Peekskill
City
School
District

Pre-K – 5
Balanced Literacy Administrator/Teacher Handbook

Effective Literacy Instruction-

A Balanced Literacy Approach

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GETTING STARTED WITH BALANCED LITERACY

Balanced Literacy in the Peekskill City School District

There is no greater gift than to teach a child to read and write. Literacy unlocks a world of opportunity and levels the playing field for all. According to a study conducted in late April 2013 by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy, 32 million adults in the U.S. can't read. That's 14 percent of the population. 21 percent of adults in the U.S. read below a 5th grade level, and 19 percent of high school graduates can't read. Adults who cannot read, cannot be employed, and therefore cannot function in highly demanding literate careers. We are faced with the tremendous opportunity to teach our students to become literate global citizens. Every day in your classroom you have the ability to engage a child's mind in rich stimulating fiction and non-fiction texts.

Teachers in the Peekskill City School District embrace a balanced literacy approach as the foundation for instruction for all students. Balanced Literacy is a philosophy of instruction that developed as a result of understanding the learning needs of students and the instructional demands on teachers to meet those needs. The "balance" in balanced literacy refers to the integration of skills within a holistic approach to reading so that all students learn the requisite aspects of literacy as defined by the National Reading Panel: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in a meaningful and authentic way. The instructional components may look different in each classroom as teachers make choices as to how to include them in order to address student needs, but the instructional framework in which a balanced literacy approach is planned and delivered will look fairly typical from classroom to classroom. A balanced literacy approach is compatible with the Common Core State Standards and is the represented in the curriculum found in the maps on Rubicon Atlas.

Students need to have their eyes on text. They need to have opportunities to develop spoken and written language. They need to hear rich stories and conversations around different content areas and associated texts in order to become literate beings who can contribute to the community and the world outside of school. Students' language and literacy development requires that teachers plan and prepare skillfully in order to make the student work meaningful.

This guidebook is a reference for teachers in Peekskill to develop and use a common language and shared understanding of literacy instruction. It will be revised and refined as we work and learn together in response to our students and as a result of our own professional learning. The Peekskill City School District has rich opportunities to incorporate the languages and cultures from a diverse population, and it is our goal to support the development of all our learners young and old. This is our mission, this is our challenge, and this is our work.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to the Arlington Central School District for sharing their document as a starting point for the Peekskill City School District Guidebook.

The Literacy Block

The Readers Workshop/Literacy Block and Writers Workshop/Writing Block sections of the handbook are not intended to provide teachers with everything they need to know to support a highly developed Readers and Writer's Workshop. It is a place to get acquainted with some of the components. Extensive professional reading and professional learning are required to become a master teacher of the Readers and Writers Workshop model.

All pre-k – grade 5 teachers are teachers of literacy. Literacy instruction occurs throughout the day and across all content areas. The literacy block incorporates the workshop model and is the time when the teacher provides direct explicit instruction in the skills and strategies of reading and writing. Every student K-5 must have at minimum a 90 minute literacy block daily. Students in grades K-5 need ample time to share their thinking and develop their oral language as well. Non-native speakers of English and struggling students typically speak less than their on-level and English speaking peers. Yet, their development of oral language is critical to their development of literacy skills involving written text.

Teachers play a critical role in the balanced literacy classroom as they set the stage for meaningful student learning. Teacher modeling is fundamental for all students and especially for those who may be non-native speakers or who struggle. Students need teachers to model so that so that they understand what they are supposed to do and how they are to accomplish a task. Students also need teachers to think aloud about why they are doing something as well as the rationale behind the task so that students understand the context in which they are supposed to use certain strategies or complete specific assignments.

The 90 minute timeframe is the typical structure within which literacy instruction occurs. However, on some days, additional blocks of time may be used for word work, word study, spelling, a read aloud, or a shared reading activity. Teachers need to think about their students' needs and structure the daily schedule to incorporate literacy instruction that meets students' needs. Classroom teachers can collaborate with their grade level colleagues, literacy leaders, and building administrator to explore alternative ways to incorporate necessary components of literacy instruction.

Even students as young as age 5 can be involved in rich literacy activities during the student work time. Imagine walking into a kindergarten classroom and observing a teacher working closely at a U-shaped table with a group of five students using the same text that includes rhyming words throughout. The children read to partners as the teacher carefully listens in as one child read and takes notes on a pre-designed observational check list to record reading behaviors. Seated on the rug is another group of students reading to themselves with "whisper phones" so they can monitor their own fluency. Four students are seated in front of a bank of computers. They are working on individual stories and skills using an online program that includes an assessment. There are four students seated at a round table discussing a chapter book using questions that they wrote for homework to share in this literature circle. The remaining six students are seated at their desks and are

reading from their "just-right" book bags and writing or drawing a response to a question posed by their teacher in their reading journals.

Organizing the Classroom to Support Balanced Literacy

In well-designed classrooms, the physical space is critical to the success of the workshop model. Some important considerations include:

- There well-defined areas for whole group, small group, and independent work.
- The classroom library is inviting, well organized and culturally diverse.
- Books are easy to find and to return.
- Noisy and quiet areas in the room are separated?
- There are clearly defined places for students to store and to retrieve their tools (writing folders, texts for various groupings, book boxes, pens/pencils/paper, etc.)
- There is wall space set aside for the following key supports:
    - Word Wall (at student eye level)
    - Daily Schedule
    - Lesson objectives (so students clearly understand what they will know and be able to do)
    - Student work
    - Anchor charts (to be developed with students)
    - Behaviors/routines/management charts

The Workshop Model: An Instructional Framework

Teachers in the Peekskill City School District, in grades Pre-K – 5, embrace a workshop model as the instructional framework for teaching children to read and write. The balanced literacy philosophy along with grade level curriculum provides the content of what is taught and the methodology of how things are taught within this framework. A workshop model enables a classroom teacher to provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students in a classroom. Although, there are subtle differences among the activities in the workshops found in a pre-K classroom, in K-1 classrooms, and in grade 2-5 classrooms, the overall components remain the same.

Readers Workshop

The reading workshop model provides a framework for delivering curriculum in accordance with a balanced literacy approach. It helps the teacher to structure her lessons and it helps the students by engaging them in a consistent process of moving from one literacy activity to another in a cohesive way. Planning for a workshop or an entire literacy block takes time and thought as there are many instructional aspects to consider and include so that students are involved in meaningful literacy work. The workshop model also allows for teachers to assess student performance so that instruction can be differentiated to respond to students' individual needs.

The workshop model has three key components that form its structure. The workshop begins with a mini-lesson. The mini-lesson is the time for the teacher to provide direct explicit instruction using content and language objectives as its focus. The mini-lesson sets the stage for students' work either in independent reading or small group work. The mini-lesson can be taught with the teacher standing at the easel or white board, with the students seated on the rug, or can be taught with students seated at their desks. Whatever the arrangement, the teacher needs to insure that all students are engaged in the mini-lesson and provides opportunities for students to share their understanding with her and with each other.

The mini-lesson is followed by student work time. During the work time, students can work independently or with a partner. This is also the time when teachers can pull a small group for targeted instruction based on student need. Students can sit comfortably around the room. They can sit at their own desks, they can pull chairs together in a group, they can sit on a rug, or they can be meeting with the teacher at her table.

The concluding part of the workshop is the whole group share. The purpose of the whole group share is two-fold. This is a time for students to share out what they did during the student work time, and how they applied the strategy or skill introduced in the mini-lesson. This is also a time when students can reflect on who they are as learners, and share out what they did new or differently that day and how it helped them. For the whole class share, the teacher can asks students to return to the rug, or they can remain where they are. The share is a critical component of the readers workshop as it provides times for students to reflect and helps them to internalize the reading work they have done. The share is often omitted due to time constraints. However, thoughtful planning and keen time-keeping should allow for students to reflect on themselves as learners and share their thinking.

Balanced Literacy Approach to Reading in a Workshop Model

A balanced literacy approach incorporates component parts that can be integrated into the workshop model. Skillful instruction of these parts functions seamlessly when planned as part of cohesive whole and taught with a high level of skill. Integration of component parts and where reading and writing are connected will be the highest form of development in this work. Although the Readers Workshop (aka Literacy Block) and Writers Workshop (aka Writing Block or Period) have separate structures, the instructional focus of those two blocks will overlap as reading and writing provide students with real world models of texts they can read and write.

Component parts of a balanced literacy approach in reading can include:

Whole Class Work	Small-Group Work	Individual Work
Read-aloud	Guided Reading	Targeted feedback during small group work.
Interactive read-aloud	Strategy Lesson	Conferring during independent reading.
Shared reading	Word Work	Independent word study.
Reading mini lesson	Vocabulary	Independent vocabulary work.
Phonics mini lesson	Phonics Work	Independent phonics work.
Whole Class Share	Small Group Share	Response or reflective journal writing.

Whole group work is best established away from the path to the classroom door. Students should be seated so they can see the teacher and the easel. They should have their attention on the shared text, and the teacher has a line of sight to anyone appearing at the door.

During a whole class lesson, students can be seated on the rug or at their desks. When the teacher and students are on the rug, the teacher sits by an easel with chart paper, markers, highlighter tape, and pointers. She may also have a large pocket chart with sentence strips and mentor texts for the day. The teacher also needs to have a way to record anecdotal notes nearby. The teacher may also stand at the enoboard. Specific items may vary according to students' grade levels. It is imperative that all materials are prepared in advance to maximize instructional time so time is not wasted searching for tools or materials while students are waiting to learn.

Small group work needs to occur in a place that provide complete visibility of all areas of the classroom AND is within arm's reach of all the materials needed to teach the small group lesson. A work table needs to be placed strategically for this to happen. Also, careful planning and management is needed so that materials are organized and easily accessible in this location.

For a guided reading or strategy lesson**,** the teacher needs to have at arm's length access to the texts for the each group that day, anecdotal note-taking materials, various markers, small dry erase boards, sentence strips, letter tiles/magnet letters/tray, small pocket chart, sticky notes, highlighters, etc. These items will be different at different grade levels. As with whole class instruction, it is imperative that materials are organized and prepared in advance so as not to waste time and to maximize instructional time.

Getting to Know My Students as Readers/Writers

Many teachers use student surveys, read previous grade level reading logs and conduct short reading conferences to get to know their students' interests and self-perceptions as readers and learners. The use of the District reading benchmarks and assessments including Fountas and Pinnell Assessments will assist in providing a diagnostic lens into what skills and strategies the reader has internalized, which in turn, provides a basis for instructional planning.

Mini-lessons in the Readers Workshop

Mini-lessons are opportunities for teachers to deliver direct explicit instruction that is targeted to address the necessary skills and strategies that all students need. The mini-lesson may come from the Curriculum Map, the Common Core Standards, and The Literacy Continuumn (Fountas and Pinneell, 2017) and should be presented with content objective and language objectives to frame the instructional target.

In general, mini-lessons fall into three categories and are addressed in the examples below:

Management Mini-lessons	Selecting and returning books Caring for independent reading journals Choosing just right books Sharing a book in small group work Writing in response journals Reading routines/expectations
Strategy and Skills Mini-lessons	Using context to figure out new words Recognizing compound words Recognizing and using punctuation Reading with phrasing Adjusting reading speed Summarizing a text Locating evidence to support thinking Reading tagged and untagged dialogue Using an index or a glossary Making connections to personal experiences Comparing texts with similar topics, plots, or characters Writing a quality response to a book Responding to an assigned topic for writing about reading

Literary Analysis Mini-lessons	Learning about different genres Noticing features of a text format and how format is related to meaning Connecting prologues and epilogues Identifying major and minor characters Identifying how authors make characters believable Identifying setting and its significance to story Noticing how an author uses time Identifying the message or theme of a book Learning about books in a series

Skills and strategies are not the same. "**Skills** are the more mechanical aspects of reading: recognizing words, monitoring accuracy, using punctuation, etc. **Strategies** are 'in the head' processes that readers employ as they construct meaning from print."

Fountas and Pinnell, 2001

Conversation in the Readers Workshop: Accountable Talk

Accountable talk is a means for engaging students in conversation where they actively listen to each other and further the conversation. Accountable talk conversations can be supported through the use of sentence stems to help students build onto each other's statements. The teacher, in accountable talk conversations, may act as a facilitator if necessary, but the primary focus is on students speaking with students.

Accountable talk conversations can occur during interactive read-alouds, during partner work, and during small group work. An accountable talk process can be used when students "turn and talk" or when they are engaged in a "think, pair, share" . In both partner and whole group conversations, the emphasis is on helping students identify their thoughts, articulate their thinking, and building a deeper level of understanding through shared conversation.

As teachers, we expect that student 'talk' focuses on some aspect of the text whether directed by a specific prompt or just a 'what do you wonder about right now?' experience. The talk is 'accountable' because it focuses on the participants' discussion of an idea or a text. When students use accountable talk in small group work, the teacher circulates around the room listening in on student conversations to assess the level of thinking and to insure that conversations are on track. The teacher may choose to ask specific students if they would be willing to share their thoughts with the whole class as she listens in.

Accountable talk needs to be modeled. Modeling should occur with the whole class first. The teacher and students sit in a circle, and sentence stems are written on the easel or the white board. The teacher provides a scaffolding for using the sentence stems and

listening actively to responses. She tells the students that she is not the focus of the conversation, and that students need to talk and listen to each other. Once this is done whole class, the teacher may choose a student to partner with, or another teacher in the room if available to model a turn and talk process. Once students begin the process of sharing with a partner, the teacher may also identify student groups to model for their classmates. Students can use the whole class share to reflect on their growing ability to contribute to meaningful conversations with a partner and/or the whole class.

Read Alouds in the Readers Workshop

Read alouds are a teacher directed component of the readers workshop. Teachers select texts that are above the readability of the class to provide students with exposure to rich language and complex text structures that they may not be able to access independently. Listening comprehension typically exceeds reading comprehension, especially with learners who are developing their literacy skills, so higher level thinking can be modeled when doing an interactive read aloud with the class.

Read alouds fulfill many important purposes in the development of critical readers at any age. These include but are not limited to:

- Fostering a love of reading
- Exposing students to diverse language and text structures
- Modeling how proficient readers process text
- Increasing/improving student vocabulary and listening skills
- Providing a 'shared text' for conversation

Read alouds are the vehicle for the teacher to think out loud about specific reading skills or strategies that they want students to learn. It is also a time for teachers to think out loud about the various aspects of text such as language, text structure, or author's purpose, as example. The teacher thinks aloud though talk. This talk lays the foundation for all conversations about texts that students are expected to engage in when reading independently or at other times such as book clubs, partnerships, or teacher conferences. A suggested sample of titles for grade level texts can be found in the curriculum maps.

Shared Reading in the Readers Workshop

Shared reading is an activity where all participants have their eyes on text. This can be done with a whole class or with a small group. The purpose of using shared reading in the readers workshop is to provide opportunities to model how text is read paying attention to phrasing, pronunciation, and expression. Shared reading also helps students read texts that are just above their level as the teacher models reading perhaps unfamiliar or above level vocabulary. In shared reading, the teacher reads the text first. Then the students read along with the teacher. This may be repeated a third time either that day or on another day, and the teacher gradually fades her voice out so that only student voices are heard.

Shared reading can be done using a big book, a poem written on chart paper, text projected on an overhead or shown on a document camera or interactive white board. Shared reading can also be done with students holding a copy of the text that is displayed in front of the class. For example, the 3rd grade curriculum includes the text, Rain School, and each student has a copy to read from.

Shared reading can be utilized to teach many of the concepts about print, phonics and phonemic awareness lessons that are critical in building the skills of our emergent readers. However, shared reading is just as appropriate at the upper elementary levels where it could be used with a text excerpt on an overhead, interactive whiteboard, or document camera. The teacher can use shared reading to model a strategy that students need to acquire.

Small Group Instruction in the Readers Workshop

Small group instruction occurs during student worktime and provides teachers with an opportunity to address the needs of small groups of students in a targeted way. Small group instruction needs to be planned and scheduled so that instructional time is purposeful and relevant to student needs. Guided reading groups and strategy lessons are two forms of small group instruction that teachers can include in the readers workshop.

Guided reading lessons typically are used to address the needs of students who are emergent readers to level J readers. The emphasis in guided reading is on decoding, phonemic awareness, word attack strategies, and fluency although students need to demonstrate an overall understanding of the texts they read. Guided reading lessons are taught to groups of no more than five students who read on the same level and demonstrate similar reading needs.

Strategy groups, on the other hand, focus specifically on the strategies that more skilled readers need to use to understand texts at an increasing level of difficulty. The emphasis in strategy lessons is on a range of comprehension strategies, the process to determine the meaning of unknown words and how to navigate through different genres and text structures. Strategy lessons may be taught to no more than five students who read on the same or different text levels but who need support in the same instructional area.

Planning for small group instruction stems from an understanding of student needs, curriculum content, and grade level standards. Students' needs are determined through the use of an informal running record, a formal Benchmark Assessment, and/or individual reading conferences. Teachers can reference The Literacy Continuum (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017) to plan for small group instruction by identifying necessary reading behaviors for oral fluency and comprehension within, beyond, and about the text. A lesson should incorporate the specific reading behaviors that will be addressed as well as the prompts that will be used to support students' development of those behaviors. (see Appendix)

Conducting an Effective Guided Reading Group

Guided reading is an opportunity to provide explicit instruction to target specific areas of need for a group of students. During the guided reading lesson, a teacher focuses on helping students learn the reading behaviors that the student is expected to use when reading independently. A template for planning a guided reading lesson can be found in The Literacy Continuum (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017) and should be completed prior to teaching a guided reading lesson. One way to keep ahead of the planning is to write the guided reading lesson plan at the end of the day on which students were taught so that next steps can be identified for the lesson on the next day.

Word work should also be included in guided reading to target specific aspects of decoding and word attack strategies that students may need. Students should also have an opportunity to write briefly so that they can capture their thinking and practice their use of encoding while they work on their decoding.

Some key points to remember when planning a guided reading lesson include:

- Group size should be limited to no more than five students. This allows the teacher to closely attend to the reading of individual students in the group setting.
- The goal(s) or focus of the lesson is determined by student data.
- The text is selected a text to support the goal.
- Identify the goal for and with the students at the start of the lesson.
- Start together as a group, moving the students toward the opportunity to try it on their own.
- End the session by reminding students what they need to continue to work on in their independent reading.

Joanna Hindley, 2005

Forming Guided Reading Groups

Assessment of individual students guides the formation of dynamic and fluid guided reading groups. Students change membership in groups frequently based upon student needs and instructional level text. Record keeping is a critical factor to determine student needs in appropriate grouping to support those needs. Common features of powerful guided reading opportunities for students include the following:

* Students are grouped based on similar reading needs and similar instructional levels of text.

* Teachers introduce the text, provide scaffolded support during the reading and probe for text comprehension after reading.

* Each student reads a whole text.

* Groups change frequently based on the results of formal and informal assessment data gathered through everyday teaching and established benchmarking.

* Emphasis is on reading many books along a gradient of increasing complexity and challenge.

* NOTE: The goal of guided reading is for children to read independently and silently.

Strategy Lessons with Flexible Groups

Flexible reading groups are formed because a group of students require extra practice with a particular skill or strategy. **These are not ability groups!** Flexible reading groups are often formed with both high ability and low achieving readers who still need to acquire a very specific skill or strategy. Groups may also be formed by text level. Other examples of flexible grouping for strategy work may include:

* Fluency work
* Word work
* Decoding multisyllabic words
* Using context clues to figure out new words
* Story sequencing
* Retelling
* Forming opinions about the reading
* Developing stronger journal responses

Remember to use your anecdotal notes from whole group work, small group lessons and conferencing along with formal assessment data to continuously reflect on the make-up of guided and flexible reading groups.

Small group instruction either for guided reading or strategy work is intended to be a short, focused session – not longer than 20 minutes per group with no more than 5 students. Readers who read lower level texts and who may struggle should optimally be in groups no larger than three students.

Scheduling groups across a week should allow for time to work with the neediest readers every day. These students receive a double dose of instruction where they meet once in the classroom and once for either a push-in or pull-out depending on the student's needs. Other groups may be scheduled so that no more than three groups in total are seen during the literacy block. For example, in addition to the neediest students, other groups may be scheduled as follows:

Monday:	A, B
Tuesday:	A, C
Wednesday:	A, D
Thursday:	A, B
Friday:	A, C

Literature Circles/Book Clubs

Literature circles or book clubs are small groups of students formed around the selection of a text that students have chosen. The purpose of a circle/club is to encourage, support and scaffold discussion, response and reflection around a text.

Through shared conversations with their peers, students deepen and expand their understanding and appreciation for a common text. Discussion centers on students' personal responses to the text and through the entry point of events, characters, and craft. Students often question and challenge one another's responses to the shared story.

The Teacher's Role in Literature Circles

Literature circles are student led and teacher supported. The teacher must check in with students working as a group to insure that they continue to grow in the way that they approach books at all levels. The teacher may sit in when the literature circle or book club meets and asks as a facilitator to the students' conversation. At times, the teacher may prompt for further discussion or pose a question to challenge students' thinking.

Teacher modeling is a critical factor in the success of student led book clubs or literature circles. The teacher needs to model aspects of the process of working in a club as well as the behaviors that are expected. Certain reading strategies may also be modeled whole class that students will use when reading in book clubs. On occasion, a teacher may wish to participate in a circle as a full member. If so, the teacher needs to be prepared to keep up with the reading and for the discussion just as students are expected to do.

Assessment in Literature Circles

Students may be assessed on their use of accountable talk, their use of a reading response journal to document their thinking while reading, and a student self-assessment on individual participation in the group. If a literature circle format is used, students will need to complete tasks related to specific roles. Students may submit their work for their role to the teacher as evidence of their participation, their thinking, and their reading work.

Organizing for Literature Circles/Book Clubs

Choosing texts

- The teacher may provide a range of texts to choose from that students can read independently.
- Students choose the text they want to read, and no more than 5 students should form a club reading the same text.
- Texts should be complex enough to provide opportunity for rich discussion.
- Over time, texts should represent diverse genres, authors, formats, world perspectives, and student interests.

Forming Groups

- Groups can be formed with a similar make-up of students to guided reading groups. Each group should have approximately 4-5 students in a group. The whole class may do literature circles or book groups at the same time, or a part of the class may be involved in this student-driven activity.
- Ideally, students should be permitted to self-select the text of their choice
- following a brief 'book talk' for each text provided for the circle/club being launched.
- Students can complete a private ballot indicating their first 3 choices. They should be guaranteed that they will have 1 of their choices in the circle/club.

Scheduling

Students need to be given time to plan a schedule that incorporates reading time and discussion time. Reading can be done at home, in school, or both. That decision can be made by the teacher or by the students based on the needs of the individuals in the group. Expectations need to be established in terms of how many weeks students can use to complete their book club conversations around a specific book. In addition, if the teacher wants students to produce something as a representation of their book club work such as a written piece, a project, or a presentation, then time needs to be built in for the completion of that as well.

For more information related to literature circles, refer to Voice and Choice in Reading Groups and Book Clubs by Harvey Daniels. (2002)

Independent Reading

Reading is like any other skill. In order to improve, a reader has to practice. Practicing, though, requires that the reader engages with books on a level where there is understanding about the content as well as of the vocabulary used. Readers will be taught how to choose "just right" books that enable them to develop more than a superficial understanding of plot when reading fiction, and more than a recitation of facts when reading non-fiction.

Beginning in the year 2005, New York State established a minimum requirement of 25 books per year for student in grades K-5. As such, all students should be required to read self-selected texts throughout the school year. Learning to choose a book is a critical part in engaging students in reading. Students may need to learn to choose books that are of interest, and that also provide opportunities for students to develop their reading ability. Suggested guidelines to help students choose appropriate books include:

- Genre
- Author
- Vocabulary
- Sentence length
- Story line
- Topic (if non-fiction)

Students should also keep a reading log. The log is a place where students can record books they start and finish, as well as those books they start but do not finish. Dates should be noted that books are begun as well as when they are completed or abandoned. Genres and authors' names should also be noted on the reading log. In this way, the teacher and student can identify patterns of reading behaviors to insure that students are developing as readers. As students develop a repertoire of reading strategies, they can also note which strategies helped them the most during their reading on a specific day or night. Students may also want to track how long they read and how many pages they read in a particular sitting to keep track of how they are building stamina.

Conferring with Students

A reading conference is a 1:1 conversation between the student and the teacher most usually around an independently selected text. During a typical conference, the teacher seeks to accomplish several things:

* Assess what the student can do independently as a reader
* Determine what still needs to be taught
* Teach (during the conference) in a way that will influence what the student does, setting expectations that will be followed-up on
* Determine next moves for the student in terms of author, genres, level of difficulty, etc.

Teachers keep extensive notes on the conversations and findings that occur during a reading conference. These anecdotal notes serve to inform instruction for that student.

In a typical literacy block, teachers should plan to confer with several students during a session with each conference lasting a few minutes. The goal is to have met at least one time with each student by the end of each week. On average, a teacher should confer with five students each day. Beginning year conferences will typically take longer to conduct because teachers are seeking to establish a baseline for each student.

Conducting a Reading Conference

In the student reading conference, teachers seek to determine if students have chosen a text they can read and if they are applying strategies taught in whole group or small group lessons. The responsibility is on the student to lead the conversation about the process and the text. This will need to be modeled during the launch unit at the beginning of the year so that reading conferences are effective. In conferences, the student should be doing most of the talking.

Students may provide the following information in a reading conference:

* Why the book was chosen.

* What the story is about.

* What the students want the teacher to notice during the conference.

* What the student is learning about herself as a reader.

* What the student might work on next in her reading.

A teacher can use the conference to listen to a student read out loud and do a running record on the fly to insure that a text is on the right level. A reading conference may also, in some ways, overlap with the information shared in a reading response journal. It may be interesting to note if the student is more capable of in depth analysis orally, in written form or both. Also, the reading conference is an opportunity to help a student set reading goals to help her move forward as a reader.

Reading Response Journals

Students and teachers engage in a private dialogue about what students read as well as on students' perceptions of themselves as readers through the use of Reader Response Journals. Students need to maintain a reading response journal in which they write about the text they are reading independently on a regular basis. Students are expected to share their thoughts about what they are reading and include details from the text to help clarify their own thinking. In turn, the reading response journal provides the teacher with a window into students' processes as readers as well as their level of comprehension. The

teacher need not have read the book under discussion, but can use questioning to help push the student to deeper understandings of and across texts, characters, theme, etc. Students' use of evidence in their responses will enable a teacher to assess students' understanding.

Writing in response to reading is an important opportunity to deepen comprehension for some students. There are many reasons for using reader response journals regularly including:

- to enable the reader to think more deeply about texts read
- to share thoughts about a text read
- to hold students accountable for their reading
- to provide another assessment opportunity
- to slow down a reader who might rush through a book
- to enable a reader to reflect on her reading strategies and or reading choices

It is important to remember that the reading response journal is just one tool to understand students as readers. For those students whose writing ability may not be equal to oral ability, a response journal may not necessarily reflect a student's true level of comprehension. A reading conference, in conjunction with the response journal, can help uncover any areas of question.

Management of Reading Response Journals

Management of the reader response journals is a teacher decision, but there are some suggested guidelines to consider:

The process a teacher uses to collect and document students' responses may vary. A teacher may collect response journals from a group of students each day so that by the end of the week, all journals have been read and responded to at least one time. Or a teacher may collect all the journals on one day and return them promptly with feedback. In either case, a teacher will see each journal a minimum of one day per week, provide feedback, and document findings as an informal assessment.

Many teachers have students respond in a marble or spiral notebook. Another possibility is to have students use a small (1/2 inch) binder as a Reader Response Journal. A binder will allow students and teachers to add or remove individual pages when necessary. Also, a binder can be divided into different sections and entries can be grouped according to like theme such as fiction, non-fiction, and strategy use as examples. If binders are used, loose-leaf sheets may make transporting student work easier. Students need to make sure though that their papers have their names and the date on them. Ultimately, the teacher may choose the journal form that works best for her. The important thing to remember, though, is that all students will use a response journal, and teachers will respond to each student at least once per week.

Teacher responses typically occur on a different page from the one the student used. However, if there is something specific that the teacher wants to reference in the student's response, the teacher may place an asterisk on the student writing so that the student understands where the comment is directed.

Preparing Students to Write Powerfully in Response to Text

Students need to be taught about how to write effective and meaningful reading responses. This is introduced early in the year during the launch unit. From time to time, reading responses may need to be revisited if the teacher notices that students need more guidance, or if the teacher wants the responses to move in another direction.

Some students may need to be helped to share their thinking about what they read. Giving students opportunities to listen to talk about texts and to share their ideas with classmates provides a springboard for writing.

As part of the launch unit, consider the following suggestions for supporting students' reading response journal writing:

- Model thinking aloud about texts during whole class read alouds.
- Model writing reading response sentence starters.
- Create an anchor chart with sentence starters for reading responses.
- Model using accountable talk prompts for whole class conversations about text.
- Engage students in pair share conversations about text.
- Model through think alouds about strategy use, and then write the response.
- Model through think alouds metacognitive understanding of being a reader, and then write the response.

Readers Workshop in the Pre-K Classroom

In a pre-k classroom, the workshop model has the same component parts as in upper grade classrooms. Student work, however, may look different. The emphasis in literacy development for pre-k students is on oral language development. As such, student work time activities should allow for students to engage in conversation with each other during play. For example to help students develop their understanding of sound-symbol correspondence, student work time activities could include:

- reading chants, songs, and rhymes that had been introduced to the whole class
- reading alphabet books
- forming letters with playdough, sand, or shaving cream
- dancing to alphabet songs
- creating individual or whole class alphabet books
- labeling pictures with invented spelling

ALL ABOUT ASSESSMENT

The Role of Assessment

Assessment is an on-going and integral process of classroom instruction. The continued assessment of student reading and writing occurs during whole group and small group lessons as well as in individual conferences. Assessment information plays a vital role in helping teachers plan instruction. It is also helpful in creating fluid and flexible groupings for small group instruction. Teachers assess student learning formally and informally and for different purposes.

Universal screening instruments are used to look at student baselines relative to grade level expectations. The Peekskill City School District uses the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment system to assess students against grade level benchmarks. In addition, different subtests of the Aimsweb assessment system is used across grades K-5. Diagnostic assessments are used to understand students' needs underlying benchmark performance. Formative assessments are used to understand student progress while engaged in learning and to inform instruction, and summative assessments are used to look at mastery of content and/or strategy use.

Assessments can exist in many forms. Teachers can observe students and record their thoughts and evidence of student performance through anecdotal notes. Students can also take traditional tests or performance assessments that close a unit of study. In addition, all students in grades 3-8 may take the New York State test of English Language Arts which offers a comparison to other students' performance in the State.

The Purpose of the Fountas & Pinnell and Reading Benchmarks and Writing Benchmarks

A universal screening instrument provides a common lens and a common language with which teachers can talk about student reading competence and plan instruction. The Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment system uses leveled books as a vehicle to understand students' reading processes and behaviors. Teachers observe, record and analyze a student's reading behaviors while a student reads orally. Teachers also learn about students' reading comprehension, or understanding of text by engaging students in conversation about what they read. Teachers can then plan for whole group, small group and individualized reading instruction throughout the day using the data from the benchmark assessment.

District Writing Benchmarks will provide an opportunity for teachers to gather initial information about what students already know about being an effective writer. We will be determining the grade level writing benchmarks and these pieces of student writing will be scored using a common rubric.

The Link Between Assessment and Instruction

The link between assessment and instruction is critical to the success of teaching and learning in every K-12 classroom. As students develop in their reading and writing throughout the year, teachers must make instructional decisions that continue to reflect the changing needs of their students. At times, this requires moving forward and skipping some areas already well understood and at other times, it requires teachers to slow down and/or re-teach a skill or strategy to allow students to internalize a concept.

Teachers need to differentiate instruction in order to address the various learning needs in a classroom. Formal assessments, such as the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark described above, along with informal assessments or anecdotal records inform teachers' decision making about instructional targets. Small group instruction and individual student conferences allow for teachers to provide targeted and differentiated instruction as evidenced in student performance data.

Teachers need to keep clear documentation of strategies that were taught and the impact on student learning. Keeping records of students' needs and whether or not they were addressed will help teachers move forward in their instructional planning. In addition, clear documentation will help teachers stay informed about student progress throughout the year to insure that end of year instructional goals are met.

WRITERS WORKSHOP

The Writers Workshop

The writers workshop has three components similar to the three basic components in the readers workshop. The writers workshop begins with a demonstration. This can take the form of a read aloud from a mentor text, a modeled writing example, or a mini-lesson on writing. This is then followed by a large chunk of time where students write. During this time, the teacher can hold individual conferences or meet with small groups of students to target aspects of the writing process. At the end of the writers workshop, students can share excerpts from their work or they can share what they learned about themselves as writers.

The Writing Process

The writing process is multi-stepped and can be linear or circular. The steps, themselves, though, remain consistent. Students learn the steps involved in the writing process so that they are comfortable moving in and out of different phases in the cycle in a fluid way. They can reflect on where they are in the process and often choose which step they need to move to next. The writing process may consist of the following steps:

Planting Seeds – students enter ideas in their notebooks

Drafting – a seed has been selected and a first draft is crafted. Note students can begin by drafting without pulling a seed from their notebooks.
Revision – the "meat" of the cycle and the place where most teaching resides is in the REVISION stage. Here a writer applies a critical lens to the work.
Editing – the work of editing is only attempted once the writer has made the final revisions to the content of the piece. Only then is it worthwhile for students to check spelling, grammar and punctuation.
Publishing – Not every piece that is drafted, revised and edited is intended for publication. This is usually the choice of the writer and sometimes the writer and the teacher. Published work is often intended to be shared through a formal process, but not necessarily.

Instruction in the Writers Workshop

The writers workshop can include the following instructional examples for whole class, small group, and individual writing work.

WRITERS WORKSHOP

Whole Class Teaching	Small-Group Teaching	Individual Teaching
Read-aloud from a mentor text.	Focus on author style, genre, use of language, etc….	Individual writing conferences to address student need.
Shared/interactive writing	Mini-lessons	Individual conferences to assess student use of things taught.
Model writing with thinking aloud.	Guided Writing	Individual conferences to assess student use of things taught.
Vocabulary/Word Study	Word work	Individual teaching during word study application
Spelling mini lesson	Word work	Individual student writing conference.
Group Share	Small group share	

Shared Writing

Shared writing refers to a teacher and students composing a text together. The students dictate what to write and the teacher scribes their words on paper or by typing (displayed on an interactive board, etc.) Through the shared writing experience, teacher and students work through the conventions of print, spelling and grammar in an authentic way that causes students to understand the 'rules' of the written word and apply them to a meaningful writing experience, simultaneously. The purpose of shared writing is to engage

students in a process of writing that they are then expected to use when writing their own pieces.

With older students, a teacher might model or share a composition of her own and together with the students, work through the piece to apply the rules of composition, revision and/or editing in context. Again the focus is on application of the 'rules' – which moves us beyond simply hearing or memorizing them. The teacher can also model writing in a specific genre or for a specific purpose. Using a think aloud process while making writing decisions, students can learn how to craft their own pieces as well.

Interactive Writing

Interactive writing helps students attend to print while using their knowledge of oral language. As young students 'share the pen' with the teacher, they have an opportunity to practice writing the letters and words they know and to do some problem solving on words they are still coming to know. Interactive Writing is an excellent way to model the Concepts of Print such as directionality and one-to-one correspondence, as well as the conventions of writing including capitalization, punctuation, etc.

It is important to remember that like Shared Writing, Interactive Writing is yet another authentic experience for students to engage in and learn the application of important writing and reading strategies and skills.

Guided Writing/Small Group Instruction

Teachers can provide small group instruction in writing in the same way that they can provide small group instruction in reading. Instructional targets are identified by reviewing student work, reflecting on student conferences, and thinking about next steps in students' writing. For small group writing instruction, a teacher sits with no more than four students who need to work on a similar writing need.

Small group writing instruction requires that a teacher plan for a specific writing lesson. In addition, as a teacher conducts individual writing conferences, she may notice that students need a quick mini-lesson on something specific. She can pull a small group of students to address what she noticed. Small group instruction can be used to teach an aspect of writing or the writing process. These groups are fluid with students moving in and out based upon their writing needs.

Independent Writing

Students learn to write by writing. Students need opportunities to draft, revise, conference and edit. They need to be given chances to write on topics of their own choosing so they have ownership of their work. Students may be taught to write in accordance with specific writing structures, however, the content of their writing should come from their own experience and/or research.

Students need to write daily. Repeated opportunities to write enable students to employ demonstrations from mini-lessons in their own work. Independent writing time must be scheduled and valued by teachers. Students should also write for an appropriate amount of time depending on the developmental age of the students. Typically younger students might start with independent writing in short periods of 15 minutes and gradually increase to 30 minutes or more over the course of a school year. Students in intermediate grades should expect to begin the year with a minimum of 30 minutes devoted to independent writing and gradually increase their writing stamina throughout the year.

Writing Conferences

A writing conference is an opportunity for a teacher and a student to engage in a deep conversation about the student as a writer using the student's written work as the vehicle for the conversation. Conferencing offers an assessment opportunity for a teacher to move a student forward in her writing. It also provides information to use for instructional planning for small and whole group work.

The tone of the conference should be positive. Student writers should feel valued in the 1:1 conversation with their teacher. Conducting a conference requires that teachers follow certain steps:

- Sit next to the student.
- The student holds her work. Your hands do not touch the paper.
- Ask the student what she is working on.
- Ask the student what she would like you to focus on in the conference.
- Ask the student to read her work out loud to you while you listen.
- Ask the student what she heard.
- Share what you heard and address the target area the student identified.
- Share another observation and provide direct instruction to move the student's writing forward. Note, only offer one or two key writing suggestions.
- Leave the conference with a clear understanding of what the student will try to do next and when you will follow up with the student. Note this for yourself in your anecdotal records for the student.

Think about the structure of the conference as:

Research – find out how the student's writing is going
Assess – listen and identify 1 or 2 instructional targets
Teach – 1:1- on the spot focused writing instruction in this session
Record – the essential content of the conference, noting new goals, expectations and accomplishments

Managing Student Conferences

Writing conferences are intended to be brief. They should last approximately 5-10 minutes with each student. Use a timer to help stay on track. The intensity of the 1:1 conversation allows for much to be accomplished in this amount of time.

With an average class size of 25 students and within the 90 + 40 minute literacy allotment of time, all students should be able to have an individual conference with the teacher within a two week span of time. In addition, students can hold peer conferences as they work in between the times that they have teacher conferences. As the teacher and students develop conferencing skills, these short conferences can be powerful learning and teaching opportunities.

Record keeping is a critical component of the writing conference. The system a teacher uses is entirely personal, however, there are key elements that need to be included in the documentation. One type of record is the status of the class chart. In the beginning of the workshop, the teacher can ask students to quickly share where they are in the writing process. For example, one student may be drafting, one student may need a teacher conference, and one student may be revising a piece. The status of the class can be recorded on paper or in an electronic document. The date should also be included so teachers can see students' writing pace.

Another type of documentation includes notes from writing conferences. The teacher can keep a binder with a sheet for each student, or again, the teacher can create an electronic document to record conference notes. The teacher needs to note the student's name, the name and type of piece, and the one or two things that the teacher observed and targeted for instruction. There should also be a brief note about what the student's next steps are for continuing with the piece.

Writers Notebooks

There a variety of tools that our students can use for writing. Developmental needs for students at different grade levels may require that materials and their storage look different, but the purpose of these tools remains.

A writer's notebook is a tool that helps students collect seed ideas. Students can write their thoughts or sketch or draw representations of their thinking. Students can also tape or glue items in the notebook that inspire their thinking. When students draw or insert items in the

notebook, it is important that they include some sort of written note to themselves as to what the image or item means and perhaps, what they might want to write. Some students may prefer to use a sketchpad or blank book rather than a notebook with lines. The blank page allows for more freedom in the way in which ideas are recorded. The opening weeks of school can provide many opportunities for the intermediate student to plant seeds for future writing pieces.

Students need to see a model of a writer's notebook so that they understand its purpose. As such, the classroom teacher needs to create and maintain her own writer's notebook so that students see this as something that "real writers" do. Teachers should also model how to keep the writer's notebook as well as how to use its contents to develop written pieces.

Students may also have a writing folder to keep their current work, an alphabet chart, and perhaps an individualized word list. Depending on classroom storage, students may have a folder in a classroom crate or drawer which is used as a writing portfolio. Current drafts and finished products can be stored in the writing portfolio or in the student's writing folder that is kept in his/her desk. Teachers can use the system that best meets her needs for record keeping and for storage, as well as for students' developmental ability to manage different writing tools.

Word Study

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the foundation for reading and writing. Children need to understand how sound matches to print in order to decode and encode. Without this knowledge and the ability to match sound to symbol, children will be more likely to experience difficulty in their literacy development. Children also need to manipulate sounds. They learn to say individual sounds and then blend and connect them into whole words. Children also need to learn to segment words by focusing on groups of sounds so that they can read more challenging texts.

In pre-k, children are first exposed to letters and letter sounds. Teaching a letter of the week is a typical pre-school activity that according to research, is not shown to support children's literacy development. Instead, children should be exposed to letters and letter-sound relationships to satisfy children's literacy needs. Children naturally learn to hear and say beginning sounds first. They then focus on ending sounds. And lastly, the middle or medial sounds develop where children hear and identify letters and letter combinations in the middle of words.

Children's names are a wonderful way to help children start to understand the importance of knowing letters and sounds. For example, children can learn the letters found in their names. They can sort children's names in their class and find all names beginning with the letter "S" for example. In addition, supporting children's knowledge of letters and letter-sounds should arise organically throughout meaningful activities and not relegated to isolated activities. For example, the class can create alphabet books related to something they are learning about.

Shared writing, in which the teacher writes with her class is a prime opportunity to model how to match sound to symbol by encoding. Shared book reading is also a wonderful opportunity to draw students' attention to the written word and identify specific sounds. Having children help label the room and writing out the names of things in the room like the door and the window, for example, help children see how sounds map onto print. Word games and alphabet books are also important for developing letter recognition and matching sound to symbol.

As children move into kindergarten and grade 1, direct instruction in letters, letter-sound relationships, and letter formation provides support for learning to read and write. The Peekskill City School District uses Fundations in grades K-3, a Wilson based program, to teach and support children's understanding of the English Language. Fundations is designed for whole group instruction. However, when students demonstrate specific needs in the area of letter identification and letter-sound relationships, Fundations can provide support for individual or small groups of learners as well.

Word Solving

The focus of word study is on helping students learn about how words work. Students are taught about patterns in words which can support continued decoding and encoding of increasingly challenging words. Word Study can also be used to help students develop a rich vocabulary that as the basis of their daily language use as well as their content knowledge.

The process of becoming competent word solvers develops when students are actively engaged as readers and writers with real text. However, teachers may need to provide direct explicit instruction in helping students understand word solving strategies. Teachers may also need to provide rich activities to allow students to develop their own understanding of the ways that words work.

Word solvers learn about and use categories of words. They do not rely solely on spelling rules. Word solvers learn how words relate to one another and use their knowledge of the parts of words to help in solving both the pronunciation of words and understanding the meanings of words in context. For example, word solvers understand the meaning of prefixes and suffixes as well as the way in which they impact the meaning of root words. Word solving, then, enables students to read and understand words as well as how to construct new words in their own written work.

Word sorts, such as those found in Words Their Way (Bear et al., 2016), provide a way for students to engage with word parts so that they can develop their word solving ability. For students who struggle with words in grades 4-5, Just Words, a continuation of Fundations can be used as support.

Vocabulary Development

Knowledge of vocabulary is found to make a significant impact on students' abilities to read and comprehend. Teaching students every word in the English Language is not possible. However, there are significant steps teachers can take to enrich children's vocabulary in meaningful ways.

Sight words are a critical component in supporting children's developing reading and writing. Pointing out sight words in whole class reads as well as in students' individual or group books helps students to become conscious of specific words that recur in a variety of texts. Similarly, sight words can be incorporated into shared or interactive writing so that students make the connection between the construction and the reception of sight words in all types of texts.

Word Walls are utilized across grades to support students' developing working knowledge of language for oral and written use. For younger students, struggling students, and non-native speakers, word walls can provide instant access to words they can use on a regular basis. Word walls can help strengthen students' knowledge of alphabetic principles. Word walls can also be constructed for content areas work to develop content-specific word knowledge.

Construction of the word wall is a whole class activity. Words are added to the word wall with a detailed introduction that should include the reason it is being added to the wall. In addition, students should be involved in reading and writing the word wall addition as a way acknowledging its importance and helping all students incorporate the new word into their working vocabularies.

Word Study in the Workshop

Word study instruction can occur at different times throughout the day, depending on the word work being done. Content area word work may be incorporated in the reading workshop, in the writing workshop, or during the time where a specific content is being taught. Specific word part rules may be introduced in a whole class mini-lesson, in small group work, or highlighted in an individual student conference. In some instances, all students will need is to learn about specific words and vocabulary. In other cases, word study may only be relevant to a one or a small group of students who either need reinforcement of specific word rules, or as a way of pushing students forward in their word solving ability.

Fountas and Pinnell (2001, p 370) share the following as a way to think about word solving:

Strategies for Solving Words	
By Sound (phonemic strategies)	You can read or write some words by thinking about the sounds (man, hot, bed, hit, cup)
By Look (visual strategies)	You can read or write some words by thinking about the way they look (the, pie)
By Meaning (morphemic strategies)	You can read or write some words by thinking about what they mean (suitcase, two/to/too)
By Connections (linking strategies	You can us what you know about a word to figure out a new word (tree, my – try; connect, connection)
By Inquiry (research strategies)	You can use reference materials to learn more about words (lists, dictionary, charts, computer programs)

Word sorts can be used to help students see relationships between and among words. In grades K-3, word sorts can be included in literacy centers or stations. It should be noted, though, that word sorts are developed for use by individual or groups of students who need to work on specific letter patterns. In upper grades, students can be given word sorts to work on during the literacy block, as a do now, or during other times in the day.

Word Walls

Word walls are a place to form a visual record of words used and are created by a teacher and the students in her class. Word walls can be arranged alphabetically for younger students when the purpose of having a word wall is to support writing. Word walls can also be created around a content area or theme. These types of word walls can be arranged alphabetically or topically. For example, sight words and high frequency words are best arranged alphabetically. Mathematical prefixes such as uni, bi/di, tri, would be placed in numerical order. Several word walls can exist in a classroom if there is room and if students understand the purpose of each word wall on display. Word walls that are content specific may change throughout the year as content changes.

GLOSSARY OF BALANCED LITERACY TERMS

(A more comprehensive glossary of terms can be found in When Reader's Struggle, (2009). Pinnell and Fountas, 2009.)

F&P Text Level Gradient- A twenty-six point (A-Z) text-rating scale of difficulty, in which each text level, from the easiest at Level A to the most challenging at Level Z, represents a small but significant increase in difficulty over the previous level. The gradient correlates these levels to grade levels.

Independent reading level- The level at which the child reads the text with an accuracy of 95% or higher and has excellent or satisfactory comprehension (Levels A-K) or 98% or higher accuracy with excellent or satisfactory comprehension (Levels L-Z).

Instructional reading level- At levels A-K, the level at which the child reads the text with 90-94% accuracy and excellent or satisfactory comprehension; or 95% or higher accuracy and limited comprehension. At levels L-Z, the level at which the child reads the text with 95-97% accuracy and excellent or satisfactory comprehension; or 98% or higher accuracy and limited comprehension.

Interactive read- aloud- The teacher reads aloud to a group of children and invites them to think and talk about the text before, during and after reading.

Interactive writing- The teacher and children compose and construct a text on chart paper for everyone to see and reread. The children cooperatively plan, compose, and write a group text; both teacher and children act as scribes (in turn).

Small group reading instruction- The teacher works with children brought together because they are similar enough in reading development to teach in a small group. Small group instruction can focus on leveled texts or on strategy work using texts on students' levels.

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Appendix

	Rereading of Familiar Text	**High Frequency word review**	**Word Work**	**Reading at the Instructional Level (refer to the Continuum for selecting goals)**	**Prompts (refer to Prompting Guide 1 or packet of prompts by level)**	**Writing**
Early Emergent Readers (Level A)	Book Handling Tracking Left to Right Directionality Concept of word and sentence.	High Frequency and Sight Words	Naming and production of upper and lower case letters. Rhyming, segmenting, and blending. Sound symbol correspondence for beginning sounds (consonants)	Points to words while reading. Moves from left to right across one page or more. Counts words on a page. Understands letter vs. word vs. sentence. Introduce cueing systems: Does it make sense? (Picture holds meaning) Does it sound right? (Would someone say it this way?) Does it look right? (Does the word start with that sound?)		Moves left to right. Leaves spaces between words. Uses consonants to represent beginning sounds. Spells a few high frequency and/or sight words.
Emergent Readers (Level A-B)	Book Handling Tracking	High Frequency and Sight Words	Fluent recognition of upper and lower case letters. Rhyming, segmenting, and blending. Sound symbol correspondence for consonants and some	Concepts of print: Points to words while reading. Tracks left to right. Counts words on a page. Understands letter vs. word vs. sentence. Introduce and		Moves left to right. Leaves spaces between words Matches number of spoken words to written words. Uses

			vowels. Recognition of word families or phonograms. Blending word families with initial consonants.	develop cueing systems: Does it make sense? (Picture holds meaning) Does it sound right? (Would someone say it this way?) Does it look right? (Does the word start with that sound?)		consonants at the beginnings and ends of words. Uses previously introduced phonograms. Recognizes and spelling high frequency and sight words.
Early Readers (Levels B-F)	Book Handling Voice to print match Reading rate, prosody, and expression.	High Frequency and Sight Words	Fluent recognition and automatic production of upper and lower case letters. Rhyming, segmenting, and blending. Sound symbol correspondence for consonants and short vowels. Recognition of word families or phonograms. Blending word families with initial consonants	Points to words while reading. Tracks left to right. Counts words on a page. Uses return sweep for multiple lines on a page. Develops use of cueing systems: Does it make sense? (Picture holds meaning) Does it sound right? (Would someone say it this way?) Does it look right? (Does the word start with that sound?)		Moves left to right. Leaves spaces between words Matches number of spoken words to written words. Uses consonants, consonant blends and digraphs at the beginning, middle, and ends of words. Uses previously introduced phonograms and spelling patterns. Recognizes and spells high frequency

						and sight words.
Transitional Readers (Levels G-L)	Reading rate, prosody, and expression. Automatic recognition of high frequency words.	High Frequency and Sight Words	Develops phonics skills: Sound/symbol correspondence for consonant and vowel combinations (blends, digraphs, and dipthongs.) Recognition of word families. Recognition and use of spelling patterns for long vowel sounds.	Develops use of cueing and self-correction systems: Does it make sense? (Picture holds meaning) Does it sound right? (Would someone say it this way?) Does it look right? (Does the word start with that sound?) Rereads to clear up confusion and self- correct. Cross-checks cueing systems to confirm guesses. Uses comprehension strategies to engage with text.		Leaves spaces between words. Uses consonants, consonant blends and digraphs at the beginning, middle, and ends of words. Uses previously introduced phonograms and spelling patterns. Uses previously introduced spelling patterns for long and short vowel sounds. Spells high frequency and sight words.
Extending Readers (Levels M-T)	Reading rate, prosody, and expression. Automatic recognition of high frequency words	High Frequency and Sight Words	Develop phonics skills: Sound/symbol correspondence for consonant and vowel combinations (blends, digraphs, and dipthongs.) Recognizes and uses	Develops use of cueing and self-correction systems: Does it make sense? (Picture holds meaning) Does it sound right? (Would someone say it this way?) Does it look		Uses previously introduced phonograms and spelling patterns in single and multi-syllabic words. Uses prefixes and

			spelling patterns in open and closed syllables. Recognizes and understands the meanings of prefixes, suffixes, and root words.	right? (Does the word start with that sound?) Rereads to clear up confusion and self- correct. Cross-checks cueing systems to confirm guesses. Uses comprehension strategies to engage with text.		suffixes with root words, and applies appropriate spelling changes. Spells high frequency and sight words.

ELA Lesson Plan Template

CO:

LO:

Whole Class Mini-Lesson

Model:

Resources:

Literacy Stations

Reading:

Writing:

Word Work:

Small Group Instruction

Group : Students:

Instructional Focus:

Book Title

Word Work/Letter Work:

Group : Students:

Instructional Focus:

Book Title

Word Work/Letter Work:

Instructional Lesson Plan for Intervention

Student Name	Rereading of Familiar Text	High Frequency word review and/or word work	Reading at the Instructional Level (refer to the continuum for selecting goals)	Prompts (refer to Prompting Guide 1 or packet of prompts by level)	Writing

Peekskill City School District Reading Benchmarks

(Based on Fountas and Pinnell Instructional Levels)

Kindergarten

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1		Emergent*	Emergent*	Emergent*	A
2		A	A	A-B	B-C
3		B	B-C	C	D
4		C+	D+	D+	E+

First Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A	A-C	A-D	A-E	A-F
2	B-C	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-I
3	D	F-G	G-H	H-J	J-K
4	E+	H+	I+	K+	L+

Second Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A-F	A-G	A-H	A-I	A-J
2	G-I	H-J	I-J	J-K	K-L
3	J-K	K	K-L	L-M	M-N
4	L+	L+	M+	N+	O+

Third Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A-J	A-K	A-L	A-L	A-M
2	K-L	L-M	M-N	M-N	N-O
3	M-N	N	O	O-P	P-Q
4	O+	O+	P+	Q+	R+

Fourth Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A-M	A-N	A-O	A-O	A-O
2	N-O	O-P	P-Q	P-Q	P-R
3	P-Q	Q	R	R-S	S-T
4	R+	R+	S+	T+	U+

Fifth Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A-O	A-P	A-Q	A-Q	A-R
2	P-R	Q-R	R-S	R-T	S-T
3	S-T	S-T	T-U	U	U-V
4	U+	U+	V+	V+	W+

Sixth Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A-R	A-R	A-S	A-S	A-T
2	S-T	S-T	T-U	T-U	U-V
3	U-V	U-V	V	V-W	V-W
4	W+	W+	W+	X+	X+

Seventh Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A-T	A-T	A-T	A-T	A-T
2	U-V	U-V	U-V	U-V	U-W
3	V-W	W	W-X	W-X	X-Y
4	X+	X+	Y+	Y+	Z+

Eighth Grade

	September	November	January/February	March/April	June
1	A-T	A-T	A-U	A-U	A-U
2	U-W	U-W	V-X	V-X	V-X
3	X-Y	X-Y	Y-Z	Y-Z	Y-Z
4	Z+	Z+	Z+	Z+	Z+

- Emergent Reading Behaviors may include but are not limited to:
    - Understands Concept of Print.
    - Recognizes initial letter sounds.
    - Has limited sight word vocabulary.
    - Tells a story through the use of picture cues.