



*From Phonics to Reading* ©2020, Grades K–3  
Author: Wiley Blevins

## Introduction and Research Basis

William H. Sadlier, Inc.'s (Sadlier's) *From Phonics to Reading (FPR)* is an effective, affordable, supplemental program that assists teachers of varying experience levels and provides a research-based progression to support students as they grow into increasingly sophisticated readers. *FPR* is built on the large, converging body of research from educational researchers, linguists, cognitive psychologists, and others that focus on how children learn to read proficiently. The program pedagogy is also based on over three decades of research and classroom practice by program author, Wiley Blevins. Blevins studied and worked directly with key researchers and academics whose work is also reflected in the DNA of this program. [The Seven Characteristics of Strong Phonics Instruction](#) (readiness skills, scope and sequence, blending, dictation, word awareness, high-frequency words, and reading connected text), drawn from Blevins's research, form the backbone of *FPR*. The program design also precludes the [10 Common Causes of Phonics Instructional Failure](#).

## Components

Program resources provide a complete school year of supplemental instruction, practice, and assessment for grade-level foundational skills, supports for differentiation (including English Learners and more advanced learners), interactive instruction, independent practice resources, and a range of supports for educators. Designed to cover the standards for Grades K–3 (Levels A–C), the program includes:

- Student Edition (consumable) with Decodable Take-Home Books, Gr K–1, Decodable Passages, Gr 2–3, and manipulatives used in multi-modal word awareness activities
- Teacher's Edition with instructional guidance for each lesson, differentiation mini-lessons, learning centers activities, formative assessment tools, and more
- Digital Resources online at [SadlierConnect.com](http://SadlierConnect.com), including robust instructional and interactive supports, comprehensive assessments, and home-school connection assets.

## Instructional Design

*FPR* promotes active and thought-provoking phonics instruction that engages students in their learning. The following offers a glance at key instructional elements:

**Systematic, explicit foundational skills** instruction is critical for students as they learn to read and write in English. The program provides extensive guidance to support **explicit instruction** not just in the Teacher's Edition, but also in the support materials online and through the professional development associated with implementing the program.

The **Gradual Release** model of instruction is used to help teachers avoid doing the “heavy-lifting,” which can lead to less impactful instruction. With all aspects of their phonics instruction, teachers are guided to appropriately model and then provide corrective feedback after students have made attempts. Teachers not only provide corrective feedback that includes explicit modeling but also prompt students with questions that help them verbalize their thinking. In the final step of the Gradual Release, students are provided opportunities in each day's lesson in reading and writing for **application and transfer**, avoiding passive listening to teachers.

A **systematic Scope and Sequence** follows a continuum from easy to more complex skills, slowly introducing each new skill. The systematic instruction includes a review and repetition cycle to achieve mastery and goes from the known to the new in a way that makes the new

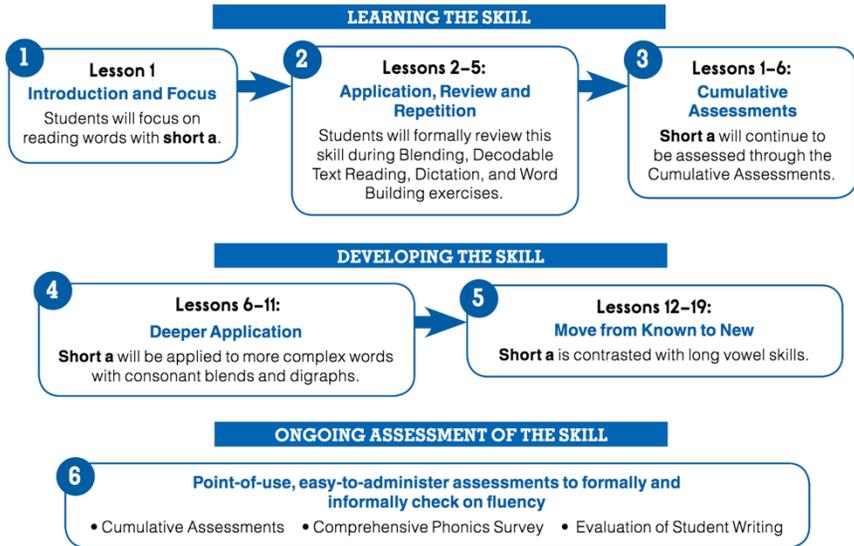
learning more obvious and easier for students to grasp. Teachers are guided to display a known word and compare it to the new to highlight this new concept, as in hop–hope or hat–hate. This side-by-side minimal contrast makes learning a new concept more obvious and easier to grasp.

*FPR* addresses **all foundational skills standards** and fosters students’ understanding and working knowledge of print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency so that students can rapidly and accurately recognize and decode printed words in connected text, comprehend that text, and respond to it through writing. Lessons are **fast-paced and rigorous**. They focus on **high-impact routines**—Blending, Word Building, High-Frequency Words, Dictation, and Decodable Texts—that quickly move the needle in terms of student learning.

An emphasis is placed on the **application and transfer to reading and writing**. Because students progress at a much faster rate in phonics when the bulk of instructional time is spent on applying skills to authentic reading and writing experiences, rather than isolated skill-and-drill work, approximately 50% of a lesson is devoted to application exercises. Students read **decodable texts** daily and write about the texts to transfer their skills and **deepen comprehension**. The decodable texts adhere to the highest research standards: **instructive, comprehensible, and engaging**.

Word Building and Word Sorts are key activities to increase students’ **word awareness** with essential understandings that are generalizable to new words in novel situations. These activities increase students’ ability to work with letter-sounds flexibly and fully analyze words. Also, students play with letters and sounds during the instructional cycle Word Awareness activities, allowing them to become flexible in their knowledge of sound-spellings and solidify learning.

Below is an example of the instructional design of a unit.



Grade-level content considerations include beginning **multi-syllabic words** at the end of Grade 1 to provide a closer alignment between phonics instruction and reading demands and continuing that focus in Grade 2 when stories students read include more challenging words.

Instruction is built on the latest research showing the impact of **multi-modal instruction**. All activities engage students' multiple senses yet focus on a direct connection to authentic reading and writing experiences. These activities can be seen in Word Building, Word Sorts, High-Frequency Words Read/Spell/Write, Handwriting, and Reading Decodable Text routines.

Students receive both grade-level instruction during whole-group lessons (with differentiation and modifications for some students) and **targeted small-group instruction** that supports specific needs. Significant resources and guidance are included to promote **differentiated instruction** and intervention that supports all students during Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. For example, daily differentiation for **English learners, students below level (not meeting grade-level expectations), and students above level (both acceleration and enrichment)** are fully addressed at point-of-use to maximize student growth. Some students will require even more intensive Tier 3 intervention. Students two or more years below level can be placed in a lower level of *FPR*.

### **Comprehensive Assessment System**

Appropriate assessment options are provided to monitor students' **progress** in the acquisition of reading foundational skills, along with related skills in other ELA/Literacy strands. Program assessments (e.g., comprehensive assessments, frequently administered cumulative assessments, observations made during students' reading, and periodic assessment of students' writing) are means to monitor mastery and check for decayed learning, allowing for both differentiated instruction and timely course corrections so learning issues don't develop into deep foundational skill deficits. Grade-level **expectations, correlated to standards**, are provided in Assessments & Expectations guides with support for making **next instructional steps** on [SadlierConnect.com](https://www.sadlierconnect.com).

### **Instructional Support**

Essential tools necessary for effectively developing students' early literacy skills include:

- **Research-based teaching strategies** embedded in each lesson to reach all learners.
- **A suite of Digital Resources** at [SadlierConnect.com](https://www.sadlierconnect.com) that reinforce instruction and actively engage students. Interactive resources for Blend It, Connected Text, Word Sort, Make New Words, Think and Write, and Take-Home Book activities support active engagement and address individual learning needs.
- **Blended Professional Learning** solutions consisting of research and Instructional Guides, a suite of author videos on instructional routines and key topics (e.g., assessment, differentiation) to transform instruction.
- **A series of Professional Development Research-based Whitepapers** that detail best practices of phonics instruction because the impact of phonics instruction rests on the shoulders of a skilled, informed teacher.
  - [From Phonics to Reading Research](#)
  - [10 Common Causes of Phonics Instruction Failure](#)
  - [From Phonics to Reading Assessment Whitepaper](#)
  - [Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction](#)
  - [Multiple Tiers for Success Instructional Guide](#)
  - [Seven Key Characteristics of Strong Phonics Instruction](#)
- **Webinars, masterclasses, and a professional learning community** for ongoing support to deepen educators' knowledge and promote successful implementation.

## **Implementation and Professional Development Services**

At Sadlier, building teachers' capacity to provide high-quality instruction is the desired outcome of implementation of all curricular offerings. Sadlier is committed to providing extensive professional learning services in support of developing deep knowledge of effective foundational skills instruction, including high-impact routines, as well as promoting successful product implementation. To guide teachers each step of the way, comprehensive blended professional learning solutions include:

- Three Professional Development sessions
- A year-long Professional Development Pacing Guide
- Study Guides for 12 on-demand videos on [SadlierConnect.com](https://www.sadlier.com)

Learn More: <https://www.sadlier.com/school/from-phonics-to-reading>

## **Key Author References**

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