Structured Literacy

INSTRUCTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS



KANSAS
STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

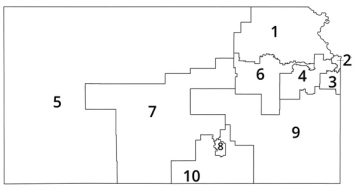
Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Feb. 13, 2026

Kansas State Board of Education

BOARD MEMBERS

900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3203
www.ksde.org/board



DISTRICT 1



Danny Zeck
Vice Chair
Danny.Zeck@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 2



Melanie Haas
Melanie.Haas@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 3



Michelle Dombrosky
Michelle.Dombrosky@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 4



Connie O'Brien
Connie.O'brien@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 5



Cathy Hopkins
Chair
Cathy.Hopkins@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 6



Dr. Beryl A. New
Beryl.New@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 7



Dennis Hershberger
Dennis.Hershberger@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 8



Betty Arnold
Betty.Arnold@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 9



Jim Porter
Jim.Porter@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 10



Debby Potter
Debby.Potter@ksde.gov

SUCCESS DEFINED

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

OUTCOMES

- Social-emotional growth
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study
- Civic engagement
- Academically prepared for postsecondary
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success

Kansans CAN

MISSION

To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.

VISION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

MOTTO

Kansans Can

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION



Dr. Randy Watson
Randy.Watson@ksde.gov

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services



Dr. Frank Harwood
Frank.Harwood@ksde.gov

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
Division of Learning Services



Dr. Renee Nugent
Renee.Nugent@ksde.gov

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

July 1, 2025

Contents

5 A BREAKDOWN OF INSTRUCTION
5 Literacy Structure
5 Recommendations
5 *Pre-K*
6 *Kindergarten*
7 *First and Second Grade*
8 *Third and Fourth Grade*
9 *Fifth Grade and Sixth Grade*

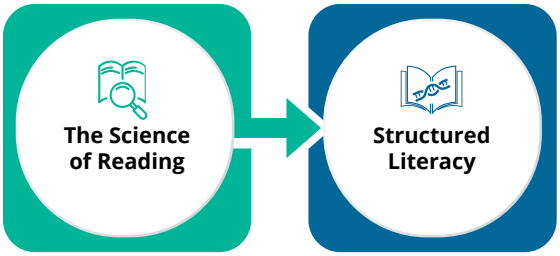
10 THE FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

STRUCTURED LITERACY: INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR LITERACY COMPONENTS

A Breakdown of Instruction

Literacy Structure

The literacy structures and graphics represented in this document are intended to create a snapshot of the domains of language arts instruction that are included in a structured literacy framework. This document is a recommendation only and should be used in conjunction with professional conversations about literacy instruction and careful review of student data. Although the literacy components are listed separately on the graphics, it is not expected that teachers silo the components in their instruction. Robust reading instruction and the components listed in this document should be integrated, when possible, to provide instructional coherence.



The terms of structured literacy and the science of reading are not synonymous. Structured literacy is founded on decades of research and instructional practice that are informed by the science of reading.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pre-K

A child's oral language provides the foundation for their ability to read and write. Time and intentionality should be given to building oral language skills with our youngest students in developmentally appropriate ways. Instruction should focus on enhancing knowledge of the function of language: having needs met, asking questions to enhance understanding, utilizing rich vocabulary, and engaging in reciprocal conversations to communicate effectively with peers and adults. Play provides excellent opportunities for students to apply these skills. It is also important that teachers carefully design explicit instruction to build the foundational reading skills and strategies that will set the stage for later reading and writing. In addition, this 30–40-minute block of integrated instruction should encourage children to be "word curious" and help children find joy in reading, writing/drawing, listening and orally sharing their thoughts and ideas. Suggested instructional structures (and suggested time) for explicit instruction within this block include:

- **Phonological Awareness-** to include **phonemic awareness** (15 min.) rhyming, syllables, alliteration letter sounds, initial, ending, medial sounds in consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words.
- **Phonics** (10 min.) letter identification, letter naming, handwriting, pencil grasp and letter strokes.
- **Language Comprehension** (15 min.) vocabulary, background knowledge, language comprehension, written expression.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

ORAL LANGUAGE, VOCABULARY AND FLUENCY	PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	PHONICS	COMPREHENSION
Pre-K	15 minutes	10 minutes	20 minutes

A BREAKDOWN OF INSTRUCTION

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) recommends a block of instructional time daily (not less than 90 minutes) that is intentionally planned for literacy learning utilizing a structured literacy model of instruction and guided by student data to allow all students access to grade level content. Instruction may occur in whole group or small group depending upon student data and resources.

Kindergarten

Students at the beginning of kindergarten will need developmentally appropriate instruction as they build stamina to longer instructional periods and their understanding and application of letters and sounds. The suggested schedule below may shift in response to the age of the student and review of data received from early screening, diagnostic, and formative assessments.

Lesson plan recommendations for **kindergarten**

Word Recognition

- Phonological/phonemic awareness
- Alphabetic knowledge
- The alphabetic principle
- Basic phonics (including dictation/handwriting)

Language Comprehension

- Vocabulary
- Background knowledge
- Language structures
- Verbal reasoning
- Literacy knowledge

Writing

- Written expression

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

ORAL LANGUAGE, VOCABULARY AND FLUENCY	PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	PHONICS	COMPREHENSION	WRITING
Kindergarten	20 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes	20 minutes

First and Second Grade

As students gain foundational skills related to letters and sounds, they will apply these skills to decodable texts and then to more complex texts. The suggested schedule below may shift in response to the age of the student and after the analyzing data received from screening, diagnostic, and formative assessments.

Lesson Plan Recommendations

Word Recognition

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Decoding
- Spelling (Orthography)
- Handwriting

Language Comprehension

- Vocabulary
- Background knowledge
- Language structures
- Verbal reasoning
- Literacy knowledge

Writing

- Written expression

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

ORAL LANGUAGE, VOCABULARY AND FLUENCY	PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	PHONICS	COMPREHENSION	WRITING
First Grade	10 minutes	30 minutes	25 minutes	20 minutes
Second Grade		30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes

Students moving into intermediate grades will encounter texts with greater complexity. Building on earlier foundational skills, students continue to grow in vocabulary development and gain comprehension skills. Students gain experience in reading in various content areas and become more independent in applying literacy skills and strategies.

Third and Fourth Grade

Lesson Plan Recommendations

Word Recognition

- Advanced word study
- Morphology
- Syllables

Language Comprehension

- Vocabulary
- Background knowledge
- Language structures
- Verbal reasoning
- Literacy knowledge

Writing

- Written expression

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

ORAL LANGUAGE, VOCABULARY AND FLUENCY	ADVANCED PHONICS AND MORPHOLOGY	COMPREHENSION	WRITING
Third Grade	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Fourth Grade	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes

Fifth Grade and Sixth Grade

Word Recognition

- Advanced word study
- Morphology
- Syllables

Language Comprehension

- Vocabulary
- Background knowledge
- Language structures
- Verbal reasoning
- Literacy knowledge

Writing

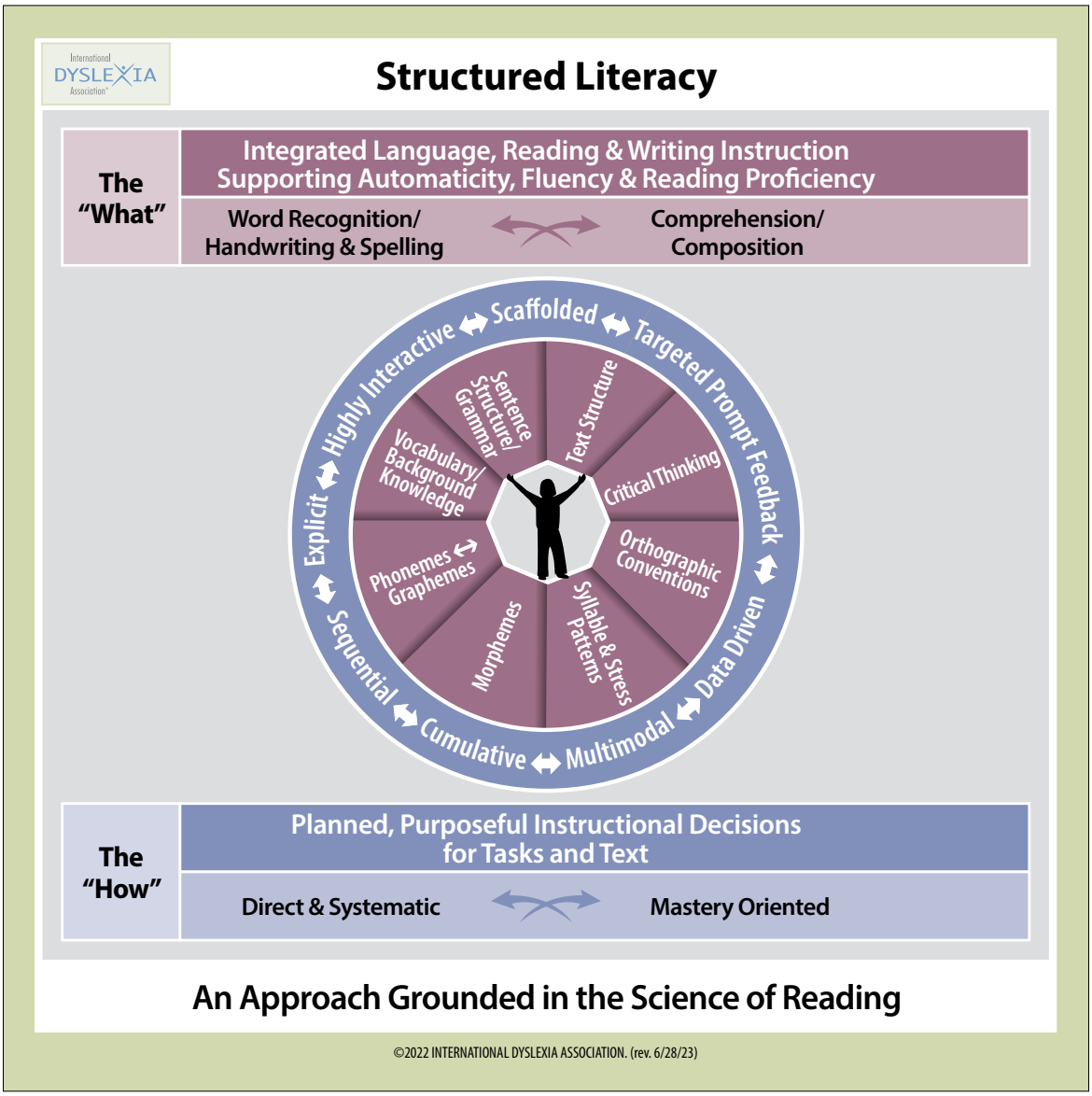
- Written expression

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

ORAL LANGUAGE, VOCABULARY AND FLUENCY	ADVANCED PHONICS AND MORPHOLOGY	COMPREHENSION	WRITING
Fifth Grade	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Sixth Grade	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes

The Focus of Instruction

The focus of instruction in a structured literacy framework varies in the amount of time spent on each element, based on careful analysis of data and age of student. Instruction by a skilled general education teacher will ebb and flow as students progress or as they need supplemental instruction to achieve mastery. Keeping this in mind, the following components are examples of what should be included in your structured literacy lessons. The grade level English Language Arts standards should determine the depth of what is taught. The graphic below indicates that beyond what is taught, how it is taught is extremely important. When using a structured literacy model of instruction, teaching should be explicit, systematic, cumulative, interactive, data driven and provide accurate and prompt feedback to guide student learning.



Examples

Pre-K Early Literacy Skills

In Pre-K classrooms, guidance can be found in the Kansas Early Learning Standards[1] for Communication and Literacy Skill Development.

- Participates in conversations and discussions.
- Describes things with details, emerging command of grammar.
- Increasing appropriate use of letters, words, and concepts of print.
- Increasing understanding and use of words.
- Engages in activities with and in response to books.
- Enjoys and engages in various forms of word play, rhymes, music, books.
- Demonstrates basic understanding of letter/sound correspondence and with prompting and support blends and segments phonemes.
- Recognizes name and engages in environmental print.
- Engages in writing, drawing activities and writes most letters in name.

Kindergarten-Second Grade

Kindergarten through second grade components of instruction based on the Kansas Early Learning Standards[1] and the Kansas Standards for English Language Arts (ELA)[2]:

Speaking and Listening

- Participates in collaborative conversations and discussions, appropriate volume, details, etc.

Print Concepts

- Concepts of print
- Recognition and naming of letters of the alphabet

Phonological Awareness

- Listening to and manipulating sound
- Segmenting words.
- Blending words
- Onset/rime/syllables

Phonics

- Letter/sound correspondence
- Prefix instruction
- Suffix instruction
- Inflectional endings
- Anglo-Saxon/Old English etymology

Semantics

- Tier II vocabulary
- Shades of meaning

Syntax

- Parts of speech
- Sentence structure (including subject, verb, object, modifiers)

Pragmatics

- Rules and purposes for conversations
- Ability to ask and answer questions, seek information and clarification

Discourse

- Listen to and generate questions while reading or being read to
- Increasing background knowledge
- Learning to infer meaning

Third Grade-Sixth Grade

In third through sixth grade, the instruction focus will expand and focus on increasingly complex components as found detailed in the Kansas Standards for English Language Arts (ELA)[2]:

Phonological Awareness

- Pronouncing words
- Listening for sounds in words

Advanced Phonics

- Vowel Teams, Syllabication, Advanced structures of the English Language (-dge, -tch, etc.)

Morphology

- Latin affixes
- Roots and bases
- Greek-based combining forms

Semantics

- Tier II vocabulary
- Word connotation
- Figurative language

Syntax

- Parts of speech
- Sentence structure (including simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences)
- Pronoun reference
- Verb tenses
- Words that signal a relationship between words in text

Pragmatics

- Metaphor
- Hyperbole

Discourse

- Monitoring reading for comprehension.
- Using graphic organizers to summarize text and understand text structure.

Endnotes

1 All In for Kansas Kids. (2024). *Kansas Early Learning Standards: Building the foundation for successful children* [Book]. All in for Kansas Kids. https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/Early%20Childhood/Kansas_Early_Learning_Standards.pdf

2 KSDE. (2023). Kansas Standards for English Language Arts [Book]. https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=lRPEqFzIgQA%3d&tabid=5280

For more information, contact:

Dr. Laurie Curtis
Early Literacy Dyslexia Program Manager
Career, Standards, and Assessment
(785) 296-2749
elitdyslexia@ksde.gov

Kansans CAN

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3201
www.ksde.gov