



Literacy and Intervention

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

WORDLY WISE 3000®

Direct Oral Language Instruction

Grades K-1



Aligned to the
Common Core
STATE STANDARDS

Using *Wordly Wise 3000*® K-1 with English Language Learners

Wordly Wise 3000® K-1 was created to complement the *Wordly Wise 3000* program, which spans grades 2–12. Because students in Kindergarten and grade 1 have limited—or not-yet-developed—reading skills, finding a way to teach vocabulary to these children was a challenge. Dr. Cheryl Dressler found a way to combine read-alouds by the teacher with a variety of visuals, including in-book illustrations, various types of picture-based activities, picture cards, and concept cards. The words she chose, primarily from the *Living Word Vocabulary*¹ and *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists*², are those that are critical for developing oral vocabulary to prepare children for the content-area and academic language they will later encounter. The words are both challenging and developmentally appropriate. Many English words are polysemous, or have multiple meanings. This property of English words is often confusing for ELLs. *Wordly Wise 3000* K-1 makes children aware of the multiple meanings of simple English words—an important metalinguistic understanding which has been shown to relate to reading comprehension ability.

In a very significant way, early and nonreaders have many things in common with English Language Learners. Both need to learn decoding in English, no matter what level of proficiency they have in their first language; both need to learn vocabulary orally and through visuals because they don't yet have the skills to read enough words to increase their vocabularies. Therefore, *Wordly Wise 3000* K-1 has been deemed an excellent resource for young ELLs, as well as for beginning readers. This does not mean that ELLs will not require extra scaffolding, as recommended by our team of educators, but with its strong visual/word match, it makes an excellent jumping-off place.

Features and Benefits for English Language Learners

Among the features of *Wordly Wise 3000* K-1 teachers find most helpful to ELLs are the following:

- Clear, attractive visuals that communicate meanings of words, including multiple meanings as appropriate.
- A consistent cast of story characters—Kindergarteners and first graders—which keeps children interested in what happens next.
- Characters who experience situations and events common to those of real life Kindergarteners and first graders.
- Word learning is reinforced through repeated exposures in a variety of engaging, hands-on activities.
- Content of stories includes informational elements that allow children to grasp concepts appropriate for their grade levels, such as nature and various cultures.

- Oral language proficiency is developed through student retellings of important events in stories using a picture sequencing activity.
- Repetitiveness of lesson structure, with variations within individual lessons.
- Ease of implementation with step-by-step, day-by-day instructions for teachers.
- ELL notes and suggestions provided throughout the Teacher's Resource Book.

Suggestions for additional scaffolding for English Language Learners

- Break up stories into smaller chunks and ask confirming comprehension questions more frequently.
- Review new words more frequently.
- Have partners of similar or different levels of fluency work together with the picture/word cards.
- Have more fluent children create new sentences with the words, and perhaps illustrate them.
- Use the picture cards as an aid in retelling the story.
- Provide sentence starters for less-fluent children to help them retell the story.
- Have children create their own versions of picture/word cards.
- Use the cards (either the program cards or self-made versions) to play matching games.
- Record (by teacher) the pronunciation of the words for children to hear and practice.

¹Dale, E. & O'Rourke, J. (1981). *The Living Word Vocabulary*. Chicago: World Book/Childcraft International.

²Fry, E.B., and Kress, J.E., Fountoukidis, D.L. (2000). *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists*, 4th ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

We are grateful to the review panel, comprising experienced ELL teachers and teacher educators, who not only pointed out the strong points of Wordly Wise 3000 K-1 for ELLs, but also offered suggestions for more robust scaffolding.