



## Book Study Guide

**CORWIN**  
Literacy

Welcome to the book study for ***Differentiating Phonics Instruction for Maximum Impact***. We know professional development is important to teachers, but we also recognize that there are a lot of demands on your time. This study guide is designed to pace your reading; to offer suggestions for before, during, and after reading each chapter, and to provide opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. To do everything as suggested in this guide, plan to meet as a group at least 11 times. You may want to spend additional weeks working through Chapters 5–11, as those chapters provide suggestions on how best to incorporate the seven characteristics of strong phonics instruction. Depending upon the time you have, you could also choose to focus on only a few chapters. Designed to be flexible, this guide allows you to spend your time studying what you feel will be most helpful for your ongoing professional development and most beneficial for your students.

By the end of the book study, as a group you will have . . .

- explored the research behind the best practices for differentiating phonics instruction in your classroom(s).
- come to understand the key components of differentiating instruction for students above, at, and below grade-level, as well as for multilingual learners—and how to address all your students' phonics needs.
- explored how best to incorporate the seven characteristics of strong phonics instruction in your classroom(s).
- come to understand the ten reasons phonics instruction at times falls short of expectations and how to analyze your teaching resources to eliminate these reasons.
- created an assessment schedule including weekly, monthly, and quarterly assessments (resources provided in the appendix and the online companion website, <https://companion.corwin.com/courses/differentiatingphonics>) to complement those provided by your phonics program.
- learned how to make modifications to your daily phonics instruction based on your assessments and classroom observations to better meet the ongoing needs of your students.
- created blending routines for phonics skills (Chapter 5).
- created routines to teach high-frequency words with differentiation for students at different levels and for multilingual learners to practice reading, writing, and spelling.
- reviewed texts to identify high-frequency words for students to practice reading, writing, and spelling.
- learned an enhanced approach to teaching decodable texts that includes not only phonics skills but also vocabulary and oral language, comprehension and other early reading skills, and writing and spelling.
- created lesson plans and routines for reading decodable texts for a variety of phonics skills (Chapter 7).
- created a list of supplemental decodable texts to provide further practice for your students.
- created weekly schedules for re-reading assigned decodable texts.
- incorporated writing—including word on structure and syntax, vocabulary, and composing—about decodable texts in your lessons.
- created sentence and paragraph frames and word banks for decodable text lessons (Chapter 8).
- developed a schedule for including decoding activities in daily phonics lessons.
- created dictation word lists and cumulative sentences for phonics skills (Chapter 9).
- created word chains and word ladders for phonics skills (Chapter 10).
- created lists for word sorts for phonics skills (Chapter 11).
- introduced six phonemic awareness routines into your classroom(s).
- incorporated six different overarching phonics lessons into your classroom(s), helping you to effectively incorporate the seven aspects of phonics instructions.

Thank you for selecting ***Differentiating Phonics Instruction for Maximum Impact*** for your book study. And thank you for the hard (and joyful) work you do every day to teach our children.

# CHAPTER 1: Why Introducing All Students to Grade-Level Content Is Key

## Synopsis

- Defines differentiated and adapted instruction—both are key
- Discusses the importance of scope and sequence, *the spine* of phonics instruction
- Provides an overview of phonics research, including three reading models
- Explains why phonics instructions must occur in both whole-group at grade-level and small-group instruction for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

- Day 1: Read pages 3–10
- Day 2: Read pages 10–17
- Day 3: Read pages 18–23

## Into the Classroom (prior to group meeting)

1. What are the top three challenges you face when teaching phonics in your classroom?

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2. How are you currently differentiating and adapting instruction? During whole-class instruction? During small-group instruction?

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## As a Group

1. Discuss your top three challenges. Are there challenges that your colleagues mentioned that you realize you are also experiencing? Together, determine the group’s top three goals to work on throughout as a group.

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### Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

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## Notes

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# CHAPTER 2: What Is Differentiated Phonics Instruction?

## Synopsis

- Explains how to provide acceleration and enrichment for above-level students during whole- and small-group instruction
- Explains the components of differentiated instruction for students below-grade level—frontloading content in a brief small-group lesson prior to whole-group instruction, modifying (not lowering) expectations during the whole-group lesson, and addressing previous skills needs during additional small-group time
- Explains the three components of differentiated instruction for multilingual learners—sound transfer and articulation, vocabulary, and building on students’ primary language

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

- Day 1: Read pages 25–29
- Day 2: Read pages 30–35
- Day 3: Read pages 35–43

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Make notes about how you are currently differentiating phonics instruction for the different learners in your classroom.

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## Group Meeting

1. Discuss the difference between enrichment and acceleration for differentiating instruction for above-level students. Share what you are currently doing.

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2. Discuss the importance of the three components of differentiating instruction for below-grade level students—frontloading content, modifying expectations, and addressing previous skills needs. Share what you are currently doing.

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3. Discuss the importance of the three components of differentiating instruction for multilingual learners—sound transfer and articulation, vocabulary, and building on students’ primary language. Share what you are currently doing.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Where do you think you are currently in providing differentiated phonics instruction for the different learners in your classroom?

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2. How will you measure success as you work through the professional guidance in this book on your own and with your group?

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## Notes

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# CHAPTER 3: High-Impact Routines

## Synopsis

- Details the seven characteristics of strong phonics instruction and why all are important for student learning gains
- Provides the 10 reasons phonics instruction sometimes falls short of expectations and how to analyze current teaching materials vis-à-vis these 10 reasons

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 45–51

Day 2: Read pages 52–56

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Do your current instructional materials meet all seven characteristics of strong phonics instruction? Do you think the materials are particularly strong in some areas? Weak in some areas? Are there particular characteristics you would like to address in this book study?

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2. Do you think your current phonics instruction is not accelerating student learning as much as you’d like due to any of the 10 reasons phonics instruction sometimes fails? Are there particular areas you would like to work on your own and with the group?

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## Group Meeting

1. Determine as a group which of the seven characteristics of strong phonics instruction your current materials address well? Are there any characteristics that aren’t covered well? As you work through this book, consider those areas you may want concentrate on more.

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2. Work as a group to determine which of the 10 reasons phonics instruction may fail that you particularly want to address as you work through this book. Consider that some of the supplemental resources recommended in Chapters 5–12 may help.

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### Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Continue to evaluate your phonics materials vis-à-vis the seven characteristics of strong phonics instruction. Where can you make improvements?

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## Notes

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# CHAPTER 4: Progress Monitoring

## Synopsis

- Provides an assessment decision tree with three steps
  - Determine which students are above or below grade level
  - Determine specific skill needs to modify whole-group instruction and form small groups
  - Monitor progress with weekly/monthly formative assessments

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 57–63

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Use your school/district assessments or a fluency assessment to determine which students are above, at, or below grade level.
2. Administer the Comprehensive Phonics Survey (see appendix) for students below or above grade-level.

For students below grade-level expectations for decoding:

- Administer a phonological awareness assessment, such as the PAST (<https://thepasttest.com>)
- Administer a letter and sound assessment (see appendix)

3. Administer the Comprehensive Spelling Survey (see appendix) for all students.

## Group Meeting

1. Compare where your students are—do you have more above, at, or below grade level?

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2. Develop an assessments schedule to monitor progress using:

- Fluency checklist (Appendix G)
- Cumulative spelling sentences (Appendix H)
- Reading observation forms (Appendix I)
- Phonics skills checklist for writer’s notebooks (Appendix J)

Remember that assessments should be linked to next steps.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Based on your student assessments, develop next steps for your students.

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## Notes

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# CHAPTER 5: Blending Routine

## Synopsis

- Highlights the research that supports blending as a decoding strategy
- Defines the two types of blending—additive and successive—and discusses when and how to use each
- Details how to create blending lines—top, middle, and bottom portions—and provides routines and ways to differentiate instruction for different learners

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 67–77

Day 2: Read pages 78–84

Day 3: Read pages 85–91

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Introduce blending lines, using the guidelines on pages 71–75, for the skill you are working on.
2. Differentiate instruction for students at different levels, using the recommendations on pages 76–77.
3. Conduct a fluency check (see Appendix G).
4. Conduct reading observation using the forms on the companion website.

## Group Meeting

1. Discuss the improvements/challenges you have experienced in your classroom while incorporating Wiley’s recommendations for blending into your phonics instruction.

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2. Determine adjustments you might make so the routines are smoother and more effective and discuss modifications you’ll make based on your fluency checks and reading observations.

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3. Break out into small groups to create blending routines (include ideas for differentiation) for the skills you'll be teaching over the next few weeks. Assign each group different skills.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Use the blending routines you created in your group meeting, continue to introduce new skills, paying attention to the best practices, particularly the differentiation strategies, outlined in the chapter.
2. Continue your weekly fluency checks and your reading observations and modify whole-group and small-group instruction based on the data.
3. Try out a couple of the variations detailed on pages 78–82, paying attention to what resonates most with our students.

## Resources

Sample Lesson: Warm-Up (page 218)

### Sample Lesson: Introduce Skill and Blending (page 220)

## Notes

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# CHAPTER 6: High-Frequency Words Routine

## Synopsis

- Highlights the research detailing the best instructional practices for teaching high-frequency words
- Discusses the most effective way (and time) to introduce and teach high-frequency words
- Provides a list of the top 248 high-frequency words in English and lists of high-frequency irregular words, high-frequency decodable words, and high-frequency irregular words by related concepts
- Details a read, spell, write, extend routine for teaching high-frequency words and offers recommendations to differentiate instruction
- Provides detailed recommendations for how to assess student learning

## Reading Timeline

Here's how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 93–97

Day 2: Read pages 97–110

Day 3: Read pages 110–118

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Determine the high-frequency words, using the lists on pages 98–100 and 102–109, for your grade level.
2. Assess students on the high frequency words lists (figures 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6), paying attention to what's appropriate for your grade level.
3. Review the high-frequency words routine.
4. Continue the assessments according to the progress schedule you developed during the group meeting about progress monitoring.

## Group Meeting

1. Develop a plan to teach (and assess) high-frequency words throughout the next few weeks (and throughout the year). If you have different grades represented, break out into small groups by grade level.
  - Review the texts you'll be reading to make sure students have plenty of time to practice reading, spelling, and writing high-frequency words. Add texts as necessary.

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2. Discuss how you plan to differentiate instruction for students above and below grade level and for multilingual learners.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Use the routines you developed for high-frequency words, paying attention to the best practices (particularly the differentiation strategies) outlined in the chapter.
2. Assess students' progress with high-frequency words based on the plan you developed.
3. Add a list of high-frequency words to your students' notebooks, if you haven't already done so.
4. Introduce a few of the variations noted on pages 114–115, paying attention to what resonates most with our students.
5. Continue the assessments according to the schedule you developed during the group meeting about progress monitoring and make instructional adjustments. Add the assessments for high-frequency words to your schedule.

## Resources

Sample Lesson: Warm-Up (page 218)

Sample Lesson: Read Decodable Text, see phonics focus (page 222)

## Notes

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# CHAPTER 7: Reading Decodable Text Routine

## Synopsis

- Highlights research about decodable texts, including common errors to avoid, the three criteria all decodable text should include, and how to assess decodability and accountability
- Outlines an enhanced approach to using decodable texts that includes vocabulary and oral language, building fluency, syntax and text cohesion, comprehension and other early reading skills, and writing and spelling
- Provides a routine (and a sample lesson on page 222) detailing how to use the enhanced approach, as well as recommendations for differentiation to meet the needs of above grade-level and below grade-level students and multilingual learners

## Reading Timeline

Here's how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 119–127

Day 2: Read pages 128–136

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Review the decodable texts provided by your phonics program and look for additional decodable texts from one of the companies recommended on page 127.
  - Tip: Divide the units among the group, so that you can cover more of the program
2. Using the lesson plan on pages 222–223, plan an enhanced decodable text lesson for a phonics skill you are teaching.
  - Refer to the routine outlined on pages 128–131.
  - Refer to the differentiation tips on page 132.

## Group Meeting

1. Bring and share the list of decodable texts you've created to supplement the unit you were assigned.  
  

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2. Discuss the enhanced lessons you taught. What went well? What might you change next time? Where did you need additional supports for students?  
  

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3. Break out into small groups to create enhanced decodable text lessons (include ideas for differentiation) for the skills you'll be teaching over the next few weeks. Assign each group different skills.  
  

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4. Create weekly schedules (see page 125) for rereading the decodable texts assigned.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Use the lessons you developed as a group for enhanced decodable text lessons, paying attention to best practices outlined in this chapter.
2. Use the weekly schedules the group created to ensure that you use the decodable texts beyond phonics instruction.
3. Introduce the supplemental decodable texts to provide further practice for your students.
4. Introduce decodable reader's theater and create an audio library of student recordings.
5. Continue the assessments according to the schedule you developed during the group meeting about progress monitoring and make instructional adjustments.

## Resources

Sample Lesson: Warm-Up (page 218)

Sample Lesson: Read Decodable Text (page 222)

## Notes

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# CHAPTER 8: Writing About Decodable Text Routine

## Synopsis

- Highlights research about how writing strengthens decoding and encoding skills
- Provides recommendations for how best to incorporate writing about decodable texts including work on structure and syntax, vocabulary, and composing
- Offers suggestions for differentiation to meet the needs of all learners

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Review pages 119–127 (as needed)

Day 2: Read pages 137–144

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Ask students to write about a decodable text(s), concentrating on different aspects of writing throughout the week with the same texts.
2. While reading a decodable text, deconstruct sentences with students.
3. After reading, use sentence frames to have students construct sentences based on content from the story.

## Group Meeting

1. Discuss the writing about decodable text lessons you taught. What went well? What might you change next time? Where did you need additional supports for students?

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2. Using the enhanced lessons you created at your last meeting, see where there are opportunities to include writing about the texts and revise lesson plans accordingly.
  - Update your weekly schedules you created at the last meeting to include writing.

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3. Split in groups and create sentence and paragraph frames and word banks for upcoming decodable text lessons.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Use the lessons (and schedules) you developed as a group for enhanced decodable text lessons, paying attention to best practices outlined in Chapters 7 and 8.
2. Remember to use your additional decodable texts for writing as well as for other enhancements.
3. Use the scaffolds you created during the group meetings as you have students write about new decodable texts.
4. Introduce word card sentence build and trio sentence building train to vary instruction and further engage students.
5. Continue the assessments according to the schedule you developed during the group meeting about progress monitoring and make instructional adjustments. Add a monthly check of students' writer's notebooks for different aspects of writer's craft to your schedule.

## Resources

Sample Lesson: Warm-Up (page 218)

Sample Lesson: Writing, Syntax, and Fluency (page 224)

## Notes

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# CHAPTER 9: Dictation Routine

## Synopsis

- Highlights research about the importance of dictation to help students practice encoding skills and attend to words at the phoneme level, improving their spelling and writing skills
- Provides a schedule for including encoding activities, such as dictation, in daily phonics lessons
- Includes sample grade-level dictation word lists, examples of cumulative sentences, and spelling checklists that can be modified for scope and sequence
- Features a routine for dictation with suggestions for differentiation, including charts that detail phonics differences for African American English, Chicano/a, and regional dialects

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 145–153

Day 2: Read pages 153–166

Day 3: Read pages 167–171

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Introduce a dictation word list (use the model on pages 151–152) for the target skill, as well as previously taught skills.
2. Introduce cumulative sentences (see example on pages 152–153) for end-of-week dictation for the target skill and previously taught skills.
3. Insert a spelling checklist (use the grade-level lists on pages 156–160) into students’ writer’s notebooks.

## Group Meeting

1. Discuss new information you learned in the reading about dictation. What do you feel has improved in how you conduct dictation? What would you like to continue to work on? How did the pacing vary from what you did previously? How did your feedback vary?

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2. Break out into small groups to create dictation word lists and cumulative sentences for upcoming skills; remember to include review skills each week.

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3. As a group, create weekly schedules (use the model schedule on pages 149–150 as a guide) to include encoding activities for upcoming skills.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Use the routines, dictation word lists, and cumulative sentences you created during group to introduce new skills and review previously taught skills.
2. Once a month, review students' writer's notebooks to make sure students are consistently and accurately spelling words containing any of the circled skills. Adjust whole-group and small-group instruction, as needed. Add this to your assessment schedule (see 4 below).
3. Try out several dictation variations (pages 167–168) to add joy to your dictation lessons.
4. Continue the assessments according to the schedule you have developed over the course of the book study and make instructional adjustments.

## Resources

Sample Lesson: Warm-Up (page 218)

Sample Lesson: Encoding (page 221)

## Notes

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# CHAPTER 10: Word-Building Routine

## Synopsis

- Highlights research detailing how word exploration provides students with essential “thinking” time, helping them to consolidate and solidify their learning
- Explains the two types of word-building activities—blending and word awareness—and when to use each
- Provides a sample schedule and a routine for word-building, including differentiation recommendations

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 173–181

Day 2: Read pages 182–188

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Introduce blending (as grade-level appropriate) and word-building chains for the skill you are working on, incorporating best practices—particularly differentiation suggestions—mentioned throughout the chapter.
2. Try out the word-building schedule outlined on page 177.

## Group Meeting

1. Discuss what you learned while differentiating word-building routines. What do you feel has improved in your classroom? What would you like to continue to work on? How did the pacing vary from what you did previously? How did your feedback vary?

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2. Break out into small groups to create word chains (remember word chains should be a maximum of 8–10 words) for upcoming skills and if you have time, create word ladders (see pages 182–183) as well.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Use the word chains and word ladders you created during your group meeting, paying attention to differentiating instruction for all the learners in your classroom.



# CHAPTER 11: Word-Sort Routine

## Synopsis

- Highlights research behind word sorts—including Ehri’s phases of word reading development—and the importance of providing students with time to think about and discuss how words work
- Explains seven common word sorts and their instructional purposes, with recommendations about when and how to use each
- Provides a routine for word sorts with recommendations for differentiation to reach all students in your classroom(s), including samples of word lists for students above, on, and below grade level

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 189–193

Day 2: Read pages 194–203

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Create a list of words to use for word sorts that emphasize the target skill you are working. Use different sorts for different purposes (see pages 192–193) through the week. Remember to ask questions throughout the word-sort routines to get students to verbalize their thinking about words.
2. Try out Wiley’s Reading Big Words Strategy (see pages 190–191) to help students tackle multisyllabic words.
3. Explore resources for word-sort lists prior to the group meeting.

## Group Meeting

1. Discuss how using the Reading Big Words Strategy worked in your classroom. What resonated with students? Where did they need more scaffolding? Less scaffolding? What would you do differently going forward?

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2. Work as a group to create word lists for upcoming targeted skills and adapt the lists to differentiate for the learners in your classroom(s). Note how you’ll use the word lists for distinct instructional purposes.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Use the word-sort lists you created during the group meeting, paying attention to best practices detailed throughout the chapter. Remember you can use the same targeted skill word list for a variety of instructional purposes.
2. Try out several of the variations on word sorts detailed on pages 199–200.
3. Continue the assessments according to the schedule you have built over the course of the book study.

## Resources

Sample Lesson: Warm-Up (page 218)

Sample Lesson: Encoding (page 221)

## Notes

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# CHAPTER 12: Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

## Synopsis

- Discusses the need to tightly connect phonemic awareness and phonics
- Explains the importance of I Do, We Do, You Do model for teaching phonemic awareness
- Provides six routines to help you incorporate five minutes of phonemic awareness daily
  - Presents recommendations for multimodal and multisensory supports (must-haves) for six routines

## Reading Timeline

Here’s how you might divide the reading into manageable segments.

Day 1: Read pages 205–208

Day 2: Read pages 209–214

## Into the Classroom (before group meeting)

1. Introduce two of the routines, paying particular attention to the I Do, We Do, You Do model and your multimodal and multisensory supports.  
*Note:* You can all do the same two routines, or you can assign two routines to each of three groups.

## Group Meeting

1. Discuss the routines you did and share any challenges, student responses, success stories, etc.

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2. As a group, determine how you might improve upon your delivery of the routines going forward.

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## Into the Classroom (after group meeting)

1. Introduce the other four routines you didn’t do prior to the meeting, paying particular attention to the I Do, We Do, You Do model and your multimodal and multisensory supports.
  - Remember during whole-group instruction to target the skills most of your students need.
2. Continue the assessments according to the schedule you have built over the course of the book study.

## Resources

Sample Lesson: Warm-Up (page 218)

Sample Lesson: Phonemic Awareness (page 219)

## Notes

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## CHAPTER 13: Sample Weekly Lesson Templates

These resources have been incorporated into recommendations for Chapters 5–11. Use this page to note any additional thoughts, observations, or ideas you had while working through the lesson templates.

## Notes

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## CHAPTER 14: Phonics Primer for Upper-Grade Teachers

This chapter doesn't form part of the book study, but if you are a coach or teacher who works with grades 3 and up, this chapter can help you provide your students with foundational phonics skills for 10–15 minutes daily. Use this page to note any additional thoughts, observations, or ideas you had while reading the chapter.

## Notes

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