My goal is for all young children to make a successful start in reading and writing. I believe the key to making that happen is for teachers to use a balanced approach that combines explicit instruction, guided practice, and authentic application. Effective teachers know their students and their individual learning needs, and they use this knowledge—and their understanding of how children develop from emergent to beginning to fluent readers and writers—to guide their teaching. This fourth edition of *Literacy in the Early Grades: A Successful Start for PreK–4 Readers and Writers*, provides the background knowledge, modeling, and application tools that will ensure you are well prepared to meet grade-level standards and lead children to become fluent readers and writers.

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS: NEW TO THIS EDITION**

I have written this text for you. It shares my vision for reading and writing instruction because I know you want to become a successful teacher of reading and writing, capable of using instructional approaches and procedures that unlock the door to reading and writing for young children. Grounding the text in both scientific research and authentic classroom practice, I cover the fundamental components of literacy instruction, illustrate how to teach developmental strategies and skills, and identify how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of every student in your classroom—children who come to school well prepared for literacy learning and those who struggle with learning to read and write, including children whose first language isn’t English. New to this edition, I present critical classroom pedagogy through five purposeful themes—teacher accountability, instructional support, developmentally responsive practice, diverse learners, and assessment resources. These themes illustrate the significant roles and responsibilities you’ll be expected to undertake in teaching reading and writing.
TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY

As a teacher, you’ll be asked to account for student achievement in reading and writing; your accountability will depend on how you address the Common Core State Standards in your literacy lessons and your successful use of instructional methods. Your knowledge can be significantly advanced through the use of this text and the following distinctive features.

NEW! Teacher Checklists. Teaching reading and writing requires understanding a number of important components—the processes of reading and writing, literacy assessment, and the strategies and skills for teaching phonemic awareness and phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. Along with the instructional knowledge shared in each chapter, I provide Teacher Checklists that will serve as guidelines for your classroom to verify that you’ve covered key elements for each reading and writing component.

NEW! Common Core State Standards. Look for Common Core State Standards boxes that highlight specific English Language Arts Standards you’ll be responsible for teaching. These boxes point out how to use grade-level standards to plan concrete and purposeful literacy lessons that align with national and state literacy standards.

NEW! Teach Kids to Be Strategic! This new feature will be invaluable in the classroom. Specific guidelines list the strategies you need to teach and then explain what to check for to ensure that children are applying them. Utilizing these features will help you and your students meet grade-level standards.

NEW! Accountability Check Self-Assessments. Located at the end of each chapter are self-assessment questions and application activities that allow you to test your knowledge of the chapter content. New activities, DIY: Monitoring Student Development and DIY: Measuring Student Progress, appear in specific chapters and ask you to apply your understanding of children’s literacy development and classroom practice, making instructional decisions based on that understanding.

REFERENCES


INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Balance is critical to teaching reading and writing: balancing the teaching of reading and writing, balancing explicit instruction with practice, and balancing the use of assessment to inform instruction. Knowing how to balance the teaching of reading and writing strategies—when, why, and how—is a significant part of teacher preparation. The following features illustrate explicit instructional procedures, identifying when, why, and how to use them. Many are supported by specific and authentic teaching examples.

Chapter-Opening Vignettes. As a signature feature of this text, chapter-opening stories describe how effective teachers integrate the teaching of reading and writing to maximize your understanding of classroom practice.

Minilessons. Each of these popular step-by-step features models a clear and concise instructional strategy or skill and is meant to serve as a ready tool for your classroom teaching.

Booklists. Quality children’s books support children’s development of literacy and advance their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Booklists appear throughout chapters to identify grade-appropriate literature for your classroom or point you to literature your students can read independently.

Student Artifacts. Nothing illustrates connected teaching and learning better than authentic artifacts of children’s work. This text is peppered with examples of children’s developmental writing performance to help you learn to recognize grade-appropriate literacy development.

NEW! Chapter 10, Scaffolding Children’s Reading Development. Five instructional approaches—guided reading lessons, basal reading programs, literature focus units, literature circles, and reading and writing workshop—provide concrete means for teaching reading and writing. Chapter 10 reviews these approaches, illustrating how to plan for and manage each one, and determine which makes the most sense for your lesson planning. An extensive new section on guided reading has been added at the request of reviewers and will teach you how to plan for, set up, and manage guided reading lessons.
opportunities to use new vocabulary to talk about things they’re learning.

As they listen, children learn new vocabulary and acquire more sophisticated language skills. Children continue to develop oral language competence at school, especially as they participate in literacy activities. Probably the most valuable activity is the instructional use of literature to develop children’s oral language. Oral Language activities are classified as authentic programs because they use trade books and involve collective responses as children discuss storyboards and activities using their hands.

Learning a Second Language

Children learn a second language much the same way they learn their first language. Both are developmental processes that require practice and exposure. Young children develop oral language through everyday experiences and interaction with their environment. They learn words at the grocery store, on the playground, during family gatherings, and while watching TV. Children who are bilingual learn that the same word can have different meanings depending on the context. They learn to use language socially—to carry on a conversation, to tell stories, and to participate in grand conversations and participate in story and grand conversations.

Chapter 12. In addition, whenever children work together in small groups, they have opportunities to use new vocabulary to talk about things they’re learning.

Oral Language Activities

Children continue to develop oral language competence as they participate in literacy activities. Probably the most valuable activity is the instructional use of literature to develop children’s oral language. Oral Language activities are classified as authentic programs because they use trade books and involve collective responses as children discuss storyboards and activities using their hands.

Evaluating children’s achievement

Assessing children’s achievement involves understanding the importance, teaching the components, and planning instructional procedures. The Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12, provides step-by-step procedures for assessing children’s reading, writing, and listening. Information is presented about teaching and assessing children’s oral language; these procedures are described in the Compendium of Instructional Procedures. The Compendium is an excellent resource for preparing lesson plans or short-term instructional sequences.

Learning about reading fluency

Teachers familiarize children with the importance of fluency by listening to their read aloud during guided reading lessons, reading母 essays, or using reading activities. At the beginning of the school year and at the end of each month or quarter, teachers collect data about children’s automaticity, speed, and prosody to document their progress and provide evidence of their growth over time.

Assessing reading fluency

Teachers formally assess children’s reading fluency by listening to their read aloud during guided reading lessons, reading Mother essays, or using reading activities. At the beginning of the school year and at the end of each month or quarter, teachers collect data about children’s automaticity, speed, and prosody to document their progress and provide evidence of their growth over time.

Assessing reading fluency

Teaching fluency. Teachers teach children’s comprehension of high-frequency words and their ability to use word identification strategies to decode other words taken from grade-level texts. Kindergarten teachers are expected to teach 24 high-frequency words, first graders 150 words, second graders 200 words, and third graders 300 words. In addition to the list of high-frequency words presented in this chapter, teachers can use the Dolch list of 220 sight words and Fry’s list of 300 instant words, both of which are available as document for Teaching Fluency (Blachowicz & Biebert, 2003). and online.

Fry’s reading readiness program

Fry’s reading readiness program is based on research that supports the use of interactive features and online activities. Fry’s reading readiness program is designed to help children develop reading fluency and comprehension skills. Fry’s reading readiness program includes interactive features and online activities that provide children with opportunities to practice reading and writing. Fry’s reading readiness program is an ideal tool for teaching children’s reading fluency. The Assessment Tools feature on page 172 lists data about children’s automaticity, speed, and prosody to document their progress and provide evidence of their growth over time.

NEW! Literacy Portraits. Literature Portraits features draw your attention to five children—Rhiannon, Rakie, Michael, Curt Lynne, and Jimmy—who are introduced at the beginning of this text as members of Ms. Janusz’s second-grade class. New direct links to video footage of these five children are available in the Pearson eText and allow you to track their reading and writing development through the school year.

NEW! Embedded Classroom Video.

If you are viewing this text as an eText, you can link directly to classroom video segments with the Play button.
NEW! More to Explore. These pop up features direct you to engage in activities and projects that will better prepare you for the rigors of classroom teaching. Completing these meaningful activities and projects will give you portfolio documents to share with prospective employers.

DIVERSE LEARNERS

No two students in any classroom are alike. Children come to school with different language experiences and literacy opportunities. They also differ in the way they learn and in the languages they speak. In this text, I describe the vast diversity of students and explain what it means to differentiate instruction to meet individual children’s literacy needs.

Nurturing English Learners. Each expanded chapter section focuses on ways to scaffold children who are learning to read and write at the same time they’re learning to speak English. These sections provide in-depth guidance for planning instruction that addresses the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

If Children Struggle. These text sections describe ways to intervene after an assessment indicates children aren’t making adequate progress or meeting a grade-level standard. These suggestions for classroom intervention detail ways to assist struggling readers and writers.

DEVELOPMENTALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE

Effective teaching requires fine-tuning the ability to determine where each child is in his or her literacy development. Features in this text support the development of teaching skills that lead to decision making based on knowledge of children’s current level of literacy progress. New end-of-chapter self-assessment activities—DIY: Monitoring Student Development and DIY: Measuring Student Progress—will help you practice developmental decision making.

PreK Practices. PreK Practices draw your attention to the most appropriate instruction for the youngest of literacy learners.

Developmental Continuum. The Developmental Continuum features describe children’s literacy accomplishments at each grade, prekindergarten through fourth grade, and will help you understand how children grow as readers and writers and provide plans that use these structures. Examination of why children behave the way they do and how external factors influence their behavior is the goal of intervention.

Problem and Solution. The author introduces a problem and offers a solution. A solution is the question or answer formula in which the teacher poses a question and accepts the answer. Core words and phrases include the idea, the problem, the search for the idea, the answer, and the synthesis of the two. This stage provides the framework for the instruction and is common to all learning. Children may choose to use this pattern.

Nonfiction Features. Informational books have unique features that ensure that stories and books of poetry normally don’t have, such as margin signposts and glossaries. The purpose of these features is to make text easier to read and to facilitate children’s comprehension. Here’s a list of nonfiction text features.

Q&A LEARNING CENTER

With these meaningful activities and projects you will better prepare yourself for the rigors of classroom teaching. Completing these meaningful activities and projects will give you portfolio documents to share with prospective employers.
appreciate grade-level expectations. Developmental Continuums appear for reading and writing development, phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, reading and writing fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension for both reader and text factors.

**ASSESSMENT RESOURCES**

Assessment requires teachers to plan for, monitor, and evaluate children’s literacy progress. Although summative assessment is often a part of a formal all-grade-level or whole-school program, formative assessment measures are typically chosen by and used at the discretion of classroom teachers. Within each chapter, I provide a variety of authentic assessment examples so you can learn how to plan for assessment that measures what’s intended, glean ongoing information on student progress, and tailor instruction to meet student needs. Recording assessment data on a frequent basis assists in documenting student progress and achievement.

**Chapter 3, Assessing Children’s Literacy Development.** This chapter is placed early in the text to lay the groundwork for assessing children in line with backward design, ensuring that you know how you’re going to measure literacy progress as you set literacy goals. Information in this chapter addresses how to use student performance to inform instructional planning.

**NEW! Instruction–Assessment Cycle.** Effective teachers engage in a four-step cycle that links instructional planning with assessment. New to this edition is an explanation of how teachers plan for, monitor, evaluate, and reflect on instruction that is informed by assessment.

**Assessment Tools.** Descriptions throughout the text identify well-respected and widely used assessment tools that measure literacy development. Teachers are responsible for knowing about these assessment choices, when it’s appropriate to use them, and the kinds of screening or diagnostic information they impart.

**NEW! Assessment Snapshots.** Chapters include a variety of authentic examples of assessment that portray the literacy performance of various children. Teacher notes are overlaid on each assessment example and illustrate the information teachers gather from assessment and what that information may mean to guide further instruction. You’ll also have the opportunity to examine assessment samples and draw your own conclusions in *DIY: Measuring Student Progress.*
SUPPLEMENTS FOR INSTRUCTORS

The Instructor's Resource Center has a variety of course resources available in downloadable, digital format—all in one location. As a registered faculty member, you can access instructional resource files, assessments, course-management content, and other premium online content directly to your computer.

Digital resources available for the fourth edition of *Literacy in the Early Grades: A Successful Start for PreK–4 Readers and Writers* include the following:

- A Test Bank of multiple-choice and essay questions.
- Chapter-by-chapter materials, including objectives, suggested readings, discussion questions, and in-class activities, including specific information about use of the interactive features in the Pearson eText.
- PowerPoint presentations designed for each chapter.

To access these resources go to [www.pearsonhighered.com/educator](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator). Enter the author or title of this book in the catalog at the top, select this edition of the book, and click the Resources tab. Select a supplement and log in to download the material.

If you have any questions regarding this process or the materials available online, please contact your local Pearson sales representative.
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Finally, I want to thank the professors and teaching professionals who reviewed my text and offered insightful comments that informed my development of this revision: Mary E. Harder, Edison State; Brian E. Maguire, Clarion University; Aimee Morehead, West Virginia University; Lynda Robinson, Cameron University; and Kathleen J. Sanders, Fort Hays State University. A special thank-you goes out to Ann Kennedy and her colleagues at Kutztown University for pointing out the need to provide more detailed information on guided reading. I sincerely appreciate the guidance of all.
Effective teachers are the key to ensuring that children learn to read and write successfully. Most researchers agree that teacher quality is the most important factor in determining how well children learn (Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley, & Berliner, 2004). Teachers need to be knowledgeable about how children learn to read and write, how to teach literacy, and how to respond to the needs of those learning English as a new language.

Today, teachers are held accountable for their effectiveness. In 2002, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act ushered in a new era by holding schools responsible for educating all students to meet mandated standards. Teachers have always been responsible for advancing their students’ achievement, but NCLB led to annual standardized tests, beginning in second grade, to measure children’s achievement; then the scores were used to determine whether teachers and schools were effective.

President Obama has called for “a new culture of accountability” that builds on NCLB (Dinan, 2009). He described these components of accountability: better tracking of teachers’ performance, higher standards for teachers, and assistance for teachers who aren’t effective. He also recommended that exemplary teachers be recognized for their effectiveness and asked to serve as mentors or lead teachers in their schools. Obama’s notion of teacher accountability, however, still translates to how well children perform on standardized tests, but new ways of determining teacher effectiveness are on the horizon; one of the most promising involves evaluating teachers against the characteristics of effective teachers.
The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2002) developed a system of standards that represent a national consensus about what makes teachers effective. These 15 standards describe what teachers need to know and do to support students’ learning:

Knowledge of Learners. Teachers use the knowledge of learning theories to inform their teaching.

Knowledge About Literacy. Teachers understand current research about literacy instruction and apply it to their teaching.

Equity, Fairness, and Diversity. Teachers provide equal access to learning, capitalize on diversity, and encourage all students to respect themselves and their classmates.

Learning Environment. Teachers establish a community of learners that’s safe, supportive, inclusive, and democratic.

Instructional Resources. Teachers collect, create, and adapt instructional resources, involve students in creating resources, and invite community members to enrich the instructional program.

Instructional Decision Making. Teachers set informed goals for their students, provide meaningful learning experiences, and interact purposefully with them.

Assessment. Teachers use multiple assessment tools to monitor instructional progress, evaluate children’s learning, and make instructional decisions.

Integration. Teachers understand the reciprocal nature of reading and writing and integrate written language with oral and visual language.

Reading. Teachers use their knowledge of the reading process, types of texts, and instructional procedures to develop strategic, lifelong readers.

Writing. Teachers apply their knowledge of the writing process, the writer’s craft, and instructional procedures to develop writers who can write for varied purposes and audiences.

Listening and Speaking. Teachers teach listening and speaking as essential components of literacy and provide opportunities for children to use oral language for varied purposes.

Viewing. Teachers value viewing as an essential component of literacy and use a variety of print and multimedia resources to develop children’s visual literacy capabilities.

Collaboration With Families and Communities. Teachers develop positive and purposeful relationships with families and community members.

Teacher as Learner. Teachers improve their knowledge about literacy learning and teaching through professional reading and inquiry.

Professional Responsibility. Teachers actively contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning and to the advancement of knowledge and professional practice.

To read more about these characteristics, go to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website (http://www.nbpts.org).

The goal of literacy instruction is to ensure that all children reach their full literacy potential, and in that light, this chapter introduces eight principles of balanced literacy instruction. These principles are stated in terms of what effective teachers do, and they provide the foundation for the chapters that follow. Evaluate your knowledge base and the effectiveness of your instruction using the Teacher Checklist on page 6.
PRINCIPLE 1: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS UNDERSTAND HOW CHILDREN LEARN

Understanding how children learn influences how teachers teach. Until the 1960s, behaviorism, a teacher-centered theory, was the dominant view; since then, child-centered theories that advocate children’s active engagement in authentic literacy activities have become more influential. The three most important theories are constructivism, sociolinguistics, and information processing. In the last decade, however, behaviorism began a resurgence as evidenced by NCLB, renewed popularity of textbook programs, current emphasis on curriculum standards, and mandated high-stakes testing. Tracey and Morrow (2006) argue that multiple theoretical perspectives improve the quality of literacy instruction, and the stance advocated in this text is that instruction should represent a realistic balance between teacher- and child-centered theories. Figure 1–1 presents an overview of these theories.

Behaviorism

Behaviorists focus on the observable and measurable aspects of children’s behavior. They believe that behavior can be learned or unlearned as the result of stimulus-and-response actions (O’Donohue & Kitchener, 1998). Reading is viewed as a conditioned response. This theory is described as teacher centered because it focuses on the teacher’s role as a dispenser of knowledge. Skinner (1974) explained that children learn to read by mastering a series of discrete skills and subskills.

Teachers use explicit instruction to teach skills in a planned, sequential order. Information is presented in small steps and reinforced through practice activities until children achieve mastery because each step is built on the previous one. Children practice skills by completing fill-in-the-blank worksheets, and they usually work individually, not in small groups or with a classmate. Behavior modification is another key feature: Teachers control and motivate children through a combination of rewards and punishments.

Constructivism

Constructivist theorists describe children as active and engaged learners who construct their own knowledge; learning occurs when children
integrate new information with their existing knowledge. This theory is child centered because teachers engage children with experiences so that they can construct their own knowledge.

**SCHEMA THEORY.** Knowledge is organized into cognitive structures called *schemas*, and schema theory describes how children learn. Jean Piaget (1969) explained that learning is the modification of schemas as children actively interact with their environment. Imagine that the brain is a mental filing cabinet, and that new information is organized with existing knowledge in the filing system. When children are already familiar with a topic, the new information is added to a mental file, or schema, in a revision process called *assimilation*, but when children study a new topic, they create

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<td>● Focuses on observable changes in behavior</td>
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<td>● Describes learning as the result of stimulus–response actions</td>
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<td>Child-Centered</td>
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<td>● Describes learning as the active construction of knowledge</td>
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<td>● Recognizes the importance of background knowledge</td>
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<td>● Views learners as innately curious</td>
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<td>● Suggests ways to engage children so they can be successful</td>
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<td>Sociolinguistics</td>
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<td>● Emphasizes the importance of language and social interaction on learning</td>
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<td>● Views reading and writing as social and cultural activities</td>
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<td>● Explains that children learn best through authentic activities</td>
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<td>● Describes the teacher’s role as scaffolding children’s learning</td>
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<td>● Describes integrating reading and writing</td>
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<td>● Guided reading</td>
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<td>● Views reading and writing as meaning-making processes</td>
<td>● Graphic organizers</td>
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<td>● Explains that readers’ interpretations are individualized</td>
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<td>● Describes children as strategic readers and writers</td>
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a mental file and place the information in it; this more difficult construction process is **accommodation**. Everyone’s cognitive structure is different, reflecting knowledge and past experiences.

**INQUIRY LEARNING.** John Dewey (1997) advocated an inquiry approach to develop citizens who could participate fully in democracy (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). He theorized that learners are innately curious and actively create their own knowledge and concluded that collaboration, not competition, is more conducive to learning. Children collaborate to conduct investigations in which they ask questions, seek information, and create new knowledge to solve problems.

**ENGAGEMENT THEORY.** Theorists have examined children’s interest in reading and writing and found that engaged learners are intrinsically motivated; they do more reading and writing, enjoy these activities, and reach higher levels of achievement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Engaged learners have **self-efficacy**, or confidence that they’ll reach their goals (Bandura, 1997). Children with high self-efficacy are resilient and persistent, despite obstacles that get in the way of their success. These theorists believe that children are more engaged when they participate in authentic literacy activities in a nurturing classroom community.

**Sociolinguistics**

Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1986) theorized that language organizes thought and is a learning tool. He recommended that teachers incorporate opportunities for children to talk with classmates as part of the learning process. Vygotsky realized that children can accomplish more challenging tasks in collaboration with adults than they can on their own but that they learn little by performing easy tasks that they can already do independently; he recommended that teachers focus instruction on children’s **zone of proximal development**, the level between their actual development and their potential development. As children learn, teachers gradually withdraw their support so that children eventually perform the task independently. Then the cycle begins again.

**SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY.** Reading and writing are viewed as social activities that reflect the culture and community children live in (Moll & Gonzales, 2004). Sociocultural theorists explain that children from varied cultures have different expectations about literacy and preferred ways of learning. Teachers apply this theory as they create culturally responsive classrooms that empower everyone, including those from marginalized groups, to become successful readers and writers (Gay, 2000). They’re respectful of all children and confident in their ability to learn.

Teachers often use powerful multicultural literature to develop children’s cross-cultural awareness, including *Goin’ Somewhere Special* (McKissack, 2001), about the mistreatment of black children in the segregated South; *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2002), about a Mexican American girl who creates a new future for herself; and *Happy Birthday Mr. Kang* (Roth, 2001), about a Chinese American grandfather who learns a lesson about freedom. The Booklist on the next page presents these and other multicultural books.

Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the legitimacy of all children’s cultures and social customs and teaches children to appreciate their classmates’ diverse heritages. This theory emphasizes that teachers must be responsive to their students’ instructional needs. When children aren’t successful, teachers examine their instructional practices and make changes so that all children become capable readers and writers.
BOOKLIST

### Multicultural Books

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**SITUATED LEARNING THEORY.** Learning takes place as a function of the activity, context, and culture in which it occurs (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Situated learning theory rejects the notion of separating learning to do something from actually doing it and emphasizes the importance of apprenticeship, where beginners move from the edge of a learning community to its center as they develop expertise (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Just as chefs learn as they work in restaurants, children learn best through authentic and meaningful activities. They join a community of learners and become more expert readers and writers through interaction with classmates. The teacher serves as an expert model, much like a chef does.

**CRITICAL LITERACY.** Freire (2000) called for sweeping educational change so that students examine fundamental questions about justice and equity. Critical literacy theorists view language as a means for social action and advocate that students become agents of social change (Johnson & Freedman, 2005). This theory has a political agenda, and the increasing social and cultural diversity in American society adds urgency to
resolving inequities and injustices. One way that children examine social issues is by reading books such as *Smoky Night* (Bunting, 1999), a Caldecott Medal–winning story about overcoming racism set during the Los Angeles riots. This story and others presented in this Booklist address injustices that children can discuss and understand (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008).

### Information Processing

Information-processing theory compares the mind to a computer and describes how information moves through a series of processing units—sensory register, short-term memory, and long-term memory—as it’s stored (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). There’s a control mechanism, too, that oversees learning. Theorists create models of the reading and writing processes to describe the complicated, interactive workings of the mind (Hayes, 2004; Kintsch, 2013; Rumelhart, 2013). They believe that reading and writing are related, and their models describe a two-way flow of information between what readers and writers know and the words written on the page.

#### INTERACTIVE MODELS

Reading and writing are interactive meaning-making processes. The interactive model emphasizes that readers focus on comprehension and construct...
meaning using a combination of reader-based and text-based information. This model also includes an executive monitor that oversees children’s attention, determines whether what they’re reading makes sense, and takes action when problems arise (Ruddell & Unrau, 2013).

Hayes’s (2004) model of writing describes what writers do as they write. It emphasizes that writing is also an interactive, meaning-making process. Children move through a series of stages as they plan, draft, revise, and edit their writing to ensure that readers will understand what they’ve written. Writers use the same control mechanism that readers do to make plans, select strategies, and solve problems.

**TRANSACTIONAL THEORY.** Rosenblatt’s transactional theory (2013) explains how readers create meaning. She describes comprehension as the result of a two-way transaction between the reader and the text. Instead of trying to figure out the author’s meaning, readers negotiate an interpretation based on the text and their knowledge about literature and the world. Interpretations are individualized because each child brings different knowledge and experiences to the reading event. Even though interpretations vary, they must be substantiated by the text.

**STRATEGIC BEHAVIORS.** Children employ strategic or goal-oriented behaviors to direct their thinking. Cognitive strategies, such as visualizing, organizing, and revising, are used to achieve a goal, and metacognitive strategies, such as monitoring and repairing, determine whether that goal is reached (Dean, 2006; Pressley, 2002). The word **metacognition** is often defined as “thinking about your own thinking,” but more accurately, it refers to a sophisticated level of thought that people use to control their thinking (Baker, 2008). Metacognition is a control mechanism; it involves both children’s awareness and active control of thinking.

**PRINCIPLE 2: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS SUPPORT CHILDREN’S USE OF THE CUEING SYSTEMS**

Language is a complex system for creating meaning through socially shared conventions (Halliday, 1978). English, like other languages, involves four cueing systems:

- The phonological, or sound, system
- The syntactic, or structural, system
- The semantic, or meaning, system
- The pragmatic, or social and cultural use, system

Together, these systems make communication possible; children and adults use all four systems simultaneously as they read, write, listen, and talk. The priority people place on the cueing systems varies; however, the phonological system is especially important for beginning readers and writers as they use phonics to decode and spell words. An overview of the four cueing systems is presented in Figure 1–2.

**The Phonological System**

The phonological system is the sound system. There are approximately 44 speech sounds in English; children learn to pronounce these sounds as they learn to talk, and they associate the sounds with letters as they learn to read and write. Sounds are called **phonemes**, and they’re represented in print with diagonal lines to differentiate them...
from graphemes, which are letters or letter combinations. For example, the first grapheme in *mother* is *m*, and the phoneme is /m/; the phoneme in *soap* that’s represented by the grapheme *oa* is called “long o” and is written /¯O/.

The phonological system is important for both oral and written language. Regional differences exist in the way people pronounce phonemes; for example, New Yorkers and Texans pronounce sounds differently. English learners learn to pronounce the sounds in English, and not surprisingly, sounds that differ from those in their native language are harder to learn. For example, because Spanish doesn’t have /th/, native Spanish speakers have difficulty pronouncing this sound, often substituting /d/ for /th/ because the sounds are articulated in similar ways. Younger children usually learn to pronounce unfamiliar sounds more easily than older children and adults do.

This system plays a crucial role in early literacy instruction. In a purely phonetic language, a one-to-one correspondence would exist between letters and sounds, and teaching children to decode words would be simple. But English is not a purely phonetic language because there are 26 letters and 44 sounds and many ways to combine the letters to spell some of the sounds, especially vowels. Consider these ways to spell long

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**FIGURE 1–2 The Four Cueing Systems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYSTEM</th>
<th>TERMS</th>
<th>APPLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonological System</strong></td>
<td>The sound system with approximately 44 sounds and more than 500 ways to spell them</td>
<td><strong>Phoneme</strong> (the smallest unit of sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grapheme</strong> (the written representation of a phoneme using one or more letters)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phonological awareness</strong> (knowledge about the sound structure of words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phonemic awareness</strong> (the ability to orally manipulate phonemes in words)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phonics</strong> (knowledge about phoneme–grapheme correspondences and rules)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decoding words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using invented spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Noticing rhyming words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dividing words into syllables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntactic System</strong></td>
<td>The structural system that governs how words are combined into sentences</td>
<td><strong>Syntax</strong> (the structure or grammar of a sentence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Morpheme</strong> (the smallest meaningful unit of language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Free morpheme</strong> (a morpheme that can stand alone as a word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bound morpheme</strong> (a morpheme that must be attached to a free morpheme)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forming compound words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adding prefixes and suffixes to root words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using capitalization and punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing simple, compound, and complex sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semantic System</strong></td>
<td>The meaning system that focuses on vocabulary</td>
<td><strong>Semantics</strong> (meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Synonyms</strong> (words that mean the same or nearly the same thing)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Antonyms</strong> (opposites)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Homophones</strong> (words that sound alike but are spelled differently)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning that many words have multiple meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studying synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using a dictionary and a thesaurus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatic System</strong></td>
<td>The social and cultural use system that explains how language varies</td>
<td><strong>Standard English</strong> (the form of English used in textbooks and by TV newscasters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Nonstandard English</strong> (other forms of English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varying language to fit specific purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparing standard and nonstandard forms of English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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And the patterns used to spell long e don’t always work—head and great are exceptions. Phonics, which describes the phoneme–grapheme correspondences and related spelling rules, is an important component of reading instruction. Children use phonics to decode words, but it isn’t a complete reading program because many common words can’t be decoded easily and because reading involves more than just decoding.

**The Syntactic System**

The syntactic system is the structural organization of English. This system is the grammar that regulates how words are combined into sentences; the word grammar means the rules governing how words are combined in sentences, not parts of speech. Children use the syntactic system as they combine words to form sentences. Word order is important in English, and English speakers must arrange words into a sequence that makes sense. Young Spanish speakers who are learning English, for example, learn to say “This is my red sweater,” not “This is my sweater red,” the literal translation from Spanish.

Children use their knowledge of the syntactic system as they read: They expect that the words they’re reading have been strung together into sentences. When they come to an unfamiliar word, they recognize its role in the sentence even if they don’t know the terms for parts of speech. In the sentence “The horses galloped through the gate and out into the field,” children may not know the word through, but they can easily substitute a reasonable word or phrase, such as out of or past.

Another component of syntax is word forms. Words such as dog and play are morphemes, the smallest meaningful units in language. Word parts that change the meaning of a word are also morphemes; when the plural marker -s is added to dog to make dogs, for instance, or the past-tense marker -ed is added to play to make played, these words now have two morphemes because the inflectional endings change the meaning of the words. The words dog and play are free morphemes because they convey meaning while standing alone; the endings -s and -ed are bound morphemes because they must be attached to free morphemes to convey meaning. Compound words are two or more morphemes combined to create a new word: Birthday, for example, is a compound word made up of two free morphemes.

**The Semantic System**

The semantic system focuses on meaning. Vocabulary is the key component of this system: Researchers estimate that children have a vocabulary of 5,000 words by the time they enter school, and they continue to acquire 3,000 to 4,000 words each year; by the time they graduate from high school, their vocabularies reach 50,000 words (Stahl & Nagy, 2006)! Children learn some words through instruction, but they acquire many more words informally through reading and through social studies and science units. Their depth of knowledge about words increases, too, from knowing one meaning for a word to knowing how to use it in many ways. The word fire, for example, has more than a dozen meanings; the most common are related to combustion, but others deal with an intense feeling, discharging a gun, or dismissing someone.

**The Pragmatic System**

The pragmatic system deals with the social aspects of language use. People use language for many purposes; how they talk and write varies according to their purpose and
audience. Language use also varies among social classes, ethnic groups, and geographic regions; these varieties are known as dialects. School is one cultural community, and the language of school is Standard English. This dialect is formal—the one used in textbooks, newspapers, and magazines and by TV newscasters. Other forms, including those spoken in urban ghettos or in Appalachia, are generally classified as nonstandard English. These nonstandard forms of English are alternatives in which the phonology, syntax, and semantics differ from those of Standard English. They're neither inferior nor substandard; instead, they reflect the communities of the speakers, and the speakers communicate as effectively as those who use Standard English. The goal is for children to add Standard English to their repertoire of language registers, not to replace their home dialect with Standard English.

Teachers understand that children use all four cueing systems as they read and write. For example, when children correctly read the sentence “Jimmy is playing ball with his father,” they’re probably using information from all four systems. A child who substitutes dad for father and reads “Jimmy is playing ball with his dad” might be focusing on the semantic or pragmatic system rather than on the phonological system. When a child substitutes basketball for ball and reads “Jimmy is playing basketball with his father,” he might be relying on an illustration or his own experience. Or, because both basketball and ball begin with b, he might have used the beginning sound as an aid in decoding, but he apparently didn’t consider how long the word basketball is compared with the word ball. A child who changes the syntax, as in “Jimmy, he play ball with his father,” may speak a nonstandard dialect. And sometimes a child reads the sentence so that it doesn’t make sense, as in “Jump is play boat with his father”: The child chooses words with the correct beginning sound, but there’s no comprehension. This becomes a serious problem because the child doesn’t understand that what he reads must make sense.

Classrooms are social settings. Together, children and their teacher create a classroom community, and the environment strongly influences the learning that takes place (Angelillo, 2008; Bullard, 2010). The classroom community should be inviting, supportive, and safe so learners will actively participate in reading and writing experiences. Perhaps the most striking quality is the partnership between the teacher and children: They become a “family” in which all members respect one another and support each other’s learning. Children value culturally and linguistically diverse classmates and recognize that everyone makes important contributions.

**PRINCIPLE 3: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS CREATE A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS**

Bennett-Armistead, Duke, and Moses (2005) list these reasons to explain why it’s important to provide a literacy-rich environment for young children and to involve them in literacy activities:

- Children learn about different uses of literacy.
- Children discover that reading and writing are fun.
- Children acquire knowledge about the world through book experiences.
- Children prepare for kindergarten and the primary grades as they learn letters of the alphabet and concepts about print.
- Children build their vocabularies and expand the ways they construct sentences.

In this text, you’ll read about ways to involve prekindergartners in reading and writing using a combination of embedded instruction that’s developmentally appropriate and explicit instruction that builds skills, including phonemic awareness (McGee, 2007).
Think about the differences between renting and owning a home. In a classroom community, children and the teacher are joint “owners” who assume responsibility for their behavior and learning, work collaboratively with classmates, complete assignments, and care for the classroom. In traditional classrooms, in contrast, the classroom belongs to the teacher and children are “renters” for the school year. Joint ownership doesn’t mean that teachers abdicate their responsibility; on the contrary, they’re the guides, instructors, coaches, and evaluators.

Characteristics of a Classroom Community

A successful classroom community has specific, identifiable characteristics that are conducive to learning:

- **Safety.** The classroom is a safe place that promotes in-depth learning and nurtures children’s physical and emotional well-being.

- **Respect.** Children and the teacher are respectful of each other. Harassment, bullying, and verbal abuse aren’t tolerated, and cultural, linguistic, and learning differences are respected so that children feel comfortable and valued.

- **High Expectations.** Teachers set high expectations and emphasize that all children can be successful. Their expectations promote a positive classroom environment where children behave appropriately and develop self-confidence.

- **Risk-Taking.** Teachers encourage children to explore new topics, try unfamiliar activities, and develop higher level thinking skills.

- **Collaboration.** Children work with classmates on literacy activities and other projects. Working together provides scaffolding and enhances their achievement.

- **Choice.** Children make choices about books they read, topics they write about, and projects they pursue within parameters set by the teacher. When children make choices, they’re more motivated to succeed, and they value the activity.

- **Family Involvement.** Teachers involve parents in classroom activities and develop home–school connections through special programs and regular communication because when parents are involved, children’s achievement increases (Edwards, 2004).

These characteristics emphasize the teacher’s role in creating an inviting, supportive, and safe classroom climate.

How to Create the Classroom Culture

Teachers are more successful when they take the first several weeks of the school year to establish the classroom climate and their expectations; it’s unrealistic to assume that children will instinctively be cooperative, responsible, and respectful. Teachers explicitly explain classroom routines, such as how to get supplies out and put them away and how to work with classmates in a small group, and they set the expectation that everyone will adhere to the routines. They demonstrate literacy procedures, including how
to choose a book, how to provide feedback about a classmate’s writing, and how to participate in a grand conversation. Third, teachers model ways of interacting with classmates and assisting them with reading and writing projects.

Teachers are the classroom managers: They set expectations and clearly explain to children what’s expected of them and what’s valued in the classroom. The classroom rules are specific and consistent, and teachers also set limits: Children can talk quietly with classmates when they’re working together, for example, but they’re not allowed to shout across the classroom or talk when the teacher’s talking or when classmates are presenting to the class. Teachers also model classroom rules themselves as they interact with children. This process of socialization at the beginning of the school year is crucial to the success of the literacy program.

Not everything can be accomplished during the first several weeks, however; teachers continue to reinforce classroom routines and literacy procedures. One way is to have student leaders model the desired routines and behaviors; this way, classmates are likely to follow the lead. Teachers also continue to teach additional literacy procedures as children become involved in new activities. The classroom evolves, but the foundation is laid at the beginning of the school year.

The classroom environment is predictable, with familiar routines and literacy procedures. Children feel comfortable, safe, and more willing to take risks in a predictable environment; this is especially true for children from varied cultures, English learners, and struggling readers and writers (Fay & Whaley, 2004).

**PRINCIPLE 4: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS ADOPT A BALANCED APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION**

The balanced approach to instruction is based on a comprehensive view of literacy that combines explicit instruction, guided practice, collaborative learning, and independent reading and writing. Cunningham and Allington (2011) compare the balanced approach to a multivitamin, suggesting that it brings together the best of teacher- and child-centered learning theories. Even though balanced programs vary, they usually embody these characteristics:

- **Literacy.** Literacy involves both reading and writing; in fact, linking the two facilitates children’s learning.
- **Explicit Instruction.** Teachers provide explicit instruction to develop children’s knowledge about reading and writing according to grade-level standards.
- **Authentic Application.** Children have regular opportunities to practice what they’re learning by reading trade books and writing compositions.
- **Reading and Writing Strategies.** Children become strategic readers and writers by learning to apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies.
- **Oral Language.** Opportunities for children to talk and listen are integrated with reading and writing activities.
- **Tools for Learning.** Children use reading, talking, writing, and technology as tools for content-area learning.

Creating a balanced literacy program is a “complex process that requires flexibility and artful orchestration of literacy’s various contextual and conceptual aspects” (Pearson, Raphael, Benson, & Madda, 2007, p. 33).
PreK through fourth grade balanced literacy instructional programs include these components:

- Reading
- Phonemic awareness and phonics
- Literacy strategies and skills
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Literature
- Content-area study
- Oral language
- Writing
- Spelling

These components are described in Figure 1–3. Creating a balance is essential, because when one component is over- or underemphasized, the development of the others suffers. A balanced literacy program integrating these components is recommended for all children, including those in high-poverty urban schools, struggling readers, and English learners (Braunger & Lewis, 2006).

Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative identified the knowledge children are expected to learn at each grade level, beginning in kindergarten. It was spearheaded by the National Governors’ Association and the Council of Chief State School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Children learn to use reader factors, including comprehension strategies, and text factors, to understand what they’re reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content-Area Study</td>
<td>Children use reading and writing as tools to learn about social studies and science topics in thematic units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Strategies and Skills</td>
<td>Children learn to use problem-solving and monitoring behaviors called strategies and automatic actions called skills as they read and write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Children become engaged readers who enjoy literature through reading and responding to books and learning about genres, text structures, and literary features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Language</td>
<td>Children use talk and listening as they work with classmates, participate in grand conversations, give oral presentations, and listen to the teacher read aloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic Awareness and Phonics</td>
<td>Children learn to manipulate sounds in words and apply the alphabetic principle and phonics rules to decode words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Children participate in a variety of reading experiences using picture-book stories and novels, informational books, books of poetry, textbooks, and Internet materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Children apply what they’re learning about English orthography to spell words, and their spellings gradually become conventional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Children learn the meaning of words through listening to books teachers read aloud and from content-area study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Children learn to use the writing process to draft and refine stories, poems, reports, and other compositions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Officers with the goal of ensuring that all students graduate from high school able to succeed in college or the workforce. More than 45 states and the District of Columbia have already adopted the CCSS.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (2010) are a framework for improving teaching and learning, with clear and consistent academic benchmarks (Allyn, 2013; Kendall, 2011). They’re research based and include rigorous content that requires children to use higher level thinking skills as they apply their knowledge. The Standards’ expectations grow in sophistication, from kindergarten through 12th grade, and at each grade level students are required to read and write more complex texts. Reading and writing are integrated across the curriculum, and children are required to conduct research to answer questions and solve problems. The literacy Standards are organized into five strands:

**Reading Strand.** The Reading strand consists of three sections: Foundational Skills, Literature, and Informational Texts. Young children develop foundational skills—print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency—as they learn to read. The emphasis in the Literature and Informational Texts sections is on children’s comprehension of complex texts: Children read increasingly sophisticated grade-level texts and grow in their ability to make inferences and connections among ideas and between texts.

**Writing Strand.** The Writing strand consists of four sections: Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, and Range of Writing. Children in the primary grades learn to use the writing process to compose texts representing a variety of genres, including narratives and informative texts.

**Speaking and Listening Strand.** The Speaking and Listening strand consists of two sections: Comprehension and Collaboration, and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas. Young children gain mastery of oral language skills; they refine their ability to use speaking and listening informally in discussions and more formally in oral presentations.

**Language Strand.** The Language strand consists of three sections: Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language, and Vocabulary Acquisition and Use. Children learn to apply vocabulary, grammar, and Standard English conventions to increasingly sophisticated oral and written presentations.

**Media and Technology Strand.** The CCSS integrate the critical analysis of media and the creation of multimedia projects within the other strands.

For each topic, Standards clearly specify what students should accomplish at each grade level. Figure 1–4 shows how the Common Core State Standards are addressed in each chapter of this text.

Now that most states have adopted the CCSS, the next step is for teachers to develop curriculum that incorporates the Standards; to that end, groups of teachers in schools and school districts are creating lesson plans, and the Common Core team of teachers from across the United States has developed six multidisciplinary units. Electronic versions are available at http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy and in print form: *Common Core Curriculum Maps in English Language Arts, Grades K–5* (2012).
PRINCIPLE 5: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS SCAFFOLD CHILDREN’S READING AND WRITING

Teachers scaffold children’s literacy development as they demonstrate, guide, and teach, and they vary the amount of support they provide according to the instructional purpose and children’s needs. Sometimes teachers model how experienced readers read or record children’s dictation when the writing’s too difficult for them to do on their own. At other times, they guide children as they read a leveled book or proofread their writing. Teachers use five levels of support, moving from more to less as children assume
responsibility (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Figure 1–5 presents an overview of these levels of support—modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent—for literacy activities.

These five levels of support illustrate Pearson and Gallagher’s (1983) “gradual release of responsibility” model. As children move from modeled to interactive to independent reading and writing, they do more of the actual reading and writing, and teachers gradually transfer responsibility to them.

**Modeled Reading and Writing**

Teachers provide the greatest amount of support when they model how expert readers read and expert writers write. When teachers read aloud, they’re modeling: They read fluently and with expression, and they talk about their thoughts and the strategies they’re using. When they model writing, teachers write a composition on chart paper or an interactive whiteboard so that everyone can see what the teacher does and how it’s being written. Teachers use this support level to demonstrate procedures, such as choosing a book to read or doing a **word sort**, and to introduce new writing genres, such as “I Am . . .” poems. Teachers often do a **think-aloud** to share what they’re thinking as they read or write, the decisions they make and the strategies they use. Teachers use modeling for these purposes:

- Demonstrate fluent reading and writing
- Explain how to use reading and writing strategies
- Teach the procedure for a literacy activity
- Show how reading and writing conventions and other skills work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE 1–5</th>
<th>Levels of Scaffolding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL</strong></td>
<td><strong>READING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeled</td>
<td>Teachers read aloud, modeling how good readers read fluently using books that are too difficult for children to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>Teacher and children read books together, with children following as the teacher reads and then repeating familiar refrains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>Teacher and children read instructional-level texts together and take turns doing the reading. Teachers help children read fluently and with expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided</td>
<td>Teachers teach guided reading lessons to small, homogeneous groups using instructional-level books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Children read self-selected books independently, and teachers conference with them to monitor their progress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shared Reading and Writing

Teachers “share” reading and writing tasks with children at this level. Probably the best known activity is **shared reading**, which teachers use to read big books with young children. The teacher does most of the reading, but children join in to read familiar and predictable words and phrases. Teachers use the **Language Experience Approach** to write children’s dictation on paintings and brainstorm lists of words on the whiteboard, make **K-W-L charts**, and write **collaborative books**. 

Sharing differs from modeling in that children actually participate in the activity rather than simply observing the teacher. In shared reading, children follow along as the teacher reads, and in shared writing, they suggest the words and sentences for the teacher to write. Teachers use shared reading and writing for these purposes:

- Involve children in literacy activities they can’t do independently
- Create opportunities for children to experience success in reading and writing
- Provide practice before children read and write independently

Interactive Reading and Writing

Children assume an increasingly important role in interactive reading and writing. They no longer observe the teacher reading or writing, repeat familiar words, or suggest words for the teacher to write; instead, they’re actively involved in reading and writing. They support classmates by sharing the reading and writing responsibilities, and their teacher provides assistance when needed. **Choral reading** and **readers theatre** are two examples of interactive reading. In **interactive writing**, children and the teacher create a text and write a message together (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996; Tompkins & Collom, 2004). Teachers use interactive reading and writing for these purposes:

- Practice reading and writing high-frequency words
- Apply phonics and spelling skills
- Read and write texts that children can’t do independently
- Provide opportunities for children to share their literacy expertise with classmates

Figure 1–6 shows a piece of interactive writing done by a group of 5-year-olds after reading Eric Carle’s repetitive book *Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?* (2000). The teacher wrote the title and the author’s name, and the children created the sentence *Animals have mothers just like me and you*. They took turns writing the letters they knew in red, and the teacher wrote the letters representing unfamiliar sounds in black. The boxes around four of the letters indicate correction tape the teacher placed over an incorrectly formed letter before the child tried again to print the letter conventionally.

Guided Reading and Writing

Even though teachers continue to provide support, children do the actual reading and writing themselves. **Guided reading** is the best known example. In this instructional procedure, small, homogeneous groups meet with the teacher to read a book at their instructional level. The teacher introduces the book and guides children as they begin reading, then children continue reading on their own while the teacher supervises them. Minilessons are another example: As teachers teach lessons, they provide practice activities and supervise while children apply what they’re reading. Teachers scaffold
I don’t mean to suggest, however, that teachers don’t play a role in independent-level activities because they continue to monitor children’s progress, but they provide much less support at this level.

Through independent reading, children learn how pleasurable reading is and, teachers hope, become lifelong readers, and as they write, children come to view themselves as authors. Teachers use activities at this level for these purposes:

- Provide opportunities for children to apply the reading and writing strategies and skills they’ve learned
- Engage children in authentic literacy experiences in which they choose their own topics, purposes, and materials
- Develop lifelong readers and writers

Teachers working with prekindergartners through fourth graders use all of these levels. When you introduce a reading strategy, for instance, you model how to apply it, and when you want children to practice a strategy you’ve already introduced, you guide them through an activity, slowly releasing more responsibility to them. Once children can apply the strategy easily, you encourage them to use it independently. The purpose of the activity, not the activity itself, determines the level of support.

No single instructional program best represents the balanced approach to literacy; instead, teachers organize for instruction by creating their own program that fits their students’ needs and their school’s grade-level standards. Instructional programs should reflect these principles:
Teachers create a community of learners in their classroom.
- Teachers incorporate the components of the balanced approach.
- Teachers scaffold children’s reading and writing experiences.

Five popular approaches are guided reading, basal reading programs, literature focus units, literature circles, and reading and writing workshop.

**Guided Reading**

Teachers use guided reading to personalize instruction and meet children’s individual needs. They meet with small groups of children who read at approximately the same proficiency level for teacher-directed lessons (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In these 20-minute lessons, teachers teach word-identification and comprehension strategies and have children apply what they’re learning as they read books at their instructional level. Teachers emphasize that the goal of reading is comprehension—understanding what you’re reading, not just saying all the words correctly. At the same time teachers are working with one guided reading group, classmates work at literacy centers or pursue other activities that they can complete independently. This instructional approach is often used in kindergarten through third grade, but it can also be adapted to use with older, struggling readers.

**Basal Reading Programs**

Commercially produced reading programs are known as basal readers. These programs feature a textbook containing reading selections with accompanying workbooks, supplemental books, and related instructional materials at each grade level, including digital components. Phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling instruction is coordinated with the reading selections and aligned with grade-level standards. The teacher’s guide provides detailed procedures for teaching the selections and related strategies and skills. Instruction is typically presented to the whole class, with reteaching to small groups of struggling students. Testing materials are also included so that teachers can monitor children’s progress. Publishers tout basal readers as a complete literacy program, but effective teachers realize that they aren’t.

**Literature Focus Units**

Teachers create literature focus units featuring high-quality picture-book stories and novels. The books are usually chosen from a district- or state-approved list of award-winning books that all children are expected to read at a particular grade level. These books include classics such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 2002) and *Charlotte’s Web* (White, 2006) and award winners such as *Officer Buckle and Gloria* (Rathmann, 1995) and *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* (Willems, 2003). Everyone in the class reads and responds to the same book, and the teacher supports children’s learning through a combination of explicit instruction and reading and writing activities. Through these units, teachers teach about literary genres and authors and develop children’s interest in literature.

**Literature Circles**

Small groups of children get together in literature circles or book clubs to read a story or informational book. To begin, teachers select five or six books at varying
reading levels. Often, the books are related in some way—representing the same theme or written by the same author, for instance. They collect multiple copies of each book and give a book talk to introduce them. Then children choose a book and form a group to read and respond to it. They set a reading and discussion schedule and work independently, although teachers sometimes sit in on the discussions. Through the experience of reading and discussing a book together, children learn more about how to respond to books and develop responsibility for completing assignments.

Reading and Writing Workshop

Children do authentic reading and writing in workshop programs. They select books, read independently, and conference with the teacher about their reading; and they write books on topics that they choose and conference with the teacher about their writing. Teachers set aside a time for reading and writing workshop, and children read and write while the teacher conferences with small groups. Teachers also teach minilessons on reading and writing strategies and skills and read books aloud to the whole class. In a workshop program, children read and write more like adults do, making choices, working independently, and developing responsibility.

These five approaches can be divided into authentic and textbook programs. Guided reading, literature focus units, literature circles, and reading and writing workshop are classified as authentic programs because they use trade books and involve children in meaningful activities. Basal readers, not surprisingly, are textbook programs that reflect the behaviorist theory. Teachers generally combine these programs because children learn best through a variety of reading and writing experiences. Sometimes teachers do guided reading along with literature focus units and writing workshop. Or, teachers alternate literature focus units or literature circles with reading and writing workshop and a textbook program, and others use some components from each approach throughout the school year.

GO DIGITAL!  Incorporate Technology Into Your Classroom. Teachers integrate 21st-century technology into their classrooms at all grade levels. They use digital software, the Internet, and computer technology for many purposes, including these:

- Presenting information to children
- Scaffolding children’s reading and writing
- Involving children in activities and projects
- Responding to children’s work
- Assessing children’s achievement

Teachers often display information on interactive whiteboards as part of whole-class presentations and minilessons, and they teach children to use a variety of digital tools, including eBooks, digital cameras, and software programs. Basal reading programs offer websites with supplemental activities, and several eBook versions of basal readers are now available.
CHAPTER 1  BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER OF READING

PRINCIPLE 7: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS DIFFERENTIATE INSTRUCTION

Effective teachers adjust and personalize their instruction because children vary in their levels of development, academic achievement, and ability. Tomlinson (2004) explains that the one-size-fits-all instructional model is obsolete, and teachers respect children by honoring both their similarities and their differences. Differentiation is based on Vygotsky’s idea of a zone of proximal development. If instruction is either too difficult or too easy, it isn’t effective; instead, teachers must provide instruction that meets children’s instructional needs.

How to Differentiate Instruction

Teachers vary instructional arrangements, choose instructional materials at children’s reading levels, and modify assignments as they differentiate instruction. They monitor children’s learning and make adjustments, when necessary, and assess learning in multiple ways, not just using paper-and-pencil tests. Differentiation involvespersonalizing the content, the process, and the products:

Differentiating the Content. Teachers identify the information that children need to learn to meet grade-level standards so that every child will be successful. They differentiate the content in these ways:

- Choose instructional materials at children’s reading levels
- Consider children’s developmental levels as well as their current grade placement in deciding what to teach
- Use assessment tools to determine children’s instructional needs

Differentiating the Process. Teachers vary instruction and application activities to meet children’s needs. They differentiate the process in these ways:

- Provide instruction to individuals, small groups, and the whole class
- Scaffold struggling readers and writers with more explicit instruction
- Challenge advanced readers and writers with activities requiring higher level thinking
- Monitor children’s learning and adjust instruction when needed

Differentiating the Products. Teachers also vary how children demonstrate what they’ve learned. Demonstrations include both the projects that children create and the tests used to measure their academic achievement. Teachers differentiate the products in these ways:

- Have children create projects individually, with partners, or in small groups
- Design projects that engage children with literacy in meaningful ways
- Assess children using a combination of visual, oral, and written formats

As teachers differentiate instruction, they consider the background knowledge and literacy demands of the reading selection, create a text set of related books, design
activities with varied grouping patterns, consider children’s preferred language modalities and thinking styles, and determine how much support children are likely to need. Figure 1–7 lists some of the ways teachers differentiate instruction.

### NURTURING ENGLISH LEARNERS

Children who come from language backgrounds other than English and aren’t yet proficient in English are known as English learners (ELs). Many can converse in English but struggle with the academic language of school. These children benefit from participating in the same instructional programs that mainstream classmates do, but teachers make adaptations to create learning contexts that respect minority students and meet their needs (Shanahan & Beck, 2006). Learning to read and write is more challenging because they’re learning to speak English at the same time. Teachers scaffold ELs’ oral language acquisition and literacy development in these ways:

**Explicit Instruction.** Teachers present more explicit instruction on literacy strategies and skills because ELs are more at risk (Genesee & Riches, 2006). They also spend more time teaching unfamiliar academic vocabulary (e.g., homonym, paragraph, revise, summarize).

**Oral Language.** Teachers provide many opportunities each day for children to practice speaking English comfortably and informally with partners and in small groups. Through conversations about topics they’re learning, ELs develop both conversational and academic language, which in turn supports their literacy development (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007).

### FIGURE 1–7 Ways to Differentiate Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Content   | Teachers identify the information that children need to learn to meet grade-level standards and the instructional materials to be used. | • Choose instructional materials at children’s reading levels.  
• Consider children’s developmental levels as well as their grade placement when deciding what to teach.  
• Use assessment tools to determine children’s instructional needs. |
| Process   | Teachers vary instruction and application activities to meet children’s needs. | • Provide instruction to individuals, small groups, and the whole class.  
• Scaffold struggling readers and writers with more explicit instruction.  
• Challenge advanced learners with activities requiring higher level thinking. |
| Products  | Teachers modify the ways children demonstrate what they’ve learned. | • Have children create projects individually or with classmates.  
• Design projects that engage children in meaningful ways.  
• Assess children using visual, oral, and written formats. |
Small-Group Work. Teachers provide opportunities for children to work in small groups because social interaction supports their learning (Genesee & Riches, 2006). As English learners talk with classmates, they’re learning the culture of literacy.

Reading Aloud to Children. Teachers read aloud a variety of stories, poems, and informational books, including some books that represent children’s home cultures (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). In the process, teachers model fluent reading, and children build background knowledge as they become more familiar with English vocabulary and written language structures.

Background Knowledge. Teachers organize instruction into units to build children’s world knowledge about grade-appropriate concepts, and they develop ELs’ literary knowledge through minilessons and a variety of reading and writing activities (Braunger & Lewis, 2006).

Authentic Literacy Activities. Teachers provide daily opportunities for children to apply the strategies and skills they’re learning as they read and write for authentic purposes (Akhavan, 2006). English learners participate in meaningful literacy activities through literature circles and reading and writing workshop.

These recommendations promote English learners’ academic success.

Teachers’ attitudes about minority children and their understanding of how people learn a second language play a critical role in the effectiveness of instruction (Gay, 2000). It’s important that teachers understand that ELs have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and plan instruction accordingly. Most classrooms reflect the European American middle-class culture, which differs significantly from minority children’s backgrounds and how they use language. For example, some children are reluctant to volunteer answers to teachers’ questions, and others may not answer if the questions are different from those their parents ask (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Teachers who learn about their students’ home language and culture and embed what they learn into their instruction are likely to be more successful.

Partnering With Parents

Parents play a crucial role in helping their children become successful readers and writers, and home-literacy activities profoundly influence children’s academic success: Children score higher on standardized achievement tests, have better school attendance, and exhibit stronger thinking skills when parents are involved in their education (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995). Most teachers recognize the importance of home-literacy activities and want to become partners with their students’ parents. In some communities, parents respond enthusiastically when teachers ask them to listen to their children read aloud or invite them to participate in a home–school writing event, for example, but in other communities, there’s little or no response.

Teachers’ expectations have been based on middle-class parents, who typically see themselves as partners with teachers, reading to their children, playing educational games, going to the public library together, and helping with homework. Other parents view their role differently (Edwards, 2004): Some are willing to attend teacher–parent
conferences and support school projects such as bake sales and carnivals, but they expect teachers to do the teaching; others feel inadequate when it comes to helping their children because of their own unsuccessful school experiences or limited ability to read and write in English. Parents’ viewpoints reflect their culture and socioeconomic status (Lareau, 2000): Middle-class parents usually work with teachers to support their children’s literacy development; working-class parents believe that teachers are better qualified to teach their children; and poor, minority, and immigrant parents often feel powerless to help their children. Parents’ involvement is also related to educational level: Those who didn’t graduate from high school are less likely to get involved (Paratore, 2001).

Because some parents don’t understand the crucial role they play in their children’s academic success, it’s up to teachers to establish collaborative relationships with parents. Edwards (2004) explains that parent–teacher collaborations need to change in these ways so that teachers can create more empowering classroom cultures:

**Respect the literacy activities of families.** Nearly all families incorporate reading and writing activities into their daily routines, but these activities may differ from school-based literacy activities. Some children are at risk of failing because they aren’t familiar with the literacy activities and language patterns that teachers use. Nieto (2002) urges teachers to value parents’ literacy activities, even if they don’t match teachers’ expectations, and use them in developing a culturally responsive literacy program.

**Reach out to families in new ways.** Edwards (2004) recommends that teachers create schoolwide programs with a yearlong schedule of activities that address particular literacy goals at each grade level. Effective communication is essential: When teachers demonstrate that they want to listen to parents, giving them opportunities to share insights about their children and ask questions about how children learn to read and write, parents become more willing to work with teachers and support their children’s learning.

**Build parents’ knowledge of literacy procedures.** Too often teachers assume that parents know how to support their children’s literacy learning, but many parents don’t know how to read aloud, respond to their children’s writing, or use other literacy procedures. Parents will be more successful when teachers offer specific suggestions and provide clear directions (Edwards, 2004).

When teachers accept that parents view their role in different ways and become more knowledgeable about cultural diversity and how it affects parent–teacher relationships, they’re more likely to be successful.

**Interventions**

Schools use the results of assessments to identify low-achieving students, and they plan intervention programs to remedy children’s reading and writing difficulties and accelerate their learning (Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006). These programs are used in addition to regular classroom instruction, not as a replacement for it. The classroom teacher or a specially trained reading teacher meets with struggling students every day; using paraprofessionals is a widespread practice that’s not recommended because aides aren’t as effective as certified teachers (Allington, 2012). Teachers provide intensive, expert instruction to individuals or very small groups
of no more than three students. Interventions take various forms: They can be provided by adding a second lesson during the regular school day, offering extra instruction in an after-school program, or holding extended-school-year programs during the summer. Figure 1–8 summarizes the recommendations for effective intervention programs.

Until recently, most school-based interventions were designed for middle grade students who were already failing; now the focus has changed to early intervention to eliminate the pattern of school failure that begins early and persists throughout some children’s lives (Strickland, 2002). Three types of interventions for young children have been developed:

- Preventive programs to create more effective early-childhood programs
- Family-focused programs to develop young children’s awareness of literacy, parents’ literacy, and parenting skills
- Early interventions to resolve reading and writing problems and accelerate literacy development for low-achieving K–3 students

Teachers are optimistic that earlier and more intensive intervention will solve many of the difficulties that older students exhibit today.

**FEDERAL EARLY INTERVENTIONS.** To prevent literacy problems and break the cycle of poverty in the United States, the federal government directs two early-intervention programs for economically disadvantaged children and their parents. Head Start promotes the healthy development and school preparedness of young low-income children through a variety of services; it provides education, health, nutrition, and
social support to children and their families. This long-running program, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, reaches one million children and their families each year through prenatal and infant programs, preschool programs, and other services for children of migrant farm workers, Native Americans, and homeless families. Head Start began in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty, and as it approaches its 50th anniversary, the program remains controversial because studies evaluating its long-term effectiveness have been inconclusive.

The Even Start Family Literacy Program is a newer program for low-income children from birth to age 7 that began as part of NCLB. It’s designed to improve educational opportunities for low-income families through these related activities:

- An early childhood education program to prepare children for school success
- An adult literacy program to improve parents’ reading and writing competencies
- A parent education program to train parents to participate more fully in children’s education
- Opportunities for children and their parents to participate in literacy activities together

All four components are required in this unified family literacy program.

**READING RECOVERY.** Reading Recovery is a first grade intervention program for the lowest achievers (Clay, 2005a, 2005b). The intervention is a 30-minute daily one-on-one tutoring session taught by specifically trained and supervised teachers. Reading Recovery lessons involve these components:

  - Rereading familiar books
  - Independently reading the book introduced in the previous lesson
  - Teaching decoding and comprehension strategies
  - Writing sentences
  - Reading a new book with teacher support

When children reach grade-level standards and demonstrate that they can work independently in their classroom, they leave the program. The results of this intervention program are impressive: 75% of children who complete the Reading Recovery program meet grade-level literacy standards and continue to be successful.

**RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION.** Response to Intervention (RTI) is a promising school-wide initiative to identify struggling students quickly, promote effective classroom instruction, provide interventions, and increase the likelihood that children will be successful (Mellard & Johnson, 2008). It involves three tiers:

**Tier 1: Screening and Prevention.** Teachers provide high-quality instruction that’s supported by scientifically based research, screen children to identify those at risk for academic failure, and monitor their progress. If children don’t make adequate progress toward meeting grade-level standards, they move to Tier 2.

**Tier 2: Early Intervention.** Trained reading teachers provide enhanced, individualized instruction targeting children’s specific areas of difficulty. If
children’s literacy problems are resolved, they return to Tier 1; if they make some progress but need additional instruction, they remain in Tier 2; and if they don’t show improvement, they move to Tier 3, where the intensity of intervention increases.

**Tier 3: Intensive Intervention.** Special education teachers provide more intensive intervention to individual children and small groups. They focus on remedying children’s problems and teaching compensatory strategies, and they monitor children’s progress more frequently.

This schoolwide instruction and assessment program incorporates data-driven decision making, and special education teachers are optimistic that it will be a better way to diagnose learning-disabled students.

Improving classroom instruction, diagnosing children’s specific reading and writing difficulties, and implementing intensive intervention programs to remedy children’s literacy problems are three important ways that teachers work more effectively with struggling readers and writers.

**PRINCIPLE 8: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS LINK INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is an integral and ongoing part of both learning and teaching (Mariotti & Homan, 2005). Sometimes teachers equate standardized high-stakes achievement tests with assessment, but classroom assessment is much more than a once-a-year test. It’s a daily part of classroom life: Teachers collect and analyze data from observations, conferences, and classroom tests, and then use the results to make decisions about children’s academic achievement (Cunningham & Allington, 2011). Teachers assess children’s learning for these purposes:

**Determining Reading Levels.** Teachers determine children’s reading levels so that they can plan appropriate instruction.

**Monitoring Progress.** Teachers regularly assess children to ensure that they’re making expected progress in reading and writing, and when they’re not progressing, teachers take action to get them back on track.

**Diagnosing Strengths and Weaknesses.** Teachers examine children’s progress in specific literacy components, including phonics, fluency, comprehension, writing, and spelling, to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Diagnosis is especially important when children are struggling or aren’t making expected progress.

**Documenting Learning.** Teachers use a combination of test results and collections of children’s work to provide evidence of their academic achievement and document that they’ve met grade-level standards.

These purposes highlight the wide range of ongoing assessment activities that effective teachers use.
The Instruction–Assessment Cycle

Assessment is linked to instruction (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). Teachers do some assessments before they begin to teach, some while they’re teaching, and others afterward. They link instruction and assessment in this four-step cycle:

**Step 1: Planning.** Teachers use their knowledge about children’s reading levels, their background knowledge, and their strategy and skill competencies to plan appropriate instruction that’s neither too easy nor too difficult.

**Step 2: Monitoring.** Teachers monitor instruction that’s in progress as they observe students, conference with them, and check their work to ensure that their instruction is effective, and they make modifications, including reteaching when necessary, to improve the quality of their instruction and meet children’s needs.

**Step 3: Evaluating.** Teachers evaluate children’s learning using rubrics and checklists to assess children’s reading and writing projects and administering teacher-made tests. They also collect samples to document children’s achievements.

**Step 4: Reflecting.** Teachers judge the effectiveness of their instruction by analyzing children’s reading and writing projects and test results and consider how they might adapt instruction to improve student learning.

It’s easy to blame the children when learning isn’t occurring, but teachers need to consider how they can improve their teaching through planning, monitoring, evaluating, and reflecting because it’s their responsibility to ensure that their students are successful.

Classroom Assessment Tools

Teachers use both a variety of informal assessment tools that they create themselves and commercially available tests (McKenna & Stahl, 2009). Informal assessment tools include these activities:

- Observing children participating in instructional activities
- Collecting *running records* of children’s oral reading to analyze their ability to solve reading problems
- Examining children’s work for signs of growth
- Conferencing with individual children about their reading and writing progress
- Completing checklists to monitor children’s progress
- Using *rubrics* to assess children’s writing and other performances

These assessment tools support instruction, and teachers choose which one to use according to the kind of information they need. They administer commercial tests to individuals or the entire class to determine children’s overall reading achievement or their proficiency in a particular component—phonemic awareness or comprehension, for example.

High-Stakes Tests

Beginning in second grade, the results of yearly high-stakes standardized tests also provide evidence of children’s literacy achievement. The usefulness of these data is limited, however, because the tests are usually administered in the spring and the results aren’t released until after the school year ends. At the beginning of the next school year,
CHAPTER 1  BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER OF READING

Teachers do examine the data and use what they learn in planning for their new class, but the impact isn’t as great as it would be for the teachers who worked with those children during the previous year. Another way the results are used is in measuring the effectiveness of teachers’ instruction by examining how much children grew since the previous year’s test and whether they met grade-level standards.

CHAPTER REVIEW

Teaching Reading and Writing

- Teachers understand how teacher-centered theory is different from learner-centered theories.
- Teachers know the role of the four cueing systems.
- Teachers create a community of learners in their classrooms.
- Teachers adopt a balanced approach to literacy instruction.
- Teachers understand that the Common Core State Standards are a framework for improving teaching and learning at all grade levels.
- Teachers use the five levels of support to scaffold children’s learning.
- Teachers use a combination of guided reading lessons, basal reading programs, literature focus units, literature circles, and reading and writing workshop to organize instruction.
- Teachers differentiate instruction so all children can be successful.
- Teachers link instruction and assessment.

ACCOUNTABILITY CHECK!

Teaching Reading and Writing

Click here to self-assess your understanding of the eight principles underlying effective literacy instruction.

1. How is the teacher-centered learning theory different from child-centered theories?
2. Name the four cueing systems and explain the role of each one.
3. How do teachers create a community of learners?
4. What components are included in a balanced approach to instruction?
5. What are the Common Core State Standards?
6. What are the five levels of scaffolding that teachers use to support children’s learning?
7. What are the five instructional programs that teachers often use to organize for instruction?
8. How do teachers differentiate instruction?
9. How do teachers link instruction and assessment?
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McGee, L. M. (2007). Transforming literacy practices in preschool: Research-based practices that give all children the opportunity to reach their potential as learners. New York: Scholastic.


Ms. McCloskey’s Students Become Readers and Writers. Kindergarten through third grade students sit on the carpet for a shared reading lesson. They listen intently as Ms. McCloskey prepares to read *Make Way for Ducklings* (McCloskey, 2004), the big-book version of an award-winning story about a family of ducks living in downtown Boston. She reads the title and the author’s name, and some children recognize that the author’s last name is the same as hers, but she explains that they aren’t related. She reads the first page and asks for predictions. During this first reading, Ms. McCloskey reads each page expressively and tracks the text, word by word, with a pointer as she reads. After she finishes, they talk about the story. Some of the English learners are initially hesitant, but others eagerly relate their own experiences to the story.

The next day, Ms. McCloskey rereads *Make Way for Ducklings*. She begins by asking for volunteers to retell the story. Children take turns retelling each page, using the illustrations as clues. Ms. McCloskey includes this oral language activity because many of her students are English learners. The class is multilingual: Approximately 45% are Asian Americans who speak Hmong, Khmer, or Lao; 45% are Hispanics who speak Spanish or English at home; and the remaining 10% are African Americans and whites who speak English.

Next, Ms. McCloskey rereads the story, stopping several times to ask the class to think about the characters, draw inferences, and reflect on the theme. Her questions include: Why did the police officer help the ducks? What would have happened to the ducks if the police officer didn’t help? Do you think animals should live in cities? What was Robert McCloskey saying to us? On the third day, Ms. McCloskey reads the story again, and the children take turns using the pointer to track the text and join in reading familiar words. After they finish, the children clap because rereading the now familiar story provides a sense of accomplishment.
Ms. McCloskey understands that her students are moving through three developmental stages—emergent, beginning, and fluent—as they learn to read and write. She monitors each child's development to tailor instruction to meet his or her needs. As she reads the big book aloud, she uses a pointer to show the direction of print, from left to right and top to bottom on the page. She also moves the pointer across the lines of text to demonstrate the relationship between the words on the page and the words she's reading. Emergent-stage readers are learning these concepts.

Others are beginning readers who are learning high-frequency words and to decode phonetically regular words. One day after rereading the story, Ms. McCloskey turns to one of the pages and asks these children to identify familiar high-frequency words (e.g., *don’t*, *make*) and decode CVC words (e.g., *run*, *big*). She also asks children to isolate individual sentences on the page and note the capital letter at the beginning and the punctuation that marks the end of each sentence.

The children in the third group are fluent readers. Ms. McCloskey addresses their needs as she rereads a page from the story: She asks these children to identify adjectives and notice inflectional endings on verbs. She also rereads the last sentence on the page and asks a child to explain why commas are used in it.

The teacher draws the children's attention to the text as a natural part of *shared reading*: She demonstrates concepts; points out letters, words, and punctuation marks; models strategies; and asks questions about concepts of print. As they watch Ms. McCloskey and listen to their classmates, the children learn more about letters, words, and sentences.

Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner, Mrs. Papaleo, share a large classroom and 40 students; despite the number of children, the room feels spacious. Children's desks are arranged in clusters around the open area in the middle where children meet for whole-class activities. An easel to display big books is placed next to the teacher's chair. Several chart racks stand nearby; one rack holds Ms. McCloskey's morning messages, a second one holds charts with poems that the children use for *choral reading*, and a third rack holds a pocket chart with word cards and sentence strips.

On one side of the classroom is the library with books arranged in crates by topic. One crate has frog books, and others have books about the ocean, plants, and the five senses; additional crates contain books by authors who have been featured in author studies, including Eric Carle, Kevin Henkes, and Paula Danziger. Picture books and chapter books are also arranged in the crates. Sets of leveled books are located on a shelf above the children's reach for the teachers to use in guided reading lessons. A child-size sofa, a table and chairs, pillows, and rugs make the area cozy. A listening center is set up at a nearby table with a tape player and headphones that accommodate six children at a time.

A *word wall* with high-frequency words fills a partition separating instructional areas. It's divided into sections for each letter of the alphabet, and nearly 100 words written on small cards cut into the shape of the words are attached to it. The teachers introduce new words each week and post them on the word wall. The children often practice reading and writing the words as a center activity, and they refer to the word wall to spell words.
A bank of computers and a printer are located on another side of the classroom. Everyone uses them, even the youngest children; those who have stronger computer skills assist their classmates. They use word processing to publish their writing during writing workshop and monitor their independent reading practice on the computer using the Accelerated Reader program. At other times, they search the Internet to find information related to topics they’re studying in science and social studies, and use software programs to learn typing skills.

Literacy center materials are stored in a corner. Clear plastic boxes hold magnetic letters, puppets and other props, whiteboards and pens, puzzles and games, flash cards, and other manipulatives. The teachers choose materials to use during minilessons, and they also set boxes of materials out for children to use during center time.

Ms. McCloskey spends the morning teaching reading and writing using a variety of teacher-directed and student-choice activities. Her daily schedule is shown here. After shared reading and a minilesson, the children participate in reading and writing workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:10–8:20</td>
<td>Class Meeting</td>
<td>Children participate in opening activities, read their teachers’ morning message, and talk about plans for the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20–8:45</td>
<td>Shared Reading</td>
<td>The teachers read big books and poems copied on charts; this activity often serves as a lead-in to the minilesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45–9:00</td>
<td>Minilesson</td>
<td>The teachers teach minilessons on literacy procedures, strategies, and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00–9:45</td>
<td>Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Children write books while the teachers confer with individual children and small groups. They also participate in interactive writing activities and share their published books from the author’s chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45–10:00</td>
<td>Recess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00–11:00</td>
<td>Reading Workshop</td>
<td>Children read self-selected books independently while the teachers teach guided reading lessons with small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00–11:30</td>
<td>Literacy Centers</td>
<td>Children work at literacy centers, participating in reading, writing, listening, and other activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30–12:10</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10–12:30</td>
<td>Read-Aloud</td>
<td>The teachers read aloud picture books and chapter books, and children discuss them in grand conversations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children write books during writing workshop. While most of them are working independently, Ms. McCloskey brings together a small group for a special activity: She conducts interactive writing lessons with emergent writers and teaches the writing process and revision strategies to more fluent writers. Today she’s conferencing with six children who are beginning writers. Because they’re writing longer compositions, she has decided to introduce revising. After each child reads his or her rough draft aloud to the group, classmates ask questions and offer compliments, and Ms. McCloskey encourages them to make a change in their writing so that their readers will understand it better. Anthony reads aloud a story about his soccer game, and after a classmate asks a question, he realizes that he needs to add more about how he scored a goal; he moves back to his desk to revise. The group continues with children
sharing their writing and beginning to make revisions. At the end of writing workshop, the children come together for author’s chair. Each day, three children sit in the author’s chair to share their “published” writing.

During reading workshop, children read independently or with a partner while Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner conduct guided reading lessons. The children have access to books in the classroom library, including predictable books for emergent readers, decodable books for beginning readers, and easy-to-read chapter books for fluent readers. The children know how to choose books that they can read successfully so they’re able to spend their time really reading.

Ms. McCloskey is working with a group of four emergent readers, and today they’ll read Playing (Prince, 1999), a seven-page predictable book with one line of text on each page that uses the pattern “I like to ______.” She begins by asking children what they like to do when they’re playing. Der says, “I like to play with my brother,” and Ms. McCloskey writes that on a strip of paper. Some children say only a word or two, and she expands the words into a sentence for the child to repeat; then she writes the expanded sentence and reads it with the child. Next, she introduces the book and reads the title and the author’s name. The teacher does a picture walk, talking about the picture on each page and naming the activity the child is doing—running, jumping, sliding, and so on. She reviews the “I like to ______” pattern, and then the children read the book independently while Ms. McCloskey supervises and provides assistance as needed. The children eagerly reread the book several times, becoming more confident with each reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bag a Story</td>
<td>Children use objects in a paper bag to create a story. They draw pictures or write sentences to tell the story they’ve created.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clip Boards</td>
<td>Children search the classroom for words beginning with a particular letter or featuring a spelling pattern and write them on paper attached to clip boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Children play alphabet, phonics, and other literacy card and board games with classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Children read books related to a thematic unit and write or draw about the books in reading logs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Children listen to a recording of a story or informational book while they follow along in a copy of the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Words</td>
<td>Children practice a making words activity that they’ve previously done together as a class with teacher guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messages</td>
<td>Children write notes to classmates and the teachers and post them on a special “Message Center” bulletin board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Frames</td>
<td>Children arrange word cards on a chart-sized poetry frame to create a poem and then practice reading it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the Room</td>
<td>Children use pointers to reread big books, charts, signs, and other texts posted in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Children use the Internet, informational books, photos, and realia to learn more about topics in literature focus units and thematic units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Reenactment</td>
<td>Children use small props, finger puppets, or flannel board figures to reenact familiar stories with classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Sorts</td>
<td>Children categorize high-frequency or thematic word cards displayed in a pocket chart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ms. McCloskey reviews the high-frequency words *I*, *like*, and *to*, and the children point them out on the classroom word wall. They use magnetic letters to spell the words and then write sentences that begin with *I like to*... on whiteboards. Then Ms. McCloskey cuts apart their sentence strips for them to sequence; afterward the children put their sentences into envelopes to practice another day. At the end of the lesson, the teacher suggests that the children might want to write “I like to _____” books during writing workshop the next day.

During the last 30 minutes before lunch, the children work at literacy centers. Ms. McCloskey and Mrs. Papaleo have set out 12 centers, and the children are free to work at any one they choose. The centers are described on page 39. The children are familiar with the routine and know what's expected of them at each center. The two teachers circulate around the classroom, monitoring children’s work and taking advantage of teachable moments to clarify misunderstandings, reinforce previous lessons, and extend children’s learning.

After lunch, Ms. McCloskey reads aloud picture books and easy-to-read chapter books. Sometimes she reads books by a particular author, but at other times, she reads books related to a thematic unit. She uses these read-alouds to teach predicting, visualizing, and other comprehension strategies. This week, she’s reading award-winning books, and today she reads aloud *The Stray Dog* (Simont, 2001), the story of a homeless dog that’s taken in by a loving family. She uses the interactive read-aloud procedure to involve children in the book as she reads, and afterward they talk about it in a grand conversation. Ms. McCloskey asks them to share their connections to the story, which she records on a chart divided into three sections. Most comments are text-to-self connections, but several children make other types of connections. Rosario says, “I am thinking of a movie. It was *101 Dalmatians*. It was about dogs, too”; that’s a text-to-text connection. Angelo offers a text-to-world connection: “You got to stay away from stray dogs. They can bite you, and they might have this bad disease called rabies—it can kill you.”

Literacy is a process that begins in infancy and continues throughout life. It used to be that 5-year-olds came to kindergarten to be “readied” for reading and writing instruction, which formally began in first grade. The implication was that there’s a point in children’s development when it’s time to teach them to read and write; for those not ready, a variety of “readiness” activities would prepare them. Since the 1970s, this view has been discredited because preschoolers have demonstrated that they could recognize signs and other environmental print, retell stories, scribble letters, invent printlike writing, and listen to stories read aloud (Morrow, Tracey, & Del Nero, 2011). Some young children even teach themselves to read!

This perspective on how children learn to read and write is known as emergent literacy, a term that New Zealand educator Marie Clay coined. Studies from 1966 on have shaped the current outlook (McGee & Richgels, 2003): Now, researchers are looking at literacy learning from the child’s point of view. Literacy development has been broadened to incorporate the cultural and social aspects of language learning, and children’s experiences with and understandings about written language—both reading and writing—are included as part of emergent literacy.
NURTURING CHILDREN'S ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Young children develop oral language through everyday experiences and interaction with parents and others; they learn words at the grocery store, on the playground, during swimming lessons, and at the zoo, for example. Children who go fishing with their grandpas, plant gardens with their moms, or collect Thomas trains or Disney princesses learn new words along the way, too. They learn even more words listening to adults read aloud picture books and watching Blue's Clues, Dora the Explorer, and other TV programs designed for young children.

Through these experiences, children develop expertise in all four language modes:

- **Phonology.** Preschoolers learn to produce the sounds of English and to manipulate language in playful ways.
- **Syntax.** Children learn to combine words into different types of sentences and to use irregular verb forms, pronouns, and plural markers and other inflectional endings.
- **Semantics.** Four- and five-year-olds acquire knowledge about the meanings of words and add approximately 2,000 words to their vocabularies each year.
- **Pragmatics.** Children learn to use language socially—to carry on a conversation, tell stories, and use social conventions, including “hello” and “goodbye” and “please” and “thank you.”

By age 4 or 5, children have acquired the oral language of their home culture. They learn to converse with individuals and in groups, to tell stories, and to listen to and follow directions, and they acquire vocabulary related to concepts they’re learning.

**Oral Language Activities**

Children continue to develop oral language competence at school, especially as they participate in literacy activities. Probably the most valuable activity is the instructional procedure teachers use to read stories and other books aloud that’s known as interactive read-alouds. As they listen, children learn new vocabulary and acquire more sophisticated sentence structures. The Booklist on page 42 presents popular picture books that introduce new vocabulary and develop young children’s talking and listening abilities. Afterward, they talk about the story in grand conversations and participate in story retelling and activities using story boards.

Figure 2–1 lists literacy activities that develop children’s oral language; these activities are described in the Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12. In addition, whenever children work together in small groups, they have opportunities to use new vocabulary to talk about things they’re learning.

**Learning a Second Language**

Children learn a second language much the same way they learn their first language: Both are developmental processes that require time and opportunity. Young children learn a second language best in a classroom where talk is encouraged and where the teacher and classmates serve as English language models. They hear English spoken in...
meaningful contexts and associated with physical actions, artifacts, and pictures. Children acquire conversational English, known as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) quickly, in 2 years or less, but academic English, known as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), can take 7 or 8 years to acquire (Cummins, 1979). Even though English learners in third or fourth grade may appear fluent in conversational settings, they may still struggle academically because they haven’t learned more formal, academic English.

### BOOKLIST

**Books That Develop Oral Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>BOOKS</th>
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Societal and cultural factors influence language acquisition; children’s personalities, the attitudes of their cultural group, and teacher expectations all play a role (Otto, 2014; Samway & McKeon, 2007). Children’s level of proficiency in their first language also affects their second language development: Those who continue to develop their first language proficiency become better English speakers than those who stop learning their native language (Tabors, 2008).

The Link Between Oral Language and Literacy

Developing children’s oral language is essential because it provides the foundation for literacy learning (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009). Children who don’t develop strong oral language before first grade have difficulty keeping pace with classmates (Hart & Risley, 2003; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Researchers have found that vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor of beginning reading success (Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002). Interestingly, children’s ability to orally define words was found to be an important predictor of how well they’d be able to decode words and comprehend text in the primary grades. Other significant factors, such as phonemic awareness and letter knowledge, are related to children’s ability to decode words, but not to their comprehension.

Assessing Children’s Oral Language

Early childhood education teachers monitor children’s oral language development because they understand its importance for academic achievement. They
use informal assessment techniques to check that children demonstrate these talk skills:

- Speak clearly in complete sentences
- Respond to questions
- Initiate conversations
- Take turns
- Ask questions
- Participate in discussions
- Sing songs and recite fingerplays
- Tell about experiences

Teachers use observations, anecdotal notes, checklists, and video clips (Otto, 2014). They also monitor that young children listen during conversations and discussions, to stories teachers are reading, and to follow directions. They notice whether children play with words (e.g., rhyming words and alliterations), connect new words to concepts they’re learning, and use new words appropriately as they talk.

Teachers also use classroom tests to evaluate 4- and 5-year-olds’ oral language development, especially when they suspect that a child may have receptive or expressive language difficulties. This Assessment Tools feature describes tests that provide normative data so teachers can compare their student’s score against national benchmarks.

**Oral Language**

Teachers use these classroom tests to screen prekindergartners’ and kindergartners’ oral language development and identify children with possible language problems:

- **Assessment of Literacy and Language (ALL)**
  Preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers use ALL to assess children who they believe are at risk for reading difficulties because of an underlying language disorder. It assesses listening comprehension, semantics and syntax, phonological awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and concepts about print. This test is time-consuming, so teachers use it selectively; it’s administered individually in 60 minutes or less. ALL is available for purchase from Pearson.

- **Kindergarten Language Screening Test, 2nd Edition (KLST-2)**
  KLST-2 is an individually administered assessment that’s used to quickly identify children who may have language problems that will interfere with their reading and writing development. It assesses 4- to 7-year-olds’ receptive and expressive language—to understand questions, follow directions, repeat sentences, and use spontaneous speech. KLST-2 is available for purchase from Pearson.

- **Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL)**
  Prekindergarten teachers use TROLL to assess 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds’ oral language, reading, and writing. This individual assessment is easy to use and can be completed in 5 to 10 minutes. Teachers judge children’s language competence using a 25-item rating scale; 8 of the items focus on oral language, including asking questions, sharing personal experiences, and identifying rhyming words. TROLL is available free of charge from the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement at the University of Michigan (http://www.ciera.org).

These tests provide normative data so teachers can compare children against national benchmarks as well as chart their growth over the school year.
Young children’s introduction to written language begins before they come to school. Parents and other caregivers read to them, and they learn to read signs and other environmental print in their community. They experiment with writing and have their parents write messages for them; they also observe adults writing. When young children come to school, their knowledge about written language expands quickly as they learn concepts about print and participate in meaningful experiences with reading and writing. The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (2010) emphasize the importance of fostering children’s interest in reading and writing and developing their understanding of concepts about written language. Check the Common Core State Standards box below to learn more about the Standards for young readers and writers.

**Concepts About Written Language**

Through experiences in their homes and communities, young children learn that print carries meaning and that reading and writing are used for a variety of purposes (Clay, 2000a). They notice menus in restaurants; write and receive email messages, postcards, and letters to communicate with friends and relatives; and listen to stories read aloud for enjoyment. Children also observe parents and teachers using written language for all these reasons.

Children’s understanding about the purposes of reading and writing reflects how written language is used in their community. Although reading and writing are part of daily life for almost every family, families use written language in different ways (Heath, 1983). Young children have a wide range of literacy experiences in both middle-class and working-class families, even though those experiences might not be the same (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1987). In some communities, written language is used mainly as a tool for practical purposes such as paying bills, and in others, reading and writing are also used for leisure-time activities. In still other communities, written language serves even wider functions, such as debating social and political issues.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers demonstrate the purposes of written language and provide opportunities for children to experiment with reading and writing in these ways:

- Posting signs in the classroom
- Integrating reading and writing materials into literacy play centers
- Exchanging messages with classmates
- Reading and writing stories
- Labeling classroom items
- Drawing and writing in journals
- Writing notes to parents

Through these activities, young children learn the following concepts about written language:

**Book-Orientation Concepts.** Children learn how to hold a book and turn pages, and where to start reading on a page. They also understand that the words, not the illustrations, carry the message.
Directionality Concepts. Children learn that print is written and read from left to right and from top to bottom on a page. They also match the reader’s voice to print, pointing word by word to the text as it’s read aloud.

Letter and Word Concepts. Children acquire concepts of what a letter is, what a word is, and what a sentence is; with this understanding, they can identify letters, words, and sentences on a page of text. They also develop awareness of capital letters and punctuation marks and why they’re used.

As young children develop these concepts, they apply their knowledge in both reading and writing. For instance, they open books and point to where their teachers or parents should begin reading and pick out familiar letters and words that they notice in the text. Preschoolers also begin to make letterlike forms and add a field of periods to their scribbles.

Concepts About Words

At first, young children have only vague notions of literacy terms, such as word, letter, sound, and sentence, that teachers use in talking about reading and writing, but children develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of these terms. Papandropoulou and Sinclair (1974) identified four levels of word consciousness. At first, children don’t differentiate between words and things. Next, children describe words as labels for things; they consider nouns that stand for objects as words, but they don’t classify verbs and prepositions as words because words such as go and with can’t be represented with objects. At the third level, children understand that words carry meaning and that stories are built with words. Finally, more fluent readers and writers describe words as autonomous elements having meanings of their own with definite semantic and syntactic relationships. Children also understand that words have different appearances: They can be spoken, listened to, read, and written. Invernizzi (2003) explains that when children reach the fourth level, they can develop a mental image of a word and notice the all of its sounds.

Children develop concepts about words through active participation in literacy activities. They watch as teachers point to words in big books during shared reading, and they mimic the teacher and point to words as they reread familiar texts. After many shared reading experiences, children notice that word boundaries are marked with spaces, and they pick out familiar words. Their pointing becomes increasingly exact, and they get better at picking out specific words in the text, noticing that words at the beginnings of sentences are marked with capital letters and words at the ends are followed with punctuation marks.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT. Young children begin reading by recognizing logos on fast-food restaurants, department stores, grocery stores, and commonly used household items within familiar contexts (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). They recognize the golden arches of McDonald’s and say “McDonald’s,” but when they’re shown the word McDonald’s written on a sheet of paper without the familiar sign and restaurant setting, they can’t read the word. At first, children depend on context to read familiar words and memorized texts, but slowly, they develop relationships linking form and meaning as they gain more reading and writing experience.

LITERACY PLAY CENTERS. Young children learn about the purposes of reading and writing as they use written language in their play: While constructing block buildings, children write signs and tape them on the buildings; as they play doctor, children write prescriptions on slips of paper; and as they play teacher, children read stories aloud to
stuffed animal “students” (McGee, 2007). Young children use these activities to reenact familiar, everyday activities and to pretend to be someone else. Through these literacy play activities, children use reading and writing for a variety of purposes.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers add literacy materials to play centers to enhance their value for literacy learning (Sluss, 2005). Housekeeping centers are probably the most common play centers; they can easily be transformed into grocery stores, post offices, or medical centers by changing the props. They become literacy play centers when reading and writing materials are included: Food packages, price stickers, and play money are props in grocery store centers; letters, stamps, and mailboxes are props in post office centers; and appointment books, prescription pads, and folders for patient records are props in medical centers. Literacy play centers can be set up in classrooms and coordinated with literature focus units and thematic units. Ideas for eight literacy play centers are presented in Figure 2–2; each center includes authentic literacy materials that young children can experiment with to learn more about the purposes of written language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE 2–2</th>
<th>Literacy Play Centers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CENTER</td>
<td>MATERIALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>teller window checks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>play money</td>
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<td></td>
<td>roll papers for coins</td>
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<td></td>
<td>deposit slips money</td>
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<td></td>
<td>bags</td>
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<td></td>
<td>signs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>receipts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grocery Store</td>
<td>food packages</td>
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<td></td>
<td>grocery cart</td>
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<td></td>
<td>cash register</td>
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<td></td>
<td>money</td>
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<td></td>
<td>grocery bags</td>
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<td></td>
<td>cents-off coupons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>advertisements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td>hair rollers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>towel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>posters of hair styles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wig and wig stand</td>
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<td></td>
<td>hair dryer (remove cord)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>curling iron (remove cord)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ribbons, barrettes, clips</td>
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<td></td>
<td>appointment book</td>
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<td></td>
<td>open/closed sign</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>appointment book</td>
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<td></td>
<td>white shirt/jacket</td>
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<td></td>
<td>medical bag</td>
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<td></td>
<td>hypodermic syringe</td>
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<td>(play)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>thermometer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stethoscope</td>
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<td></td>
<td>prescription pad</td>
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<td></td>
<td>folders (for patient</td>
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<td></td>
<td>records)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>bandages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prescription bottles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and labels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>computer</td>
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<td>calculator</td>
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<td>paper</td>
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<td>stapler</td>
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<td>file folders</td>
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<td>in/out boxes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>pens and pencils</td>
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<td></td>
<td>envelopes and stamps</td>
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<td></td>
<td>telephone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>message pad</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rubber stamps</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stamp pad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>mailboxes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>envelopes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stamps (stickers)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>pens</td>
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<td></td>
<td>wrapping paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tape</td>
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<td></td>
<td>packages</td>
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<td>scale</td>
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<td>package seals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>address labels</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cash register</td>
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<td></td>
<td>money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>tablecloth</td>
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<td>dishes</td>
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<td>glasses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>silverware</td>
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<td></td>
<td>napkins</td>
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<td>menus</td>
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<td>tray</td>
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<td></td>
<td>order pad and pencil</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>apron for waitress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>vest for waiter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hat and apron for chef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinarian</td>
<td>stuffed animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cages (cardboard boxes)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>medical bag</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stethoscope</td>
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<td>medicine bottles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>prescription labels</td>
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<td></td>
<td>bandages</td>
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<td></td>
<td>popsicle stick splints</td>
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<td></td>
<td>hypodermic syringe (play)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>open/closed sign</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Concepts About the Alphabet

Young children also develop concepts about the alphabet and how letters are used to represent phonemes. Pinnell and Fountas (1998) identified these components of letter knowledge:

- The letter’s name
- The formation of the upper- and lowercase letter in manuscript handwriting
- The features of the letter that distinguish it from other letters (e.g., \( b \) and \( d \))
- The direction the letter must be turned to distinguish it from other letters
- The use of the letter in known words (e.g., names and common words)
- The sound the letter represents in isolation
- The sound the letter represents in combination with others (e.g., \( ch \), \( th \))
- The sound the letter represents in the context of a word (e.g., the \( c \) sounds in \( cat \), \( city \), and \( chair \))

Children use this knowledge to decode unfamiliar words as they read and to create spellings for words as they write.

The most basic information children learn about the alphabet is how to identify and form the letters in handwriting. They notice letters in environmental print and learn to sing the ABC song. By the time children enter kindergarten, they usually recognize some letters, especially those in their own names, in names of family members and pets, and in common words. Children also write some of these familiar letters.

Research suggests that children don’t learn alphabet letter names in any particular order or by isolating letters from meaningful written language in skill-and-drill activities. McGee and Richgels (2012) conclude that learning letters of the alphabet requires many, many experiences with meaningful written language and recommend that teachers take these steps to encourage alphabet learning:

- **Capitalize on children’s interests.** Teachers provide letter activities that children enjoy, and they talk about letters when children are interested in talking about them. Teachers know what features to comment on because they observe children during reading and writing activities to find out which letters or features of letters they’re exploring.

- **Talk about the role of letters in reading and writing.** Teachers talk about how letters represent sounds and how letters combine to spell words and point out capital letters and lowercase letters. They often talk about the role of letters as they write with children.

- **Provide a variety of opportunities for alphabet learning.** Teachers use children’s names and environmental print in literacy activities, do interactive writing encourage children to use invented spelling, share alphabet books, and play letter games.

Teachers begin teaching letters of the alphabet using two sources of words—children’s own names and environmental print. They teach the ABC song to provide children with a strategy for identifying the name of an unknown letter. Children learn to sing this song and point to each letter on an alphabet chart until they reach the unfamiliar one; this is a very useful strategy because it gives them a real sense of independence in identifying letters. Teachers also provide routines, activities, and games for talking about and manipulating letters. During these familiar, predictable activities, teachers and children say letter names, manipulate magnetic letters, and write letters on whiteboards. At first, the teacher structures and guides the activities, but with experience,
Children sort food labels, toy traffic signs, store names cut from advertisements, and other environmental print to find examples of a letter being studied.

Teachers read aloud alphabet books to build vocabulary, and later, children reread the books to find words when making books about a letter.

Children pick all examples of one letter from a collection of magnetic letters or match upper- and lowercase letterforms using magnetic letters. They also arrange the letters in alphabetical order and use them to spell familiar words.

Children use letter stamps and ink pads to print letters on paper or in booklets. They also use letter-shaped sponges to paint letters and letter-shaped cookie cutters to cut out clay letters.

Children point to letters and pictures on the alphabet chart as they recite the alphabet and say the names of the pictures, such as “A-airplane, B-baby, C-cat,” and so on.

Teachers collect coffee cans or shoe boxes, one for each letter, and place several familiar objects that represent the letter in each container. Teachers use these containers to introduce the letters, and children use them for sorting and matching activities.

Teachers make circle-shaped letter frames from tagboard, collect large plastic bracelets, or shape pipe cleaners or Wikki-Stix (pipe cleaners covered in wax) into circles for students to use to highlight particular letters on charts or in big books.

Children make letter books with pictures of objects beginning with a particular letter on each page. They add letter stamps, stickers, or pictures cut from magazines.

Teachers draw a large letterform on a chart and children add pictures, stickers, and letter stamps.

Children sort objects and pictures representing two or more letters and place them in containers marked with the specific letters.

Children practice writing upper- and lowercase forms of a letter and familiar words on whiteboards.

Being able to name the letters of the alphabet is a good predictor of beginning reading achievement, even though knowing the names of the letters doesn’t directly affect a child’s ability to read (Adams, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). A more likely explanation for this relationship is that children who have been actively involved in literacy activities before first grade know the names of the letters, and they’re more likely to begin reading quickly. Simply teaching children to name the letters without the accompanying reading and writing experiences doesn’t have this effect.

**Manuscript Handwriting**

Children enter kindergarten with different backgrounds of handwriting experience. Some 5-year-olds have never held a pencil, but many others have written cursive-like scribbles or manuscript letterlike lines and circles. Some have learned to print their names and even a few other letters. Handwriting instruction in kindergarten typically
includes developing children’s ability to hold pencils, refining their fine-motor control, and focusing on letter formation. Some people might argue that kindergartners are too young to learn handwriting skills, but young children should be encouraged to write from the first day of school. They write letters and words on labels, draw and write stories, keep journals, and write other types of messages. The more children write, the greater their need becomes for instruction in handwriting. Instruction is necessary so that children don’t learn bad habits that later must be broken.

To teach children how to form letters, many kindergarten and first grade teachers create brief directions for forming letters and sing the directions using a familiar tune. For example, to form a lowercase a, expand the direction “All around and make a tail” into a verse and sing it to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” As teachers sing the directions, they model the formation of the letter in the air or on a whiteboard using large arm motions. Then children sing along and practice forming the letter in the air. Later, they practice writing letters using shaving cream spread over their desks or dry-erase pens on whiteboards.
Moving models are much more effective than still models in teaching children how to handwrite, so worksheets on the letters aren’t very useful because children may not form the letters correctly. It’s important that children watch teachers form letters and then practice forming them themselves. Also, teachers supervise children as they write so that they can correct those who form letters incorrectly. Children must learn to write circles counterclockwise, starting from 1:00, and to form most lines from top to bottom and left to right across the page. When children follow these guidelines, they’re less likely to tear their paper, and they’ll have an easier transition to cursive handwriting.

**Teaching Children About Written Language**

Teachers develop young children’s concepts about written language as they demonstrate how reading and writing work and involve children in shared and interactive reading and writing activities. In addition, teachers often use previously read texts in minilessons about written language concepts because children are already familiar with them.

**MORNING MESSAGE.** Teachers write a brief friendly letter, called a morning message, each day to share with children (Payne & Schulman, 1999). Before children arrive, they write a message on chart paper about what will happen that day; then they read the message aloud at the beginning of the school day, pointing at each word as they read. Afterward, children reread it and count the letters, words, and sentences in the message. Depending on their developmental level, they also pick out familiar letters and words, words illustrating a particular phonics concept, or capital letters and punctuation marks.

Teachers usually follow a predictable pattern in their messages each day to make it easier for children to read, as these two morning messages show:

- **Dear Kindergartners,**
  - Today is Monday.
  - We will plant seeds.
  - We will make books about plants.
  - Love,
  - Ms. Thao

- **Dear Kindergartners,**
  - Today is Thursday.
  - We will measure the plants.
  - We will write about how plants grow.
  - Love,
  - Ms. Thao

The morning messages that teachers write for first and second graders become gradually more complex, as this second grade teacher’s message demonstrates:

- **Good Morning!**
  - Today is Monday, February 3, 2014.
  - New literature circles begin on Wednesday.
  - I’ll tell you about the new book choices this morning, and then you can sign up for your favorite book. Who remembers what a **synonym** is? Can you give an example?
  - Love,
  - Mrs. Salazar
Teachers usually choose children to take the messages home to share with their families, either day by day or at the end of each week.

**LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH.** Teachers demonstrate how written language works in the **Language Experience Approach** (LEA) (Ashton-Warner, 1986). Children dictate sentences about an experience, and the teacher records their dictation on chart paper. As they write, teachers demonstrate how to write from left to right on a page, how to form letters and to space between words, and how to use capital letters and punctuation marks. Then the completed text becomes the reading material; children practice rereading the text and picking out letters and words. Because the language comes from the children and because the content is based on shared experiences, the text can usually be read easily.

Teachers often use LEA to create collaborative books, where each child creates one page to be added to a class book. For example, as part of a unit on bears, a kindergarten class made a collaborative book on bears. Children each chose a fact about bears for their pages; they drew an illustration and dictated the text for their teacher to record. One page from the class book is shown in Figure 2–4. The teacher took the children's dictation because she wanted the book to be written in conventional spelling so that children and their parents could read it.

**INTERACTIVE WRITING.** Children and the teacher create a text together using **interactive writing** (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000; Tompkins & Collom, 2004). The children compose the message together, and then the teacher guides them as they write it word by word on chart paper. Children take turns writing known letters and familiar words, adding punctuation marks, and leaving spaces between words. Everyone participates in creating and writing the text on chart paper, and they also write the text on small whiteboards or on paper as it's written on chart paper. Afterward, children read and reread the text together with classmates and on their own.

**Assessing Children’s Knowledge About Written Language**

Teachers observe children as they look at books and reread familiar ones. They also watch as children do pretend writing and write their names and other familiar words.
Chapter 2

Examining Children’s Literacy Development

Concepts about Written Language

Teachers monitor children’s growing awareness of written language as they observe them during shared reading and other literacy activities. The most widely used assessment is Marie Clay’s Concepts About Print Test:

- **Concepts About Print (CAP) Test**

  The CAP Test (Clay, 2007a) assesses young children’s understanding of three concepts about written language: book-orientation concepts, directionality concepts, and letter and word concepts. The test has 24 items and is administered individually in about 10 minutes. The teacher reads a short book aloud while a child looks on. The child is asked to open the book, turn pages, and point out particular print features as the text is read. Four forms of the CAP Test booklet are available: Sand (Clay, 2007c), Stones (Clay, 2007d), Follow Me, Moon (Clay, 2000b), and No Shoes (Clay, 2007b), as well as a Spanish version. Teachers carefully observe children as they respond, and then mark their responses on a scoring sheet. Directions for administering the CAP Test are included in An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (Clay, 2007a), which is available for purchase from Heinemann Books.

Instead of using the test booklets, teachers can also administer the test using books available in the classroom and the scoring sheet in the Assessment Snapshot below.

### ASSESSMENT SNAPSHOT

**CAP Test Scoring Sheet**

Name: Adele  Date: Jan. 10

Title of Book: First the Egg

Check the items that the child demonstrates.

1. **Book-Orientation Concepts**
   - ☑ Shows the front of a book.
   - ☑ Turns to the first page of the story.
   - ☑ Shows where to start reading on a page.

2. **Directionality Concepts**
   - ☑ Shows the direction of print across a line of text.
   - ☐ Shows the direction of print on a page with more than one line of print.
   - ☐ Points to track words as the teacher reads.

3. **Letter and Word Concepts**
   - ☑ Points to any letter on a page.
   - ☐ Points to a particular letter on a page.
   - ☑ Puts fingers around any word on a page.
   - ☑ Puts fingers around a particular word on a page.
   - ☐ Puts fingers around any sentence on a page.
   - ☐ Points to the first and last letters of a word.
   - ☐ Points to a period or other punctuation mark.
   - ☑ Points to a capital letter.

**TEACHER’S NOTE**

Adele is familiar with books and has book-orientation concepts. She’s reached the point where her classmates were in September. She’s working on tracking words and needs to learn more about letters, words, and sentences.
They notice which concepts children understand and which ones they need to continue to talk about and demonstrate during shared reading.

Teachers use Marie Clay’s Concepts About Print (CAP) Test (2007a), explained in the Assessment Tools feature on page 53, to measure young children’s understanding of these written language concepts. Teachers also create their own versions of the test to use with any story they’re reading with a child. As they read aloud, teachers ask the child to point out book-orientation concepts, directionality concepts, and letter and word concepts. They can use the CAP Test scoring sheet shown in the Assessment Snapshot on page 53 or develop one of their own to monitor children’s growing knowledge about these concepts.

Children move through three stages as they learn to read and write: emergent, beginning, and fluent (Juel, 1991). During the emergent stage, young children gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print, and they move from pretend reading to reading predictable books and from using scribbles to simulate writing to writing patterned sentences, such as I see a bird. I see a tree. I see a car. The focus of the second stage, beginning reading and writing, is on children’s growing ability to use phonics to “crack the alphabetic code” in order to decode and spell words. Children also learn to read and write many high-frequency words and write several sentences to develop a story or other composition. In the fluent stage, children are automatic, fluent readers, and in writing, they develop good handwriting skills, spell many high-frequency words correctly, and organize their writing into multiple-paragraph compositions. Figure 2–5 presents an overview of children’s literacy accomplishments at each stage.

### Stage 1: Emergent Reading and Writing

Children gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print and develop an interest in reading and writing. They notice environmental print and develop concepts about print as teachers read and write with them. As children dictate stories for the teacher to record, for example, they learn that their speech can be written down, and they observe how teachers write from left to right and top to bottom.

Children grow in these ways during the first stage:

- Develop an interest in reading and writing
- Acquire concepts about print
- Develop book-handling skills
- Identify the letters of the alphabet
- Develop handwriting skills
- Learn to read and write some high-frequency words

Four- and five-year-olds are usually emergent readers and writers, but some children whose parents have read to them every day and provided a variety of literacy experiences do learn how to read before they come to school. Caroline, a 5-year-old emergent reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey’s classroom, is presented in the Literacy Portraits on pages 56–61.

**READING.** Emergent readers are interested in books and are developing concepts about written language. Children develop book-orientation skills as they listen to teachers read aloud, and they imitate the teacher’s behavior as they look at books, locating the
### FIGURE 2–5 Children’s Literacy Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>• notice environmental print</td>
<td>• distinguish between writing and drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• show interest in books</td>
<td>• write letters and letterlike forms or scribble randomly on the page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• pretend to read</td>
<td>• develop an understanding of directionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use picture cues and predictable patterns in books to retell the story</td>
<td>• show interest in writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reread familiar books with predictable patterns</td>
<td>• write their first and last names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify some letter names</td>
<td>• write 5–20 familiar or high-frequency words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognize 5–20 familiar or high-frequency words</td>
<td>• use sentence frames to write a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>• identify letter names and sounds</td>
<td>• write from left to right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• match spoken words to written words</td>
<td>• print the upper- and lowercase letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognize 20–100 high-frequency words</td>
<td>• write one or more sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use beginning, middle, and ending sounds to decode words</td>
<td>• add a title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• apply knowledge of the cueing systems to monitor reading</td>
<td>• spell many words phonetically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• self-correct while reading</td>
<td>• spell 20–50 high-frequency words correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• read slowly, word by word</td>
<td>• write single-draft compositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• read orally</td>
<td>• use capital letters to begin sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• point to words when reading</td>
<td>• use periods, question marks, and exclamation points to mark the ends of sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make reasonable predictions</td>
<td>• can reread their writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>• identify most words automatically</td>
<td>• use the writing process to write drafts and final copies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• read with expression</td>
<td>• write compositions with more than one paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• read at a rate of 100 words per minute or more</td>
<td>• indent paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• prefer to read silently</td>
<td>• spell most of the 100 high-frequency words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify unfamiliar words using the cueing systems</td>
<td>• use sophisticated and technical vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognize 100–300 high-frequency words</td>
<td>• apply vowel patterns to spell words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use a variety of strategies effectively</td>
<td>• add inflectional endings to words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• often read independently</td>
<td>• apply capitalization rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use knowledge of text structure and genre to support comprehension</td>
<td>• use commas, quotation marks, and other punctuation marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make inferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five-year-old Caroline is a friendly, eager child who is learning to speak English as she learns to read and write. Her grandparents emigrated from Thailand to the United States; her family speaks Hmong at home, and she speaks English only at school. When Caroline’s Hmong-speaking classmates start to talk in their native language, she admonishes them to speak English because “we learn English school.”

When she came to kindergarten, Caroline didn’t know any letters of the alphabet and had never held a pencil. She had not listened to stories read aloud and had no book-handling experience. She spoke very few words of English. The classroom culture and language were very different than those of her home, but Caroline was eager to learn. For the first few days, she stood back, observing her classmates; then she said “I do” and joined them.

Reading

Caroline has shown remarkable growth in 5 months. She has been reading books with repetitive sentences on each page, but now at level 3, she’s beginning to use phonics to sound out unfamiliar words. She knows the names of most letters and the sounds that the letters represent. She can read about 20 high-frequency words. She has developed good book-handling skills and follows the line of words on a page. She reads word by word and points at the text as she reads. She’s learning consonant and vowel sounds, but because of her pronunciation of English sounds and lack of vocabulary, she has difficulty decoding words.

Caroline demonstrates that she understands the books she reads, and she makes text-to-self connections. Recently, she was reading a book about a child having a birthday, and she pointed to the picture of a young, blond mother wrapping a child’s birthday present. She looked up at Ms. McCloskey and said, “She no mom, she sister. This wrong.” The woman in the picture looks nothing like her mother.
Writing

Caroline began participating in writing workshop on the first day of school, and for several weeks, she scribbled. Within a month, she learned how to print some letters because she wanted her writing to look like her classmates’. Soon she wrote her own name, copied classmates’ names, and wrote words she saw posted in the classroom.

A month ago, Ms. McCloskey gave Caroline a ring for key words. Every few days, Caroline chooses a new word to add to her ring. Ms. McCloskey writes the word on a word card that Caroline puts on her ring. She has 31 words now, including you and birthday. She flips through the cards to practice reading, and she uses the words when she writes sentences.

After 4 months of instruction, Caroline began writing sentences. Ms. McCloskey introduced the frame “I see a _____” and Caroline wrote sentences using familiar words, including some from her key words ring. Then, to make her writing longer, she wrote the same sentence over and over, as shown in the “Apple” writing sample.

Next, she began reading and writing color words, and she expanded her writing to two sentences. Her two-sentence writing sample, “Zebra,” also is shown here. Most of the words that Caroline writes are spelled correctly because she uses key words and words she locates in a picture dictionary. Notice that Caroline puts a period at the end of each sentence; but recently she has seen that some of her classmates put a period at the end of each line so she added one at the end of each line in the “Zebra” sample, too. When she draws a picture to accompany a sentence, Caroline can usually read her writing immediately after she has written it, but by the next day, she often doesn’t remember what she has written.

Caroline has one of the thickest writing folders in the classroom, and she’s very proud of her writing. Nearly 100 pages of writing are stuffed into the folder, tracing her development as a writer since the beginning of the school year.

Instructional Implications

Ms. McCloskey explains, “Caroline is an emergent-stage reader and writer. She’s making excellent progress because she can read books with repetitive patterns and is learning phonics and high-frequency words and can write words and craft sentences.” The emergent-stage characteristics that Caroline exemplifies are listed in the chart on the preceding page.

Now Ms. McCloskey is beginning to ask Caroline to read books without repetitive patterns during guided reading; in these books, she has to recognize high-frequency words and use phonics to identify unfamiliar words rather than rely on repetitive sentence patterns. Similarly, during writing workshop, Ms. McCloskey is encouraging Caroline to write books about events in her life without using repetitive patterns. Working without the support the patterns provide is difficult for Caroline because her knowledge of English is limited. Ms. McCloskey concludes, “Even though Caroline is learning to speak English at the same time she’s learning to read and write, I’m confident that she’s up to the challenge.”
Anthony, a first grader with a ready smile, is a beginning reader and writer. He's 6 years old, and he says that he likes to read and write. He's a well-behaved child who’s extremely competitive. He reads at level 12 now, and recently he announced to Ms. McCloskey that he wants to read at level 15. She explained that to do that, Anthony needs to practice reading at home with his mom, so he’s been taking several books home each night to practice. Ms. McCloskey predicts that Anthony will be reading at level 18 by the end of the year; level 18 is the school’s benchmark for the end of first grade.

Reading

According to Ms. McCloskey’s assessment of Anthony’s reading at the end of the second quarter, he recognizes 80 of the 100 high-frequency words taught in first grade, and he can decode most one-syllable words with short and long vowel sounds, including words with consonant blends and digraphs, such as shock, chest, and spike. He’s beginning to sound out some of the more complex vowel digraphs and diphthongs (e.g., loud, boil, soon) and r-controlled vowels (e.g., chart, snore), and in the past month, Ms. McCloskey has noticed that his ability to decode words is growing and that about two thirds of the time, he can identify these words with more complex vowel sounds in the context of a sentence. He also is decoding some two- and three-syllable words, such as dinner, parents, and hospital, in books he’s reading.

Anthony reads orally and points only when he reads challenging texts. He’s beginning to chunk words into phrases as he reads, and he notices when something he’s reading doesn’t make sense. He uses the cross-checking strategy to make corrections, and get back on track.
Anthony has read 17 books this month, according to his reading workshop log. He’s increasingly choosing easy-to-read chapter books to read, including Syd Hoff’s *Sammy the Seal* (2000b) and *Oliver* (2000a). After he reads, he often shares his books with his friend Angel, and they reread them together and talk about their favorite parts. He regularly uses the connecting strategy and shares his text-to-self and text-to-world connections with Angel and Ms. McCloskey. When he reads two or more books by the same author, he shares text-to-text comparisons and can explain to his teacher how these comparisons make him a better reader: “Now I think and read at the same time,” he explains.

Writing

Anthony likes to write during writing workshop. He identified his “I Got Sick” story as the very best one he’s written, and Ms. McCloskey agrees. Anthony tells an interesting and complete story with a beginning, middle, and end. And, you can hear his voice clearly in the story. Anthony’s story is shown in the box, and here is a translation of it:

**I Got Sick**

I went outside with no jacket on and my throat started to hurt. It really hurt and I was getting sick. I went to find my Mom and I told her I was sick. My Mom gave me some medicine and she made Campbell's chicken noodle soup for me to eat. Then I got all better.

Anthony’s spelling errors are characteristic of phonetic spellers. He sounds out the spelling of many words, such as HRT (*hurt*), MEDISIN (*medicine*), and BETR (*better*), and he’s experimenting with final e markers at the end of TOLDE and FINDE, but ignores them on other words, such as OUT SID (*outside*) and GAV (*gave*). He uses the word wall in the classroom and spells many high-frequency words correctly (e.g., *with, went, have*).

Anthony writes single-draft compositions in paragraph form, and he creates a title for his stories. He writes in sentences and includes simple, compound, and complex sentences in his writing. He correctly uses capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences and periods to mark the ends, but as his “I Got Sick” story shows, he continues to randomly capitalize words.

Instructional Implications

“Anthony is a very motivated student: He’s eager to read because he has a goal in mind,” Ms. McCloskey explains. “I’m confident that he’ll reach level 18 by the end of the year. I’ve been encouraging Anthony to read increasingly difficult chapter books and practice using the strategies he’s learned when he’s reading independently.”

Ms. McCloskey plans to teach Anthony about complex vowel patterns and consonant blends and digraphs so he’ll be able to decode unfamiliar words while he’s reading. She’s also noticed that it’s time for him to move beyond single-draft compositions and learn to use the writing process to revise and edit his writing.
Jazmen is a confident and articulate African American third grader with an easy smile. She’s 8 years old, and she celebrated her birthday last fall with a family trip to the Magic Mountain amusement park in Southern California. Jazmen is a computer geek, and she often provides assistance to her classmates. When asked about her favorite school activity, Jazmen says that she likes using the computer best of all. In fact, she’s interested in learning more about careers that involve computers because she knows that she always wants to work with them.

Ms. McCloskey identified Jazmen for this feature because she’s made such remarkable progress this year. This is the second year that Jazmen has been in Ms. McCloskey’s class. Last year, she seemed stuck in the beginning stage, not making too much progress, according to Ms. McCloskey, “but this year, it’s like a lightbulb has been turned on!” She’s now a fluent reader and writer.

Reading

Jazmen likes to read, and she reports that she has a lot of books at home. According to the Accelerated Reader program, she’s reading at 3.8 (third grade, eighth month) level, which means she’s reading at or slightly above grade level. She enjoys reading the Marvin Redpost (e.g., *Marvin Redpost: A Magic Crystal?* by Louis Sachar, 2000) and Zack Files (e.g., *Never Trust a Cat Who Wears Earrings*, by Dan Greenburg, 1997) series of easy-to-read paperback chapter books. She says she enjoys these books because they’re funny.

Jazmen reads fluently. She recognizes words automatically and reads with expression. She says that when you’re reading to someone, you have to be interesting, and that’s why she reads the way she does. Her most outstanding achievement, according to Ms. McCloskey, is that she thinks inferentially about stories. She can juggle thinking about plot, characters, setting, and theme in order to make thoughtful connections and interpretations. She knows about various genres and literary elements, and she uses this knowledge as she reflects on her reading.

**Writing**

Jazmen likes to write. She gets her ideas for stories from TV programs. She explains, “When I’m watching TV, I get these ideas and I draw pictures of them and that’s how I think of a story.” She’s currently working on a story entitled “Lucky and the Color Purple,” about a princess named Lucky who possesses magical qualities. Why are her stories interesting? Jazmen says, “Most important is that they are creative.” She shares her stories with her classmates, and they agree that Jazmen is a good writer.

Jazmen is particularly pleased with her story “The Super Hero Dog,” which is shown here. The story is humorous—just imagine a 3-pound dog helping an elephant! Ms. McCloskey said that she likes the story because it’s complete with a beginning, middle, and end, and because Jazmen uses dialogue (and quotation marks) effectively. The errors remaining on the final draft of the paper also suggest direction for future instruction. Jazmen spelled 95% of the words in her composition correctly. In particular, she appears ready to learn more about homophones, possessives, and punctuating dialogue.

**Instructional Implications**

“Jazmen is a fluent reader,” says Ms. McCloskey, “so she’s ready to tackle more challenging fiction and nonfiction books, both during guided reading lessons and when she’s reading independently.” When she reads, Jazmen’s focus has changed from decoding the words to comprehending the author’s message. Ms. McCloskey plans to teach minilessons about asking questions, drawing inferences, and using other reading strategies to encourage Jazmen to think more deeply about the books she’s reading.

Jazmen has begun to use the writing process to refine her compositions, but most of her pieces have been stories. Ms. McCloskey is encouraging Jazmen to write nonfiction books, poems, letters, and other genres. After reading *Hate That Cat* (Creech, 2010), a novel written in verse, Jazmen decided to imitate the genre and draft her own novel in verse, expanding on an encounter she had with a squirrel. Ms. McCloskey also plans to carefully monitor Jazmen’s progress and teach minilessons on concepts and skills that she’s attempting to use, including homophones, possessives, and dialogue.
cover, turning pages, and pretending to read. They learn that text moves from top to bottom on a page and from left to right across a line. At the same time, emergent readers are learning to name the letters of the alphabet and sing the ABC song to identify unfamiliar letters. They can recognize their own name and some classmates’ names, and through lots of reading experiences, they can read Mom, Dad, love, cat, dog, and a few high-frequency words, including the, you, I, and is.

WRITING. Young children make scribbles to represent writing. They may appear randomly on a page at first, but with experience, children line up the marks from left to right on a line and from top to bottom on a page. Children also begin to “read,” or tell what their writing says (Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2009). At first, they can reread it only immediately after writing, but with experience, they learn to remember what their writing says, and as their writing becomes more conventional, they’re able to decipher it more easily.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES. Emergent readers and writers participate in a variety of activities ranging from modeled and shared reading and writing, during which they watch as teachers read and write, to independent reading and writing that they do themselves. Ms. McCloskey’s students, for example, listened to her read books aloud and read big books using shared reading, and they also participated in reading and writing workshop.

Stage 2: Beginning Reading and Writing

This stage marks children’s growing awareness of the alphabetic principle—that letters represent sounds. Children learn about phoneme–grapheme correspondences, phonics rules in words such as run, hand, this, make, day, and road, and word families, including -ill (fill, bill, will) and -ake (bake, make, take). They also apply (and misapply) their developing phonics knowledge to spell words. For example, they spell night as NIT and train as TRANE. At the same time, they’re learning to read and write high-frequency words, many of which can’t be sounded out, such as what, are, and there.

Children grow in these ways during the second stage:

- Learn phonics skills
- Recognize 20–100 high-frequency words
- Apply reading strategies, including cross-checking, predicting, and repairing
- Write five or more sentences, sometimes organized into a paragraph
- Spell phonetically
- Spell 20–50 high-frequency words
- Capitalize letters to begin sentences
- Use punctuation marks to indicate the ends of sentences
- Reread their writing

Most first and second graders are beginning readers and writers, and with explicit instruction and daily opportunities to read and write, children move through
this stage to reach the fluent stage. Anthony, a 6-year-old beginning reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey’s classroom, is presented in the Literacy Portraits on pages 56–61.

**READING.** Children usually read aloud slowly, word by word, stopping often to sound out unfamiliar words. They point at each word as they read, but by the end of this stage, their reading becomes smoother and more fluent, and they point at words only when the text is especially challenging.

Although the emphasis in this stage is on word identification, children also learn that reading involves comprehension. They make predictions to guide their thinking about events in stories they read, and they make connections between what they’re reading and their own lives and the world around them as they personalize the reading experience. They monitor their reading to recognize when it doesn’t make sense; cross-check using phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic information in the text to figure out the problem; and repair or self-correct it (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). They also learn about story structure, particularly that stories have a beginning, middle, and end, and use this knowledge to guide their reading and retelling.

**WRITING.** Children move from writing one or two sentences to developing longer compositions, with five, eight, or more sentences organized into paragraphs. Their writing is better developed because they’re acquiring a sense of audience, and they want their classmates to like what they’ve written. Children continue to write single-draft compositions but begin to make a few revisions and editing corrections as they learn about the writing process.

Children apply what they’re learning about phonics in spelling, and they correctly spell many of the high-frequency words that they’ve learned to read. They know how to spell some high-frequency words and can locate others on word walls. They learn

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**DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PreK</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="PreK" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="K" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="1" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="2" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="3" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="4" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **PreK:** Some children are emergent readers and writers before coming to school, but others enter the stage as a result of school experiences.
- **K:** Most children are emergent readers and writers during kindergarten, but a few reach the beginning stage during the school year.
- **1:** Most children are beginning readers and writers, and through instruction, their understanding of the alphabetic principle grows.
- **2:** Most second graders continue in the beginning stage, but some reach the fluent stage by the end of the school year.
- **3:** Most children become fluent readers and writers by the end of the school year, but a few still struggle with literacy.
- **4:** Most fourth graders are fluent readers and writers, but those who continue to struggle need extra instruction in problem areas.
to use capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences and punctuation to mark the ends. Children are more adept at rereading their writing, both immediately afterward and days later, because they’re able to read many of the words they’ve written.

**INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES.** Teachers plan activities for children at the beginning stage that range from modeled to independent reading and writing activities, but the emphasis is on interactive and guided activities. Through interactive writing, choral reading, and guided reading, teachers scaffold children as they read and write, and they use minilessons to provide strategy and skill instruction. For example, Ms. McCloskey’s students were divided into small, homogeneous groups for guided reading lessons; the children met to read books at their reading levels, and Ms. McCloskey introduced new vocabulary words, taught reading strategies and skills, and assessed their comprehension.

Teachers introduce the writing process to beginning-stage writers once they develop a sense of audience and want to make their writing better. Children don’t immediately start writing rough drafts and final copies or doing both revising and editing: They often begin the writing process by rereading their compositions and adding a word or two, correcting a misspelled word, or capitalizing a lowercase letter. These changes are cosmetic, but the idea that the writing process doesn’t end after the first draft is established. Next, children show interest in making a final copy that really looks good. They either recopy the composition by hand or use word processing and print out the final copy. Once children understand that writing involves a rough draft and a final copy, they’re ready to learn more about revising and editing, and they usually reach this point at about the same time they become fluent writers.

**Stage 3: Fluent Reading and Writing**

Fluent readers and writers reach the third stage when they accomplish the following:

- Read fluently and with expression
- Recognize most one-syllable words automatically and can decode other words efficiently
- Use decoding and comprehension strategies effectively
- Write well-developed, multiparagraph compositions
- Use the writing process to draft and refine their writing
- Write stories, reports, letters, and other genres
- Spell most high-frequency and other one-syllable words correctly
- Use capital letters and punctuation marks correctly most of the time

Some second graders reach this stage, and all children should be fluent readers and writers by the end of third grade. Reaching this stage is an important milestone because it indicates that children are ready for the increased literacy demands of fourth grade, when they’re expected to read longer chapter-book stories, use writing to respond to literature, read content-area textbooks, and write essays and reports. Jazmen, an 8-year-old fluent reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey’s classroom, is profiled in the Literacy Portraits on pages 56–61.

**READING.** The distinguishing characteristic of fluent readers is that they read words accurately, rapidly, and expressively. Fluent readers automatically recognize many words and can decode unfamiliar words efficiently. Their reading rate has increased to
100 words or more per minute; in addition, they can vary their speed according to the demands of the text they’re reading.

Most fluent readers prefer to read silently because they can read more quickly than when they read orally. No longer do they point at words as they read. Children can read many books independently, actively making predictions, visualizing, monitoring their understanding, and making repairs when necessary. They have a range of strategies available and use them to enhance their comprehension.

Fluent readers’ comprehension is stronger, and they think more deeply about their reading than emergent and beginning readers do. It’s likely that children’s comprehension improves at this stage because they have more cognitive energy available for comprehension now; in contrast, beginning readers use much more cognitive energy to decode words. So, as children become fluent, they use less energy for word identification and have more cognitive resources available for comprehending what they read.

Children now read longer, more sophisticated picture books and chapter books, but they generally prefer chapter books because they enjoy really getting into a story or digging deeply in an informational book. They learn more about the literary genres, their structural patterns, and literary devices, such as alliteration, personification, and symbolism. They participate in literature focus units featuring an author, genre, or book, in small-group literature circles where children read and discuss a book together, and in author studies where they read and compare several books by the same author and examine that author’s writing style. They’re able to explain why they liked a particular book and make recommendations to classmates.

WRITING. Fluent writers understand that writing is a process, and they use the writing process stages—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They make plans for writing and write both rough drafts and final copies. They reread their rough drafts and make revisions and editing changes that reflect their understanding of writing forms and their purpose for writing. They increasingly share their rough drafts with classmates and turn to them for advice on how to make their writing better.

Children get ideas for writing from books they’ve read and from TV programs and movies they’ve viewed. They organize their writing into paragraphs, indent paragraphs, and focus on a single idea in each paragraph. They develop ideas more completely and use more sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas.

Fluent writers are aware of writing genres and organize their writing into stories, reports, letters, and poems. Their stories have a beginning, middle, and end, and the reports they write are structured using sequence, comparison, or cause-and-effect structures. Their letters reflect an understanding of the parts of a letter and how they’re arranged on a page. Their poems incorporate alliteration, symbolism, rhyme, or other poetic devices to create vivid impressions.

Children’s writing looks more conventional. They spell most of the 100 high-frequency words correctly and use phonics to spell other one-syllable words. They add inflectional endings (e.g., -s, -ed, -ing) and experiment with spelling two-syllable and longer words. They’ve learned to capitalize the first word in sentences and names and to use punctuation marks correctly at the ends of sentences, although they’re still experimenting with punctuation marks within sentences.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES. At this stage, children can apply the reading and writing processes and are prepared to participate independently in reading and writing
### Figure 2–6  Instructional Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Use environmental print.</td>
<td>Have children use crayons for drawing and pencils for writing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Include literacy materials in play centers.</td>
<td>Encourage children to use scribble writing or write random letters if they can’t do more conventional writing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read aloud to children.</td>
<td>Teach handwriting skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read big books and poems on charts using shared reading.</td>
<td>Use interactive writing for whole-class and small-group writing projects.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduce the title and author of books before reading.</td>
<td>Have children write their names on sign-in sheets each day.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach directionality and letter and word concepts using big books.</td>
<td>Have children write their own names and names of classmates.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Encourage children to make predictions and text-to-self connections.</td>
<td>Have children inventory or make lists of words they know how to write.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have children retell and dramatize stories.</td>
<td>Have children “write the classroom” by making lists of familiar words they find in the classroom.</td>
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<td>Have children respond to literature through talk and drawing.</td>
<td>Have children use frames such as “I like _____” and “I see a _____” to write sentences.</td>
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<td>Have children manipulate sounds using phonemic awareness activities.</td>
<td>Encourage children to remember what they write so they can read it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use alphabet-learning routines.</td>
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<td>Take children’s dictation using the Language Experience Approach.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach 20–24 high-frequency words.</td>
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<td>Post words on a word wall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Read charts of poems and songs using choral reading.</td>
<td>Use interactive writing to teach concepts about written language.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read leveled books during guided reading lessons.</td>
<td>Provide daily opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and using different genres.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide daily opportunities to read and reread books independently.</td>
<td>Introduce the writing process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach phonics concepts and rules.</td>
<td>Teach children to develop a single idea in their compositions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach children to cross-check using the cueing systems.</td>
<td>Teach children to proofread their compositions.</td>
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<td>Teach the 100 high-frequency words.</td>
<td>Teach children to spell the 100 high-frequency words.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Point out whether texts are stories, informational books, or poems.</td>
<td>Teach contractions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach predicting, connecting, cross-checking, and other strategies.</td>
<td>Teach capitalization and punctuation skills.</td>
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<td>Teach the elements of story structure, particularly beginning, middle, and end.</td>
<td>Have children use computers to publish their writing.</td>
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<td>Have children write in reading logs and participate in grand conversations.</td>
<td>Have children share their writing from the author’s chair.</td>
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<td>Have children take books home to read with parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>Have children participate in literature circles.</td>
<td>Have children participate in writing workshop.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have children participate in reading workshop.</td>
<td>Teach children to use the writing process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach about genres and other text features.</td>
<td>Teach children to revise and edit their writing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Involve children in author and genre studies.</td>
<td>Teach paragraphing skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach children to make text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text connections.</td>
<td>Teach spelling rules.</td>
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<td>Expand children’s ability to use comprehension strategies.</td>
<td>Teach synonyms.</td>
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<td>Have children respond to books through talk and writing.</td>
<td>Teach homonyms.</td>
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<td>Teach root words and affixes.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Teach children to use a dictionary and a thesaurus.</td>
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</table>
workshop. They’re learning about genres, text structures, and literary devices and can apply this knowledge to reading and responding to literature in literature circles. Teachers have shifted their focus from teaching children to decode words to comprehending stories and informational books.

Instructional recommendations for each of the three stages of reading and writing development are presented in Figure 2–6.

Preventing Reading and Writing Difficulties

It would be so convenient to identify a single factor—such as phonics—as the key to reading success, but preventing reading and writing difficulties is much more complicated than that. Young children need a strong foundation before they reach first grade. They get interested in literacy when parents and teachers demonstrate authentic purposes for reading and writing. They listen to stories and informational books read aloud and watch adults read letters and email, newspapers, directions, and other real-world texts. They learn about writing as they observe adults composing messages and taking their dictation and as they write messages and lists and send email messages. As young children recite nursery rhymes, sing silly songs, and play word games, they learn about the structure of spoken words. These activities are important because they prepare children for reading and writing instruction; most children who struggle with reading and writing come to school unprepared.

Three potential stumbling blocks can interfere with children becoming successful readers and writers (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). First, emergent readers and writers may have difficulty understanding the alphabetic principle and applying it when they read and write. Second, beginning readers and writers may have difficulty transferring comprehension strategies (e.g., predicting, connecting, and visualizing) that they use when listening to books being read aloud to using them as they read. Third, fluent readers and writers may not nurture the motivation for literacy needed to become lifelong readers and writers. To prevent difficulties, teachers must ensure that children learn to use the alphabetic principle, apply reading and writing strategies effectively, and view reading and writing as interesting and worthwhile activities.

**CHAPTER REVIEW**

**Children’s Literacy Development**

- Teachers nurture children’s language development and build their vocabulary.
- Teachers foster young children’s interest in literacy and teach concepts about written language.
- Teachers understand that children move through the emergent, beginning, and fluent stages of literacy development as they become proficient readers and writers.
ACCOUNTABILITY CHECK!

Children’s Literacy Development

Click here to self-assess your understanding of how children develop as readers and writers.

1. Why do teachers nurture children’s oral language development?
2. What concepts about written language do young children learn?
3. How do teachers foster young children’s interest in literacy and teach concepts about written language?
4. What stages do children move through as they become proficient readers and writers?
5. How do teachers apply what they know about their students’ literacy development when they’re planning for instruction?

DIY Monitoring Student Development

You’ve been asked to examine a group of children’s literacy progress and determine whether they’re working at grade level, according to the Developmental Continuum, “Literacy Learning,” presented in this chapter. Click here to read sketches about preK–4 students and decide whether their progress meets grade-level standards. Respond in the essay boxes provided, and support your answers with the information you used to make your decisions. If you have difficulty responding to any of the questions, take another look at both the Developmental Continuum and Figure 2–5, “Children’s Literacy Development.”

DIY Measuring Student Performance

Ms. Okoro, a preK teacher, evaluated Sami’s knowledge of concepts about print using the CAP Test. Click here to examine Sami’s test results, determine whether Sami is meeting grade-level standards, and make instructional recommendations. Respond in the essay boxes, and support your answers with the information you used to make your decisions.

REFERENCES


McGee, L. M. (2007). Transforming literacy practices in preschool: Research-based practices that give all children the opportunity to reach their potential as learners. New York: Scholastic.


