

Foundational Skills for English Learners

The CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy foundational skills reading standards are the same for all students, including ELs. However, the way foundational skills are taught to ELs and how quickly the children can be expected to acquire the skills and use them for independent higher-level reading and writing tasks depend on a variety of factors, including their age and previous oral and written literacy experiences in their primary language and/or in English. Teachers need to take these factors into consideration when teaching the standards and supporting EL children in grades two and three to develop English foundational literacy skills in an accelerated time frame. In particular, the curriculum needs to be flexible, so it can address the different profiles of EL students in grades two and three. Figure 4.12 provides general guidance on teaching foundational skills to EL children with different learning needs. This general guidance should be combined with other information teachers have gathered about their EL students in order to provide appropriate foundational skills instruction.

Figure 4.12. Foundational Literacy Skills for ELs in Grades Two and Three*

Student Language and Literacy Characteristics		Considerations for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction	CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy Reading Standards: Foundational Skills
Oral Skills	No or little spoken English proficiency	Students will need instruction in recognizing and distinguishing the sounds of English as compared or contrasted with sounds in their native language (e.g., vowels, consonants, consonant blends, syllable structures).	Phonological Awareness 2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes). RF.K–1.2
	Spoken English proficiency	Students will need instruction in applying their knowledge of the English sound system to foundational literacy learning.	Review of Phonological Awareness skills as needed.
Print Skills	No or little native language literacy	Students will need instruction in print concepts.	Print Concepts 1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print. RF.K–1.1
	Foundational literacy proficiency in a language not using the Latin alphabet (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian)	Students will be familiar with print concepts, and will need instruction in learning the Latin alphabet for English, as compared or contrasted with their native language writing system (e.g., direction of print, symbols representing whole words, syllables, or phonemes) and native language vocabulary (e.g., cognates) and sentence structure (e.g., subject-verb-object vs. subject-object-verb word order).	Phonics and Word Recognition 3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. RF.K–3.3 Fluency 4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. RF.2–3.4

Student Language and Literacy Characteristics		Considerations for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction	CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy Reading Standards: Foundational Skills
Print Skills (cont.)	Foundational literacy proficiency in a language using the Latin alphabet (e.g., Spanish)	Students will need instruction in applying their knowledge of print concepts and phonics and word recognition to the English writing system, as compared or contrasted with their native language alphabet (e.g., letters that are the same or different, or represent the same or different sounds) and native language vocabulary (e.g., cognates) and sentence structure (e.g., subject-verb-object vs. subject-object-verb word order).	Phonics and Word Recognition 3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. RF.K–3.3 Fluency 4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. RF.2–3.4
<small>*Teachers may need to refer to the kindergarten or grade one CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy Reading Standards for Foundational Skills, depending on individual student learning needs.</small>			

Supporting Students Strategically

Students enter the grade span with widely ranging skills. Some enter having achieved the standards of the prior grades. They can meaningfully engage with grade-level (or above) texts that are read aloud to them. They express themselves effectively in discussions, using grade-level (or above) vocabulary, syntax, and discourse practices. They demonstrate grade-level (or above) content knowledge as a result of having participated in rich subject matter instruction (e.g., science, history–social science, visual and performing arts, health, mathematics) and having been exposed to a wide range of topics through texts and other media. And, they have acquired sufficient skill with the alphabetic code, so they can independently read and produce grade-level (or above) texts. These students are ready for the challenges of the second- and third-grade curricula. Other students, however, enter the grade span without having experienced the same successes as their peers for a variety of reasons. They require instruction that addresses a few or perhaps many of the standards of the prior years. Teachers and schools strategically support their progress, skillfully and sensitively identifying their needs and accelerating their learning so that they attain the standards of the new grade span and are ready for the challenges of the subsequent years.

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Support for all children, and especially those experiencing difficulties, is multi-layered. Teachers collaborate with their grade-level colleagues and with colleagues across grade levels to discuss the progress of students. They review summative assessment data from the prior years and, importantly, they engage in formative assessment, which informs instruction in the moment and for the days and weeks ahead (see chapter 8 of this *ELA/ELD Framework*). They employ the principles of Universal Design for Learning (see chapter 9) to develop lessons that are accessible to the range of learners, and they differentiate instruction to address the unique constellation of skills that each child brings to the setting. They scaffold. They use different grouping strategies. They work closely with specialists, as necessary, and they leverage the school's resources to maximally serve every student.