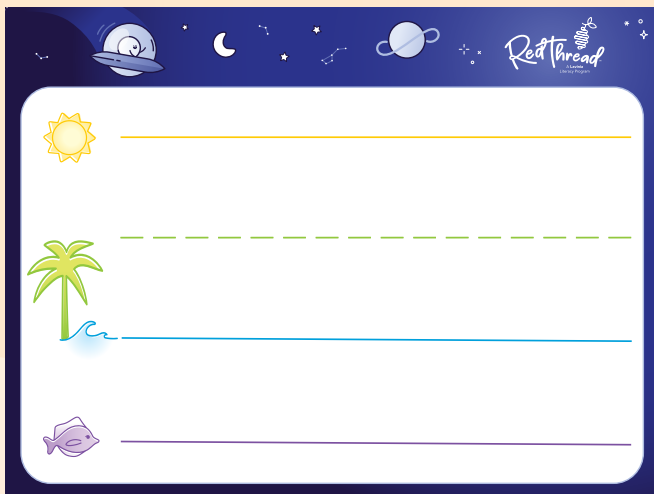
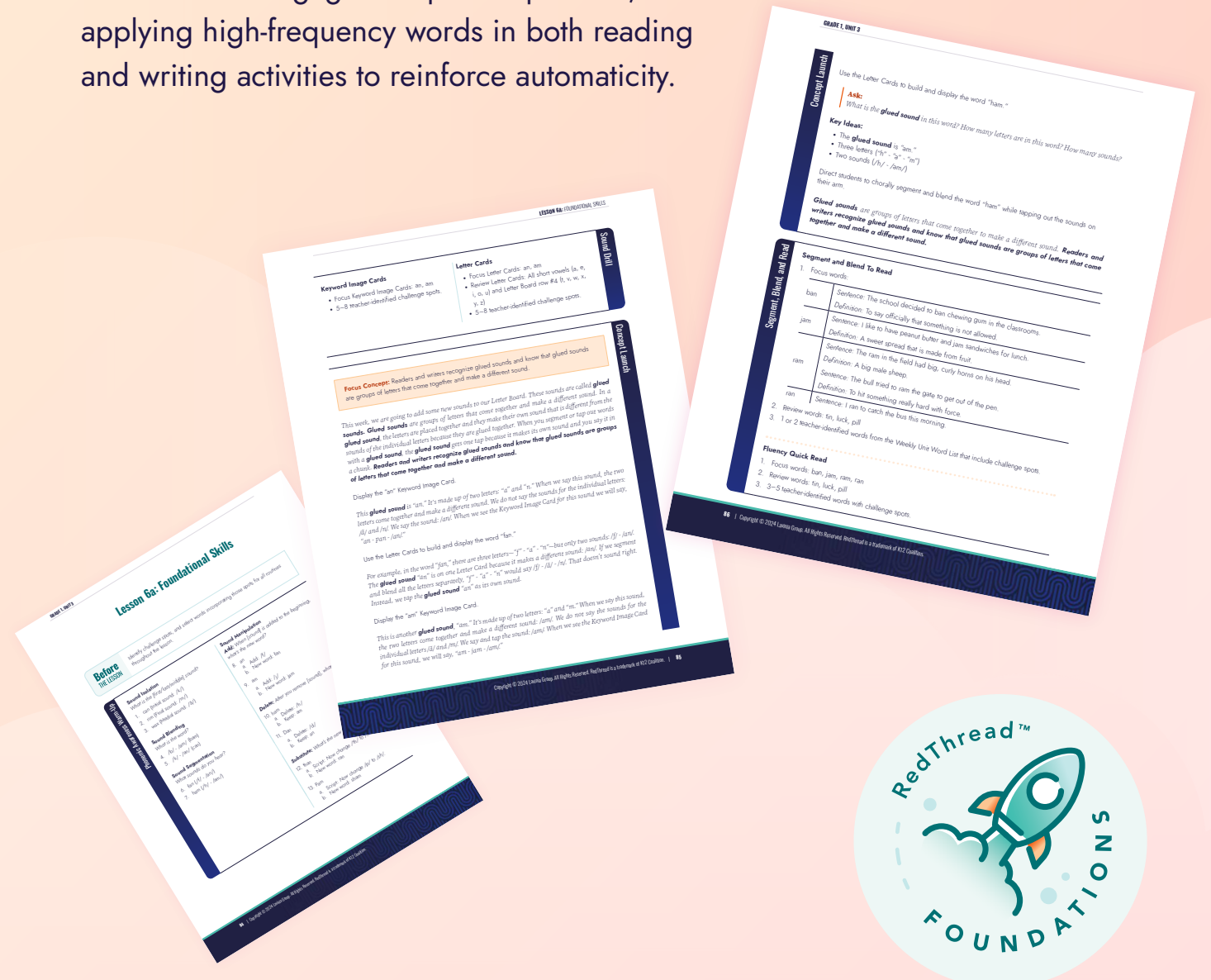


## High-Frequency Words

High-frequency words are those most commonly found in text. Fluent recognition of these words frees cognitive resources for students to focus on decoding unfamiliar words and comprehending meaning.

In RedThread Literacy, instruction in high-frequency words is explicit and systematic. Through orthographic mapping, students connect sounds, spelling patterns, and meanings—building long-term retention.

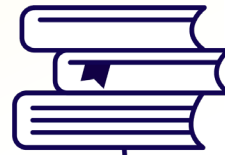
Students also engage in repeated practice, applying high-frequency words in both reading and writing activities to reinforce automaticity.



Instruction is designed to deepen students' word knowledge, expand their academic language, and support their ability to comprehend complex texts.

Vocabulary instruction also includes regular review, student-friendly explanations, and opportunities for students to use new words in various contexts, which enhances retention and understanding.





# Knowledge Building

Every RedThread Knowledge unit immerses students in rich, interconnected content. Themes build across grade levels, supporting the development of schema and background knowledge essential for understanding complex texts.

## Unit Themes Progression Examples:

**K: Exploring Our World and Community**

**3: Problem Solvers and Innovators**

**5: Journeys of Discovery and Perseverance**

Instruction emphasizes close reading, text-based discussions, and opportunities to connect knowledge across subjects and texts.

# COMPREHENSION: UNLOCKING MEANING

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading instruction, integrating vocabulary, background knowledge, fluency, and critical thinking skills to support deep understanding (Scarborough, 2001; Fletcher et al., 2018).

RedThread Literacy fosters comprehension through systematic knowledge building, oral language development, and vocabulary instruction.



# ORAL LANGUAGE

Oral language development is essential for comprehension. RedThread includes structured opportunities for discourse through Discourse Clubs, Socratic Seminars, and Whole-Class Discussions. These routines build students' verbal reasoning, argumentation skills, and confidence in expressing complex ideas.


## Discourse Clubs

**Prompt:** How would you describe the library **setting**? How does the library **setting** **impact** Langston?

### Key Ideas:

- The library is an impressive place with "smells better than Mama's peach cobbler" (21) and where Langston has access to information about anything he wants for the first time.
- Langston is in **awe** of the impressive building, many Black people using the resources, and easy access to many books.
- He feels drawn to the library because he cannot stop himself from following the librarian and losing track of time as he reads. A library is an unfamiliar but intriguing place to Langston because he loves to read and did not have access to enough books down south.
- The library is the first place in Chicago where Langston actively wants to be.
- Langston notices the newness and beauty of the library, which is different from his life in Chicago so far.

Many reading lessons include **Partner Discourse** or **Discourse Clubs** after reading. These serve as both a scaffold and opportunity for advancement as students discuss their ideas in a small group, preparing them for either writing or a larger group discussion.



## Discourse Clubs

Discourse Clubs are a foundational structure of RedThread Knowledge in grades 3-8 and are used in most reading lessons after students have read the text for the day. They help to build independent learners by giving students time to process and discuss the text with peers. Students come to a deeper understanding of the text while also having ownership over their learning and giving crucial attention to speaking and listening skills.

Discourse Clubs require strong routines and careful planning at the beginning to ensure that they are purposeful for all students.

DISCOURSE CLUBS	
Planning for Discourse Clubs	
Group Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategically create Discourse Clubs™ with 4 - 6 students per group</li> <li>Students can be grouped in a variety of ways at different times throughout the year, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heterogeneously so that students learn from and support one another's strengths and growth areas</li> <li>Homogeneously so that teachers can strategically group students based on need and provide targeted supports</li> <li>By student choice, so that students have an opportunity to exercise agency in working with one another</li> </ul> </li> <li>Have students remain in the same groups for at least three weeks so they have the opportunity to establish rapport and routines and implement feedback to improve their group's discourse over time.</li> </ul>

The **Discourse Clubs** resource, in the Implementation Resources offers details on the routine, including how to group students.

## Quick Draw and Write



**Quick Draw and Write Prompt:** What is one thing that happens in the story? Use the illustrations and details to describe what happens.

**Quick Draw and Writes** and **Quick Writes** provide opportunities for students to integrate their skills in both reading and writing.

In K-2, **Quick Draw and Write** (K-1) and **Quick Write** (2) occurs after the Whole-Class Discourse, providing students with additional support prior to writing.

## Quick Write



**Quick Write Prompt:** How have Langston's relationships with Miss Fulton and Clem evolved throughout the story? What do those changes reveal about the story's thematic ideas?

In 3-8, students typically engage in **Quick Writes** prior to **Whole-Class Discourse**, allowing students to process their ideas in writing before engaging in rigorous discourse.

## Whole-Class Discourse

**Prompt:** How do the **settings** of the apartment and library **impact** Langston so far?

### Key Ideas:


- Langston is unhappy in the dingy, tiny apartment. He constantly remembers Alabama and misses his life there because the familiarity of his home made it a more comfortable, welcoming place.
- Langston feels out of place in his Chicago apartment where all of the noises, sights, and smells are different from what he is used to. He lies awake at night and thinks about his mother and how the new noises and sights bother him.
- For the first time, Langston is drawn to something in Chicago when he discovers the public library that "smells better than Mama's peach cobbler" (21). This **setting** is the first purely positive experience Langston has in Chicago.
- Langston's experience in the library is the opposite of his experience in his apartment—the library is "big and bright" (19), whereas his cramped apartment is "nothing but a room" (2). The library has "sunlit silence" (19) with enjoyable "library smells" (21), whereas the apartment has the streetlights and lamp, is noisy, and smells like sweaty clothes.
- The **setting** of the library is where Langston has access to "any kind of book" he wants, unlike in Alabama where he read the limited books at his school multiple times because he could not enter the library.

### Back-Pocket Questions:

- What details describe the apartment? What details describe the library? How are these details similar or different?
- How would you compare or contrast Langston's feelings about the two **settings** in these chapters? Why does he feel differently about them?
- How does Langston compare his experiences in his apartment to his experiences in Alabama?
- How does Langston compare his experiences in the library to his experiences in Alabama?
- Why does Langston think about his conversation about libraries with his mama on page 19 and the conversation between his parents on page 20? What do these memories teach readers about Langston? How does that connect to Langston's experience entering the Chicago library?

Back-Pocket Questions provide options for teachers to support student understanding and address misconceptions.

The **Tips and Prompts for Facilitating Discourse** from the Implementation Resources support teachers in building a discourse-rich classroom, in which students drive each other's learning.



## Tips and Prompts for Facilitating Discourse

IF ...	TRY ...
Students are not participating in discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posing a skeptical question that encourages more debate.</li> <li>Ask students for feedback: are they confused about the content or are they not interested in speaking?</li> <li>Strategically cold call students to invite them to join. For example, "Kayla just said that _____ Carter, could you evaluate that idea?"</li> <li>Prompt students to discuss in partnerships or smaller groups before coming back to a larger group.</li> <li>Coach students around habits of discussion. If needed, set a focus by saying, "I want you to focus on... today by doing..." Follow up in the moment as needed to coach and support.</li> </ul>
Students are not speaking audibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach students a signal to ask for louder volume without interrupting.</li> <li>Move as far away from the student speaking as possible to encourage them to speak so the whole class can hear.</li> </ul>

# Unit Words and Story Words

Vocabulary instruction is embedded within Knowledge units. Students learn Unit Words that connect to broader themes and Story Words that support text-specific understanding. Multiple exposures to these words in varied contexts reinforce comprehension and retention.

Introduce and define the following term.

LITERARY TERM	DEFINITION
<b>setting</b>	The time and place when the events of a text happen.



Vocabulary is either introduced formally in a table, or informally, in scripting while discussing or reading

Lessons in morphology and determining the meaning of words in context build additional vocabulary knowledge and skill.

### Ask:

What additional details do we get about the **setting** in this section? How does this **setting** **impact** Langston?

### Key Ideas:

- We learn the hot water does not always turn on. In this case, Langston must leave the dirty dishes in the sink overnight. This reinforces the idea that the apartment is not comfortable for Langston and his father.

Students are exposed to vocabulary repeatedly throughout lessons in context. Within a lesson, each time a word is repeated, it is bolded to emphasize to teachers.

## COMMON GRADE 4 SUFFIXES

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-graph	Something written or drawn.	autograph paragraph
-phone	Sound.	telephone headphone saxophone
-ment	Act, process.	improvement assessment accomplishment
-er, -or	Someone who performs an action or is something.	actor teacher baker
-ive, -ative	Inclined or tending toward an action.	argumentative supportive aggressive
-ed	The past tense of regular verbs.	explored washed cooked
-s/-es	The plural form of nouns and the present tense of verbs.	eats books teaches
-ful	Full of or notable for.	thankful joyful beautiful

# SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

A thoughtfully designed Scope and Sequence is essential for ensuring that students receive consistent, cumulative instruction that builds skills and knowledge over time.

RedThread's Scope and Sequence provides:

A clear, progressive path for teaching foundational skills in grades K–5 (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Knowledge and comprehension objectives that deepen across K–8, building the background knowledge and language skills essential for higher-level comprehension (Scarborough, 2001).

Seamless alignment with Common Core State Standards and the Science of Reading framework (Fletcher et al., 2018).

Each year's Scope and Sequence is intentionally structured to revisit and extend previous learning while introducing new, grade-appropriate skills. This spiraling approach reinforces mastery and supports differentiation for students who need additional practice or acceleration.

For educators, the RedThread Scope and Sequence serves as both a roadmap and a flexible tool, allowing for responsive instruction that meets the needs of all learners, including multilingual students and those with unfinished learning.

	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 6
<b>Unit Title</b>	Laying the Foundation for Learning: Launching the Yearlong Theme	Classroom Kinship: Our Diverse Learning Community	Working Together: Community Jobs Make a Difference	Community Voices: The Power of Voting	In the Footsteps of Ancestors: Communities of the Past	Outdoor Adventures: Exploring Nature in Our Community
<b>Sampling of Core Texts</b>	All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold My First Day by Phung Nguyen Quang and Haythim Kim Lihn Jesse James by Denise Leunig	Amica's Picture Day by Reem Faruqi A Boy and His Mirror by Marchant Davis Every Night is Every Night by J. Kenji López-Ali	This is How We Do It by Matt Lamothe Growing an Artist: The Story of a Landscaper and His Son by John Parra A Chef's Tale in 13 Bites by Debbi Michiko Florence and Jamie Michalak	Vote for Our Future by Margaret McManera The Boy Who Would Be a Hero by Carmen Agre Deryn and Eugene Yelton Shane's Big Voice by Sharice Davids	Time Is a Flower by Julie Morstad Blue by Nana Ehus Brew Hammond and Daniel Minter We Planted a Tree by Diane Mulrow Shadows: Preuvian Archaeologist by Julio C. Tello Fatima's Great Question by Anthea Tetaq	What's In Your Pocket? by Heather L. Montgomery and Maribel Lechuga We Planted a Tree by Diane Mulrow Fatima's Great Question by Anthea Tetaq
<b>Process-Based Products</b>	Classwide Book of Agreements	Informational List Book	Personal Narrative	Persuasive Writing	Informational Writing	Realistic Fiction Narrative

**GRADE K: YEAR LONG THEME**  
Growing Together: What does it mean to be part of a community?  
change over time?

	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 6
<b>Unit Title</b>	Laying the Foundation for Learning: Launching the Yearlong Theme	A Road to Belonging: The Great Migration	Founding Freedom: The American Revolution	Stories of Freedom: The Role of Mythology in Society	Championing Gender Equality: The Fight for Women's Rights	And Still I Rise: Workers Rights and the Great Depression
<b>Core Texts</b>	Various Short Texts	Ending Langston by Lisa Cline Ransome	What is the Declaration of Independence? by Michael C. Harris Her Name Was Mary Katherine by Ella Schwartz The Amos Over the Door by Joseph Bruchac	Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin Pushing on the Sky: Seven Native American Plays for Children by Joseph Bruchac Treasury of Greek Mythology by Donna Jo Napoli	Mahala: My Story of Standing Up for Girls by Mahala Yousefi Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges Separate is Never Equal by Duncan Tonstone	Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan
<b>Process-Based Products</b>	Response to Literature	Personal Narrative	Informational Article	Literary Opinion Essay	Opinion Piece	Informational Writing

**GRADE 4: YEAR LONG THEME**  
Finding Freedom: What does it mean to be free?  
How do people innovate, create, and thrive?



**RedThread Literacy** integrates the latest Science of Reading research with culturally responsive, rigorous, and joyful instruction. This comprehensive approach equips students not only to read, but to comprehend, analyze, and express their ideas with confidence.

Bring the power of RedThread to your classrooms and watch students *thrive*.



## References

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