

A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating Supplemental and Intervention Reading Programs Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis

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Current Working Version

The selection and adoption of effective, research-based supplemental and intervention reading programs in the primary grades is a critical step in the development of an effective schoolwide reading initiative. The investment in identifying supplemental and intervention programs that align with research and fit the needs of learners in your school will reap long-term benefits for children's reading acquisition and development.

A critical review of reading programs requires objective and in-depth analysis. For these reasons, we offer the following recommendations and procedures for analyzing critical elements of programs. First, we

define supplemental and intervention programs. Following, we discuss the process for selection of these programs. Further, we offer specific guidelines regarding the review process including type of review, sampling procedures, documenting evidence, and scoring. We trust you will find these guidelines useful and usable in this significant professional process.

1. What are supplemental and intervention reading programs?

Supplemental programs are used to support and extend the critical elements of a core reading program. Typically, supplemental programs provide additional instruction in one or two areas (e.g., phonological

awareness, fluency) and provide more instruction or practice in the particular area(s) of need. These programs can often be effective in supporting an identified gap in an otherwise strong core reading program. For example, if the core program does not provide enough fluency in reading connected text, a supplemental program could be implemented to support the core.

Intervention programs are designed specifically for children who demonstrate reading difficulty and are performing below grade level. The purpose of these programs is to provide more explicit, systematic instruction to accelerate learning and bring the learner to grade-level performance. In general, intervention

programs focus on more than one area (e.g., phonics, fluency, and comprehension). In some cases, a particular intervention program may focus explicitly and exclusively on one essential reading area (e.g., phonemic awareness.) Intervention programs allow teachers to meet the needs of individual students who are struggling in their classrooms. They are specialized, intense, and typically delivered in small group settings. This tool is designed to evaluate supplemental and intervention programs that address one or more of the five essential components of the Reading First legislation in scientifically-based beginning reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It is not designed for programs that exclusively target spelling, writing, visual processing, or areas other than the five essential components.

A supplemental or intervention program may be designed for a specific grade (e.g., kindergarten) or span across several grades (e.g., K/1 or 1/2, etc.).

2. What process should be used to select supplemental and intervention reading programs?

Schools may begin the selection process by conducting a thorough examination of the core reading program that has been adopted. Using the tool [A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis](#), schools can identify the areas of strength and weakness in their core program. Schools can then focus their attention on supplemental and intervention programs that provide instruction in those areas of weakness.

In addition, schools will want to examine student assessment data to determine areas where students are experiencing difficulties (e.g., phonemic awareness, vocabulary). Again, it makes sense to direct a search toward supplemental and intervention programs that address those particular skill areas. Schools will also want to consider how discrepant the individual students' scores are from target goals on essential reading components. Some students may require strategic instruction that includes the current

core program intensified or modified to some degree (e.g., time, grouping size, number of modeled examples, etc.). A supplemental program may be a very appropriate way to strengthen the instruction provided in the core for these students. Other students may require intensive instruction that involves changing the core instruction significantly or supplanting it with an intervention program. Through a combination of examining the adopted core and considering student abilities, schools can target specific supplemental and intervention programs for review.

Once targeted programs have been identified, ideally every teacher involved in reading instruction would be involved in the review and selection of the supplemental and intervention reading programs. Realistically, a grade-level representative may be responsible for the initial review and reduce the "possible" options to a reasonable number. At minimum, we recommend that grade-level representatives use the criteria that follow and then share those findings with grade-level teams.

3. What criteria should be used to select supplemental and intervention reading programs?

A converging body of scientific evidence is available and accessible

to guide the development of primary-grade reading programs. We know from research the critical skills and strategies that children must acquire in order to become successful readers by grade 3 (National Reading

Panel, 2000, National Research Council, 1998; NICHD, 1996, Simmons & Kame'enui, 1998). Following, we specify criteria for reviewing critical elements of reading organized by essential component.

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A Consumer's Guide to Selecting Supplemental and Intervention Programs: A Critical Elements Analysis

A key assumption is that a schoolwide beginning reading initiative will (a) address all grade-level content standards and (b) ensure that high priority standards are taught in sufficient depth, breadth, and quality that all learners will achieve or exceed expected levels of proficiency. However, all standards are not equally important. Our critical elements analysis focuses on those skills and strategies essential for early reading success.

General Review Process

1. Scope of Review and Prioritization of Items

To begin, identify the essential components (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) and grade levels that the supplemental or intervention program targets. Complete only those items that evaluate the targeted components and grades. Many programs are designed to instruct students across grade levels (e.g., a K-1 program).

For these multi-level or multi-grade programs, mark one program rating per relevant item. Some programs have a separate, distinct level for each grade (e.g., K, 1, 2). For grade-specific programs, review each grade level separately and assign a distinct score for each grade for each item. For intervention programs, complete the relevant items by essential component then complete the additional items included in the Intervention Supplement.

2. Type of Review and Sampling Procedures

To gain a representative sample of the program, we recommend the following strategies:

- (a) Within lesson procedure (w) involves identifying the first day (lesson) in which a critical skill (e.g., letter sound correspondence, word reading) is introduced and tracing that skill over a sequence of 2-3 days. Then, repeating the process to document evidence at an additional point in time (e.g., middle/end of program).
- (b) Scope and sequence procedure (ss) involves using the scope and sequence to

identify the initial instruction on a skill and analyze how instruction progresses over time. Document progression in the evidence columns.

- (c) Skills trace procedure (st) should be used for selected skills that involve evaluation of practice cycles or cumulative review. This procedure involves identifying the first day (lesson) in which a critical skill is introduced and tracing that skill over 10 consecutive lessons. A separate form is provided for conducting skills traces.

Example information may include lesson number, particular skill/strategy introduced, etc. A separate form is provided for documenting

evidence on skills traces. This form requires documentation of both new and review content for 10 consecutive lessons.

4. Scoring Criteria

The criteria for scoring each element is listed below. When evaluating individual elements, place a slash (/) through the respective circle that represents your rating.

3. Documenting Evidence

On the review forms there is space to document specific information.

Use the following criteria for each critical element:

- = Program consistently meets/exceeds criterion.
- ◐ = Program partially meets/exceeds criterion.
- = Program does not satisfy criterion.

Program Name: Phonics Plus

Date of Publication: 2006

Publisher: Educators Publishing Service

Reviewer Code: _____

Directions: Place a check (√) next to each appropriate item that applies to your evaluation of the program.

Part A • The program targets instruction on the following essential components (select all that apply):

- _____ phonemic awareness
- _____ phonics
- _____ fluency
- _____ vocabulary
- _____ comprehension

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• Specify for which grade the program is appropriate (select all that apply):

- _____ K
- _____ 1
- _____ 2
- _____ 3

• Select one of the following:

- _____ Multi-grade program. One program rating will be assigned for each relevant item.
- _____ Grade-specific program. A separate analysis will be completed for each grade.

• Decision Point:

- Part B _____ The program meets the criteria for a **supplemental** program and will be reviewed for that purpose.
- _____ The program meets the criteria for an **intervention** program and will be reviewed for that purpose.

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 Elements Analysis

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Critical

Phonemic Awareness: *The ability to hear and manipulate the sound structure of language. It is a strong predictor of reading success. Phonemic awareness is an auditory skill and consists of multiple components.*

Phonemic Awareness Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	1. Teaches skills explicitly. (w)	√	√	√	√	Phonemic elements are introduced, modeled, and/or reviewed orally throughout all four levels, followed by modeled and supervised practice.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	2. Models phonemic awareness tasks and responses orally and follows with students' production of the task. (w)	√	√	√	√	Every lesson on phonemic elements at all four levels follows this procedure.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	3. Progresses from the easier phonemic awareness activities to the more difficult (e.g., isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation). (ss)	√	√	√	√	Lessons begin with hearing and isolating the sound and move to blending onsets and rimes and then to spelling by segmenting sounds.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	4. Incorporates letters into phonemic awareness activities. [NRP, pg. 2-41] (w)	√	√	√	√	Letters are incorporated, starting in the earliest lessons in kindergarten, through sight words and print exposure to nursery rhymes and other poems. At lesson seven, work begins with the alphabet and letter recognition. By the beginning of unit	These kinds of lessons repeat throughout Book K -- see lessons 68, 64, and 69b for examples -- as well as Books A, B, and C.

						two, lesson 21, children are working on relating letter sounds to symbols.	
	5. Makes students' cognitive manipulations of sounds overt by using auditory cues or manipulatives that signal the movement of one sound to the next. (w)	√	√	√	√	Lesson 28 in Book K has children orally blending onsets and rimes. Similar blending occurs later with letters and word families using a sweeping hand motion and arrows to signal blending (lessons 50a and b). Books A, B, and C continue with blending in Books A and B mostly of initial and final consonants, onsets and rimes. Books B and C focus more on blending syllables, prefixes and suffixes.	The Differentiated Instruction Guides (DIGs)— <i>Reteach and Practice</i> , <i>Learning Differences</i> , and <i>English Language Learners</i> — that accompany Books A, B, and C focus even more on overt cues. Lesson 21 in the <i>Reteach and Practice</i> Guide for Book A, for example, teaches children "onset-rime-clap", and Lesson 22a in the <i>Learning Differences</i> Guide for Book A teaches children to finger spell. Both techniques facilitate segmenting and blending sounds.

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PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Critical

Phonemic Awareness Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
	6. Analyzes words at the phoneme level (e.g., working with individual sounds within words). (ss)	√	√	√	√	Lessons in the K book introduce letters and beginning sounds through poems and nursery rhymes, then focus on words – for example, lessons 21-27b. With vowel sounds, children continue by building words with the short vowel word family, blending onsets and rimes with the vowel, and responding to short written sentences with the vowel sound words, as in lessons 37–39a.	Books A, B, and C work with sounds in beginning, medial, and final positions within words, always beginning at the oral level. Activities in Books A and B that have children spell words with targeted sounds require children to analyze words at the phoneme level. Examples: (Book A - lessons 22, 31, 40, 47, 55; Book B -- lessons 25-27, 34-36a).
	7. In K, focus is on first the initial sound (<u>s</u> at), then on final sound, (sa <u>t</u>), and lastly	√	√			The focus in Book K is on initial sounds of all consonants and the short sounds of vowels in the initial	

	on the medial sound (<u>s</u> at) in words. In grade 1, focus is on phonemes in all positions. (ss)					and medial positions. Book A focuses on phonemes in all positions, as in Lesson 43b, which reinforces previous lessons on phonemes in each of the positions.
● ○ ○	8. Focuses beginning phonemic level instruction on short words (two to three phonemes; e.g. <i>at</i> , <i>mud</i> , <i>run</i>). (ss)	√	√			In teaching the sound of short a, in Book K, a review page, Lesson 39a, asks questions like "Is it a cat or an ant?" Book A in lesson 22a asks children to spell words like <i>bag</i> , <i>jam</i> , and <i>cap</i> . This follows several lessons that focus on short a in the medial position and in word families and is typical of vowel lessons.
● ○ ○	9. Works with increasingly longer words and expands beyond consonant-vowel-consonant words (e.g., <i>sun</i>) to more complex phonemic structures (consonant blends). (ss)		√	√	√	Book A teaches consonant digraphs and blends in initial (Examples: lessons 51, 52, 58, 68, 69) and final positions (lessons 82, 88, 90, 95), long vowel syllable patterns (beginning with lessons 64a, 65), vowel digraphs and diphthongs (beginning with lessons 64b, 103), and <i>r</i> -controlled vowels (lesson 101). Books B and C review all of the above and expand even further into multisyllabic words, verb endings, prefixes and suffixes.
● ○ ○	10. Focuses appropriate amount of daily time on blending, segmenting, and manipulating tasks until proficient. [NRP, pg. 2-41] (w)	√	√	√	√	Although all four levels devote time to these skills, Book K and Book 1 devote the greater part of the daily half-hour lesson to these tasks. See lessons 38b – 40b in Book A for examples. Review is built into every few lessons to help achieve proficiency.

Please summarize evidence of sufficient and insufficient instructional quality in the area of phonemic awareness. Space for additional comments is provided on the next page. Constructive feedback is helpful. Comments may be used and distributed to a wider audience (schools, publishers, etc.).

SUMMARY	
Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality	Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality
<p><i>Phonics Plus</i> provides a strong grounding in phonemic awareness in both the core program and the <i>Differentiated Instruction Guides</i> (DIGs). These guides accompany levels A, B, and C and provide expanded explicit teaching at tiers 2 and 3 to address students who may require reteaching and practice, who have learning differences, or who are English Language learners. At all four levels of the core program, and in the DIGs, phonemic elements are introduced and practiced orally at first. This is true even in grades two and three to ensure children's ability to segment the spoken word into its phonemes and recognize the phoneme being considered. Books K and A begin with an emphasis on rhyme. As children progress through the four levels, they learn to recognize phonemes in various positions in spoken words, segment</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: gray; font-size: 2em; opacity: 0.5;">Current Working Version</p>

syllables, blend onsets and rimes, and substitute initial and final consonant sounds as well as beginning and medial vowel sounds.	

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PHONICS: DECODING

Critical Elements



Analysis

Phonics: The ability to recognize words accurately, fluently, and independently. Phonics is fundamental to reading in an alphabetic writing system. In early grades, critical skills include learning to associate sounds with letters, using those associations to decode and read simple words, and learning to recognize important nondecodable words. [NRP, pg. 2-41; pg 2-93]

Phonics Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
	1. Introduces high-utility letter sound instruction early in the sequence (e.g., /m/, /s/, /a/, /r/, /t/) instead of low-utility letter sounds (e.g., /x/, /y/, /z/). (ss)	√	√			Book K /m/-- lesson 32 /s/-- lesson 21 /a/-- lesson 37 /r/-- lesson 34 /t/-- lesson 22 /x/-- lesson 60 /y/-- lesson 61 /z/-- lesson 62 Book A lesson 13a lesson 8b lesson 20 lesson 14a lesson 8a lesson 27b lesson 18a lesson 27b	
	2. Sequences the introduction of letter sounds, letter combinations, and word parts in ways that minimize confusion. (ss)	√	√	√	√	High utility consonants are taught first (see above). Short vowels and then (Book A) r and l initial blends precede long vowels (more complicated syllable patterns). These are followed by final blends, variant vowel sounds and silent consonants. Book B reviews the consonant sounds introduced in Books K and A, teaches soft sounds of c and g, consonant digraphs, and three letter blends. Vowel review is interspersed with teaching of syllables and syllable patterns, inflectional endings, accent and schwa, ending unit three with a focus on vowel digraphs and diphthongs. Prefixes are introduced in Unit four.	Book C reviews the preceding teaching using more sophisticated text and focuses more on prefixes and suffixes, Greek and Latin word parts, multiple sounds of vowel digraphs and diphthongs, homophones, and syllabication.

● ○	3. Incorporates frequent and cumulative review of taught letter sounds to increase automaticity. (st)	√	√	√	√		

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	<p>4. Models instruction at each of the fundamental stages (e.g., letter-sound correspondences, letter combinations, prefixes, word endings, blending, reading whole words). (w) and (ss)</p>	√	√	√	√	<p>Modeling is a part of the direct instruction in every lesson in <i>Phonics Plus</i>, both in the core program and in the accompanying DIGs.</p>	
	<p>5. Introduces regular words for which students know all the letter sounds. (ss)</p>	√	√	√	√	<p>Examples: Book K lessons 38, 39 (short a words), 50, 51 (short i words), 54, 55 (short u words), 66, 67 (short o words), 70, 71 (short e words), 80b, 82a. Book A lessons 21- 24 use short a words. Similar lesson formats are used for the other vowels. Lesson 41a is a good example. Lesson 70a uses decodable parts of compound words. The stories in Lessons 80b and 102 focus on long <i>u</i> and <i>r</i>-controlled vowels respectively. Books B and C use decodable text as well for all newly introduced phonics elements</p>	<p>Decodable Readers coordinate with lessons at all four levels.</p>



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PHONICS: DECODING

Critical Elements

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Phonics Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	6. Progresses systematically from simple word types (e.g., consonant-vowel-consonant) and word lengths (e.g., number of phonemes) and word complexity (e.g. phonemes in the word, position of blends, stop sounds) to more complex words. [NRP, pg. 2-132] (ss)	√	√	√	√	See response to item numbers 2 and 5.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	7. Incorporates spelling to reinforce word analysis. After students can read words, provides explicit instruction in spelling, showing students how to map the sounds of letters on to print. (w) and (ss)	√	√	√	√	See items 3 and 8 under Phonemic Awareness. In Book B, children spell words using vowel patterns starting in lessons 25-27. Book C asks children to sort long vowels by spelling patterns (lesson 15 for long a). Sorting is used for double vowels – lessons 31a, 32a, and 33a.	Lesson 22a in the <i>Learning Differences</i> guide for Book A teaches children to finger spell by segmenting sounds for which children provide letters.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	8. Provides teacher-guided practice in controlled word lists and connected text in which students can apply their newly learned skills successfully. (w)	√	√	√	√	This occurs at every level, starting with Book K, where children create words with short vowel word families. Practice with connected text follows: lesson 38 and 39 for short a word families. Decodable books correspond to the word families taught for the five vowels. The same technique is used at each level -- lists of words are generated for each phonics element explicitly taught and then practiced in sentences and in connected text. Additional practice is available in the Decodable Readers accompanying each level and as needed at tiers two and three in the DIGs. In book Word Walls are used for automaticity practice.	

	9. Begins instruction in word families, word patterns, and larger orthographic units after students have learned the letter-sound correspondence in the unit. [NRP, pg 2-13] (ss)	√	√	√	√	See item 2 above (Phonics)	
	10. Teaches students to process larger, highly represented patterns to increase fluency in word recognition. (w)		√	√	√	Examples: Book A -- lessons with short vowel word families starting with lesson 21 and long vowel word families starting with lesson 65. Book B -- lessons on: syllables starting with lesson 29b, compound words starting with lesson 30, word endings starting with lesson 31, and suffixes and prefixes starting with lessons 66 and 82.	Book C -- lessons on: syllables with short vowels starting with lesson 14b, syllables with long vowels starting with lesson 15b, compound words starting with lesson 20, suffixes and prefixes starting with lessons 50 and 52, and Greek and Latin word parts starting with lesson 54. Throughout the three books, the skills mentioned are further developed and reviewed.

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PHONICS: DECODING

Critical Elements

Phonics Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
	11. Teaches advanced phonic-analysis skills explicitly, first in isolation, then in words and connected text and utilizes other program materials (e.g., trade books, anthologies) when students are proficient. [NRP pg. 2-132] (w) and (ss)		√	√	√	See item 8 above. (Phonics)	Decodable Readers at all four grades

<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	12. Teaches explicit strategy to read multisyllabic words by using prefixes, suffixes, and known word parts (w).		√	√	√	See item 8 above. (Phonics)	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	13. Uses structural analysis judiciously to support word recognition strategies. (ss)			√	√	Children begin learning about inflectional endings and base words in Book B (lessons 31 and 32) and other suffixes beginning with lesson 66. Lessons 82-84 involve prefixes. Book C expands on all of the above and adds Greek and Latin word parts. Both books focus on spelling and meaning issues to support word recognition strategies.	

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 Elements Analysis

PHONICS: IRREGULAR WORDS

Critical

Phonics: *The ability to recognize words accurately, fluently, and independently. Phonics is fundamental to reading in an alphabetic writing system. In early grades, critical skills include learning to associate sounds with letters, using those associations to decode and read simple words, and learning to recognize important nondecodable words. [NRP, pg. 2-41; pg 2-93]*

Phonics Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	1. Selects words that have high utility; that is, words that are used frequently in grade-appropriate literature and informational text. (ss)	√	√	√		High-frequency words are referred to as Star Words in <i>Phonics Plus</i> and are introduced in Book K as early as the first few lessons. By the end of Book K, the children have learned 21 words which are reviewed and reinforced every few lessons and enable children to read simple rebus sentences and as word elements are learned, decodable text in the student book as well as the Decodable Readers. The	Page T20 in the Teacher's Guide lists the Star Words in Books K, A, and B, and describes their use. The DIGs offer further techniques and activities for reinforcement.

						usefulness/importance of these words is pointed out to children in the numerous poems, stories, and expository text included in <i>Phonics Plus</i> .	
	2. Controls the number of irregular words introduced at one time. (w)	√	√	√		Irregular words are introduced as Star Words (see above), generally between two and five at a time.	
	3. Separates highly similar words for initial instruction (e.g. was/saw). (ss)	√	√				
	4. Points out irregularities and provides a strategy for reading irregular words using letters or parts of the words. (w)	√	√	√		In Books K (lesson 5 for example) and A (12b, for example), children are advised that the Star Words are words they will see over and over and are given writing and reading activities to help them learn the words. Once children have learned enough phonics, the regularities along with the irregularities are highlighted as in Book B, lesson 7b, 13a and b, and others	The DIGs that accompany the lessons of the core program give further strategies and practice.
	5. Preteaches sight words and incorporates them into connected text. (w)	√	√	√	√	Connected text follows the introduction of most Star Words, even in lessons 5 and 6a in Book K where after preteaching, the teacher reads the sentences as the child follows the print and circles the words (lessons 5) and in lesson 6a reads the rebus sentences with a partner.	
Phonics Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
	6. Provides ample practice and cumulative review of important high-frequency sight words. (st)	√	√	√			

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PHONICS: IRREGULAR WORDS

Critical Elements

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Please summarize evidence of sufficient and insufficient instructional quality in the area of phonics (decoding and irregular words). Space for additional comments is provided on the next page. Constructive feedback is helpful. Comments may be used and distributed to a wider audience (schools, publishers, etc.).

SUMMARY	
Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality (specify elements)	Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality (specify elements)
<p><i>Phonics Plus</i> begins in kindergarten and concludes in third grade, during which time a full range of phonics skills, carefully sequenced to build from simpler to more complicated elements, are explicitly taught, practiced, and reviewed. Teaching begins with the more useful consonants, interspersing sight words and short vowels to allow real reading to commence quickly. In addition to individual phonics elements, such as individual vowels sounds and vowel pairs, syllable patterns that cue the appropriate vowel sounds are taught.</p> <p>Morphological elements are taught with increasing importance in Books B and C.</p> <p>Phonics elements are introduced orally and then with words in isolation, followed by their use in sentences, and finally in longer connected text. For the most part, only words which contain elements that children have learned are used for the connected text. The lessons in each book are structured so</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: gray; font-size: 2em; opacity: 0.5;">Current Working Version</p>

that the task is often the same, allowing children to focus on just the change in the phonics element. Multiple examples of words illustrating the phonics elements under consideration are provided to help children internalize the patterns. In-book Word Walls follow each series of lessons on phonics elements and provide summary lists to practice reading both these regular words and the (irregular) sight words learned. Elements taught are reviewed continually in each workbook and again at each grade. Assessment is built into the program at the beginning and end of each unit.

Three DIGs provide opportunities for reteaching and/or adapting teaching and extra practice to follow each lesson or group of lessons, as needed at tiers two and three. An engaging series of Decodable Readers developed to match the scope and sequence of skills and sight words taught in the core program at each level offer children practice with their new skills and reinforcement of skills already mastered.

Within the *Phonics Plus* student books at each level are a variety of real reading opportunities — poems, stories, plays, expository articles— which provide children practice with the phonics elements they're learning, with a focus as well on elements of genre and appropriate comprehension strategies. Writing opportunities to reinforce sound-symbol

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<p>relationships occur at the word and sentence level with regularity in <i>Phonics Plus</i>. In addition, children write longer text such as stories, plays, and poems as they progress through the program.</p>	
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 Analysis

TEXT READING AND FLUENCY

Critical Elements

Fluency: *The effortless, automatic ability to read words in isolation (orthographic coding) and connected text.*

Text Reading and Fluency Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	1. Provides fluency practice at the word level. (w)	√	√	√		Examples: Book K—39a: children do a speed read with short a words built with consonants learned. Similar lessons occur throughout with other vowels (51a) and Star Words (68) Book A: In book Word Walls throughout feature timed reading of words, for example, lesson 23b, 32b	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	2. Introduces passage reading soon after students can read a sufficient number of words accurately. (w)	√	√	√	√	Book K – Example: 39b – children partner read and reread to build fluency Book A – Example: lesson 12b All four levels use passages illustrating the phonics elements and sight words in the lessons covered.	Decodable Readers at all four levels match the scope and sequence of skills and sight words taught in the core program.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	3. Teaches explicit strategy to permit readers to move from reading words in lists to reading words in sentences and passages. (w)	√	√				
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	4. Initial stories/passages composed of a high percentage of regular words (minimum of 75-80% decodable words). (w)	√	√	√	√	Stories/ Passages within the student books are written to utilize the phonics elements of the lessons.	Decodable Readers at all four levels match the scope and sequence of skills and sight words taught in the core program.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	5. Passages contain regular words comprised of letter-sounds, phonic elements, and word types that have been taught. (w) and (ss)	√	√	√	√	See item 4 above	DIGs use passages with only words and/or word elements children have been taught.

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TEXT READING AND FLUENCY


Critical Elements

Text Reading and Fluency Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	6. Passages contain high-frequency irregular words that have been previously taught. (w) and (ss)					See item 2 above. Many Star Words are irregular.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	7. Introduces fluency practice (e.g., repeated reading) after students read words in passages accurately. [NRP, pg. 3-15] (w)					Instructions in the Teacher's Guides for both the core program and the DIGs recommend repeated reading of sentences and passages to build fluency in most lessons for all four levels. Partner reading, choral reading, and Reader's Theater activities promote fluency practice.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	8. Includes sufficient independent practice materials of appropriate difficulty for students to develop fluency. [NRP pg. 3-28] (w) and (ss)					In addition to the core program, the DIGs provide additional and/or adapted practice materials for tiers two and three. Decodable Readers matching the scope and sequence of the skills at each level give further practice.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	9. Builds toward a 60 word-per-minute fluency goal by the end of grade one. [NRP, pg. 3-4] (ss)	√	√			Teacher/students can utilize connected text of increasing length (through the four grades) as well as Decodable Readers to work toward this fluency goal.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	10. Builds toward a 90 word-per-minute fluency goal by the end of grade two. [NRP, pg. 3-4] (ss)	√	√	√		See item 9 above.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	11. Builds toward a 120 word-per-minute fluency goal by the end of grade three. [NRP, pg. 3-4] (ss)	√	√	√	√	See item 9 above.	

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TEXT READING AND FLUENCY

Critical Elements

Text Reading and Fluency Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
	12. Assesses fluency regularly. (ss)	√	√	√	√	Evaluation of both automaticity and fluency is integrated into direct instruction.	

Please summarize evidence of sufficient and insufficient instructional quality in the area of text reading and fluency. Space for additional comments is provided on the next page. Constructive feedback is helpful. Comments may be used and distributed to a wider audience (schools, publishers, etc.).

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SUMMARY	
Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality	Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality
<p>Accurate, automatic word recognition and expressive reading – the skill elements that characterize fluent readers — are skill elements that characterize much of the instructional focus of <i>Phonics Plus</i>. Star Words are one mechanism used to build accuracy in word recognition. These are the high-frequency words that occur over and over in printed text, which often do not conform to expected sound-symbol correspondences. Star Words are first introduced in kindergarten and new ones are frequently added to the children's bank of instantly recognizable words. Reinforcement activities for the words, both in isolation and in</p>	

<p>connected text, are found throughout Books K and A, but because these high-frequency words are so much a part of all connected text, the sentences and longer text presented in Books B and C cement accuracy and automaticity as well.</p>	
<p>All the phoneme-grapheme elements and phonic and morphemic word part activities promote accurate and automatic word recognition. These latter larger units facilitate speed of recognition of the illustrative words. Review for all elements is built in after every few lessons and for students at tiers two and three, there are coordinating pages in the DIGs. Fluency and automaticity are encouraged through automatic word recognition using the in-book Word Walls, which occur frequently at the culmination of work with a particular phonics element. Typical teacher instructions have children practice reading the words as quickly and as accurately as they can and recording their time. With sentences and longer text, children build fluency through various scenarios of repeated readings: whole group, choral reading, and partner reading.</p>	<p>Current Working Version</p>
<p>Expressive reading is promoted most often with longer segments of text. Children are encouraged to reread the selections several times focusing on expression and how the speaker would say the words. <i>Phonics Plus</i> includes a number of readings — such as poems, folktales, and even</p>	

knock-knock jokes— that are excellent vehicles for helping children achieve expressive reading. There are plays at each level for children to read, practice, and perform as Reader’s Theater.	

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VOCABULARY

Critical Elements

Vocabulary: *The words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary can be described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.*

Vocabulary Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
● ○ ○	1. Selects words that are highly useful for passage understanding and/or later learning. (w)	√	√	√	√	In all books, teacher instructions highlight potential words in nursery rhymes and poems (Book K) and other passages that may be unfamiliar. Teachers are advised to ensure that children are familiar with the meanings of all words used as instruction examples and in all words pictured or used on every student page both in the core program and in the DIGs.	A picture glossary helps to reinforce meanings of selected words.
● ○ ○	2. Explains meanings of words in everyday language (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). (w)	√	√	√	√	Throughout all four books and DIGs. In the core program see Teacher's Guides for examples: Book K -- lessons 2b (cocoa pod) Book A -- lesson 11a (dell), 51a Book B -- lesson 4a (angry, umbrella, igloo, opera), 11a (wrist, wrench, wrong, wren) Book C -- lesson 8b (spring)	
● ○ ○	3. Provides direct instruction of targeted concepts and vocabulary. (w)	√	√	√	√	Vocabulary instruction/discussion is included in every lesson where appropriate and/or necessary. In most lessons, teachers are instructed to discuss the meanings of pictures and words both in isolation and in sentences and to have children relate their experiences with these. Examples: Book K: lessons 6b, 20b	Direct instruction occurs with homophones (Book K – lesson 40b; Book A – 66b, 85b, 94a; Book B— lessons 12b , 74a, 77b, 78, 89a; Book C – 43b, 65a, 75) compound words (Books A, B, C) prefixes and suffixes (Books B, C) semantic webs (Book B -- lessons 72a, 81b) synonyms, antonyms, analogies,

						<p>Book A: lessons 11a, 12a, 13, 14,, 74a, 87a, 91a, Book B: lessons 3, 14, 17b, 48a Book C: lessons 8b, 11b, 12b, 15b, 16b</p>	multiple meanings, Latin and Greek roots – Book C
● ○	4. Provides repeated and multiple exposures to critical vocabulary in a variety of contexts. (w) and (ss)	√	√	√	√	Repeated exposure to critical vocabulary occurs throughout the whole program with words in isolation, in sentences, and in passages. Words are spiraled within books and from book to book.	
● ○	5. Integrates words into sentences and asks students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence. (w)	√	√	√	√	See item 3 above. Children are also asked create sentences and larger text for vocabulary words.	

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VOCABULARY

Critical Elements

Vocabulary Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	6. Engages students in processing word meanings at a deeper level (e.g., associating new words with known words, creating context for new words). (w)	√	√	√	√	See item 5 above. See also item 3—semantic webs, synonyms and antonyms.	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	7. Reviews previously introduced words cumulatively. [NRP, p.4-4] (st)	√	√	√	√		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	8. Teaches strategies to use context to gain the meanings of an unfamiliar word. (Context includes the words surrounding the unfamiliar word that provide information to its meaning.) (w)	√	√	√	√	Examples: Book A -- lessons 48a, 74a, 108a Book B -- lessons 9b, 11, 12 a, 16a, 72a, 90a Book C -- passage assessment questions ask children to determine a word's meaning by its use in the sentence – lesson 3a children fill in appropriate words contextually – lessons 8b, 14b, 62b	Throughout <i>Phonics Plus</i> , after learning meanings of new vocabulary, the words are put into oral and written sentences and children are encouraged to use the new vocabulary in sentences of their own as well.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	9. Teaches dictionary usage explicitly with grade-appropriate dictionaries that allow students to access and understand the meaning of an unknown word. (w)			√	√	Examples: Book B -- lesson 72a Book C -- lessons 40, 62a, 63a, 79	Skills needed for using the dictionary, such as alphabetizing, work with syllables, and multiple meanings of words, are found in other levels as well.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	10. Extends the understanding of concepts and vocabulary of the English language through: (1) learning and using		√	√	√	Examples: Synonyms and antonyms – Book C -- lessons 27, 28a, 63b, 64b, 66, 74b, 76 compound words – Book A – 70a, 89b, 108b	

	<p>antonyms and synonyms; (2) using individual words in compound words to predict meaning; (3) using prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning; and (4) learning simple multiple-meaning words. (w) and (ss)</p>				<p>Book B –30, 37a, 80b Book C – 20a, 34a, 55b, 74a Prefixes and suffixes Book B – 30,31, 38, 39, 42, 43, 57, 58, 82-84 Book C – 50-53 Multiple meaning words – Book C – 65b</p>	
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Please summarize evidence of sufficient and insufficient instructional quality in the area of vocabulary. Space for additional comments is provided on the next page. Constructive feedback is helpful. Comments may be used and distributed to a wider audience (schools, publishers, etc.).

SUMMARY	
Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality	Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality
<p>Expanding word meaning knowledge is an integral goal of <i>Phonics Plus</i>. Often vocabulary building occurs through the many read-alouds and the discussion that follows them, especially in kindergarten. At other times, it is achieved through direct instruction. Books A, B, and C include selections that are initially read aloud to or with the children and subsequently read by the children. Most contain some words whose meanings may be unfamiliar to the children, but through context, illustrations, and discussion, come to be understood. The Teacher's Guides of <i>Phonics Plus</i> at every level suggest accompanying books and poems to further illustrate and enrich the lessons with vocabulary knowledge through wide reading.</p>	<p>Current Working Version</p>
<p>Daily lessons have a strong vocabulary emphasis. Teachers are instructed to ascertain that children know the meanings of the names of nearly every object pictured and every word used to illustrate phonics elements. In many instances, teachers are advised to explain the meanings of unfamiliar words, use</p>	

the words in sentences, and then have children relate to the words personally by using the words in their own sentences, responding to the appropriateness of the words in sentences (Book A, lessons 48 a: “Can a sock nod?”), or perhaps creating semantic webs. In other instances, children are given strategies for unlocking the meanings by themselves through understanding how prefixes and suffixes affect meaning (structural analysis) and by learning how context reveals meaning. In relation to the latter, children learn homophones and about multiple meanings of words. Examples of vocabulary assessment techniques used in high-stakes testing focus on use of context as well. And by the end of Book C, children have learned the skills to use the dictionary effectively. Word meaning is also reinforced through the use of the Picture Glossaries, which feature words from the selections.

Children are exposed to vocabulary which may be unfamiliar to them from a variety of connected texts — nursery rhymes, poems, folktales, plays, book reports, and expository text on subjects such as animals, weather, outer space, and the like. In addition, there are lessons on synonyms and antonyms, Greek and Latin word parts, analogies, math, social studies, science, and geography words. Their meanings are

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<p>reinforced and expanded upon as children meet these words repeatedly, in isolation, in sentences, in the many passages contained in the activity books, and in the Decodable Readers.</p>	
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COMPREHENSION

Critical Elements

Comprehension: The complex cognitive process involving the intentional interaction between reader and text to extract and construct meaning. The if

Comprehension Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
	1. Explicitly teaches critical comprehension strategies (e.g. main idea, literal, inferential, retell, prediction) by providing multiple examples. [NRP, pg. 4-126; pp 4-100] (w)	√	√	√	√	<p><i>Phonics Plus</i>, while primarily a phonics program, features comprehension skills as necessary and appropriate tools for understanding and enjoying the connected text of the program. Critical comprehension strategies are taught at every level. Modeled think-alouds for passages help teach predicting. Questions to Think About follow most passages and help teach main idea and inferential and critical comprehension. A few examples include:</p> <p>main idea Book A –74b Book B – 64,71</p> <p>literal comprehension -- Book K –72b, 84b Book A –24b, 37, 57b, 60b... Book B –1, 2, ..., 48a, 94a</p> <p>Inferential Book K -- 39b, 72a Book A – 57b, 60a Book B – 2</p> <p>Predicting – Book K – 72a, 73a Book A – 80b, 87, 102, 109a Book B – 2, 52, 73, 91b</p> <p>Retell – Book K— 3a,84a Book A – 37, 93b, 109a Book B –56a</p>	Book C continues work on all of the skills noted for the other books. In addition, Book B and especially Book C use high stakes test style assessment pages following passages as a means of teaching children critical comprehension strategies. Writing activities throughout are also used for these purposes. The <i>DIG Reteach and Practice</i> offers additional techniques for teaching critical comprehension strategies at levels A, B, and C.

	<p>2. Teaches background information or activates prior knowledge to increase a student's understanding of what is read. [NRP, pg. 4-108] (w)</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>Modeled think-alouds for all passages show children how to activate prior knowledge. For most of the expository passages, a KWL chart is used to activate prior knowledge as in Book A – 60a, 93b.</p>	
	<p>3. The text for initial instruction in comprehension: (1) begins with text units appropriate for the learner; (2) uses familiar vocabulary; and (3) uses simple sentences. (w)</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>These criteria determined the choice of text for comprehension instruction at all levels See lessons noted above in item 1.</p>	
	<p>4. Uses text in which the main idea or comprehension unit is explicitly stated, clear, and in which the ideas follow a logical order. (w)</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>Examples: Book K – 19b, 72b Book A – 24a, 74a, 93a Book B – 48a, 94b Book C – 21a, 60, 62a, 67</p>	
	<p>5. Provides guided practice in and systematic review of critical comprehension strategies. [NRP, pg. 4-126; pp. 4-100] (st)</p>						

COMPREHENSION

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Comprehension Instruction							
Rating	Criterion	Grade				Initial Instruction	Additional Evidence
		K	1	2	3		
● ○ ○	6. Connects previously taught skills and strategies with new content and text. [NRP, pg. 4-107] (w) and (ss)					Students can follow instruction and in-book reading passages with reading the Decodable Readers that feature the same phonics elements.	
● ○ ○	7. Models and guides the students through story structure (e.g., setting _____), thinking out loud as elements are being identified. [NRP, pg. 4-100] (w)	√	√	√	√	Examples: Book K – 39b Book A – 37, 109a Book B—14, 24b, 48b(expository text), 72b, 91b Book C –3b, 48, 49b, 68b Story elements are identified as program selections are read.	
● ○ ○	8. Uses story grammar structure as a tool for prompting information to compare and contrast, organize information, and group related ideas to maintain a consistent focus. [NRP, pg. 4-112] (w)	√	√	√	√	Examples: K- 3a A- 74 B- 48 C-60	
● ○ ○	9. Teaches conventions of informational text (e.g. titles, chapter headings) to locate important information. (w) and (ss)		√	√	√	Examples: A- 24a, 60 a/b B- 48 a/b, 60 a/b C 56 a/b, 60	
● ○ ○	10. Teaches explicit strategy to interpret information from graphs, diagrams, and charts. (w) and (ss)						

Please summarize evidence of sufficient and insufficient instructional quality in the area of comprehension. Space for additional comments is provided on the next page. Constructive feedback is helpful. Comments may be used and distributed to a wider audience (schools, publishers, etc.).

SUMMARY	
Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality	Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality
<p>Whereas decoding is the main thrust of <i>Phonics Plus</i>, the ultimate goal is to produce proficient readers, children who can both decode and comprehend. Therefore, comprehension skills and strategies are a regular feature of the direct instruction for the connected text readings in the program.</p> <p>To aid children in learning the syntax of written language and a variety of written text structures, <i>Phonics Plus</i> works with children at the sentence level as well as with longer text. In Book A in lessons 81b, 83b, and 106a children progress from understanding sentence meaning by matching sentences to pictures, to writing correct word order for endings of sentences, to writing the proper word order for complete sentences. Text that goes beyond the sentence level includes narrative and expository text as well as plays, poetry, and book reports.</p> <p>Children read the texts not only to build sight and meaning vocabulary and fluency, but also to learn identifying characteristics of the various text structures. In most instances they not only read these text structure examples but are asked to write poems, stories, plays, and reports to enhance their understanding of the elements that define different genre. In Book B, Lesson 69, using the elements of narrative text from the play <i>City Mouse and Country Mouse</i> as</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; color: gray; opacity: 0.5;">Current Working Version</p>

an example, children are asked to create a title, characters, setting, plot, and theme for a story, which they then write. In Book C, Lesson 49b, using the play *Johnny Appleseed* from the previous lesson, children identify characters, time, place, and narrator to write a play based on ideas from their reading. Using the expository texts, children learn to activate background knowledge by creating KWL charts to help them identify what they think they know, what they want to learn, and recall what they have learned.

Comprehension strategies are directly and explicitly taught with all of the text selections. Think-Aloud modeling, which teachers are encouraged to emulate, accompanies the direct instruction for all the connected text readings throughout *Phonics Plus*. The modeling illustrates a variety of strategies for identifying words, for test taking, and most often for comprehending text (as in the direct instruction for Lesson 29 in Book C) to help children understand how the text raises questions. How one predicts and visualizes while reading and how the reader identifies main idea are still other strategies modeled in several other lessons.

Comprehending at literal, inferential, and critical thinking levels is also a part of direct instruction. An example of retelling strategies may be found in Book A, Lesson 94. Thorough teacher instructions about how to use this strategy and a retelling response sheet are included. Questions to think and talk about, which follow the connected reading passages, are a consistent feature of all four levels. Teacher direction with the children's responses helps them with inferential and critical thinking skills.

Throughout the four levels, the texts chosen for connected reading incorporate the phonics and vocabulary skills that will enable the children to read them successfully. The comprehension tasks are always appropriate for the

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