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Introduction

Purposeful practice is essential for improvement and mastery of literacy skills. When given proper instruction, materials, and opportunities to practice and apply what they learn, all students can experience literacy success.

Over the past two decades, scientific research has revealed how expert readers read and what goes wrong when students fail to read. One of the most important findings is how important early intervention is to avoiding problems for students at risk for reading difficulties (Torgenson, Wagner, and Rashotte 1994).

Children who fall behind in first-grade reading have a one-in-eight chance of ever catching up to grade level (Juel 1994). Seventy-five percent of children whose help is delayed to age nine or later continue to struggle throughout their school careers (Francis et. al. 1996). If help can be given at an earlier age, children may be more successful in their later years.

Allowing children opportunities with independent practice can give children the help needed to be successful. Whole-class lessons are most effective when the materials and activities involved are available to small groups or individuals for further application. Students need to practice what they have learned in order to assimilate the new information into their current knowledge base. Through literacy centers, students gain opportunities to manipulate, repeat, share, and expand upon the presented materials at their own pace. The literacy centers in this book provide the meaningful, independent practice that is a natural follow up to whole-class instruction.

Children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. Classrooms that incorporate literacy centers into their daily routine become less teacher directed and more student driven. As students' knowledge grows, they learn to think critically, make decisions, and solve problems. Additionally, they demonstrate the personal characteristics of responsibility, self-esteem, self-management, and integrity needed to function in today's society.

What Is a Center?

Centers are effective teaching tools developed to support and reinforce whole-class instruction. They offer teachers a way to engage students of various abilities in active learning. Centers are designed to provide purposeful activities that encourage students to work independently, allowing the teacher to focus on differentiated instruction with students who may need extra support. Various learning tasks along with multiple degrees of teacher interaction are involved.

Centers provide a motivating and engaging learning environment. They are process oriented and offer opportunities for students to practice new skills and to problem solve at their own pace.

Introduction (cont.)

Why Are Literacy Centers Valuable?

An optimal literacy learning environment is created when whole-group instructional periods are combined with reinforcement and independent practice in literacy centers. Through independent practice with literacy centers, students drive their learning.

With *Ready! Set! Go! Literacy Centers*, students gain opportunities to manipulate, repeat, share, and expand upon the presented materials at their own pace. Students learn best when they are actively involved in their own learning process. *Ready! Set! Go! Literacy Centers* allows this process to happen naturally and effectively. The literacy centers in this book focus on the individual needs of each student.

Research shows that literacy centers have several instructional advantages:

- Literacy centers address different learning styles better than paper and pencil tasks; they also motivate students by providing varied stimulating activities (Wait and Stephens 1989).
- Literacy centers result in improved communication between home and school (Optiz 1995).
- Literacy centers play an important role in meeting the needs of each student (Huyett 1994).

Why Ready! Set! Go! Literacy Centers?

Research has made great strides in identifying critical skills that consistently relate to reading success. The National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that the need for systematic and explicit instruction in the following five components of reading is critical to reading success: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It is essential to understand each one of these five components in order to provide the best literacy center experiences for students.

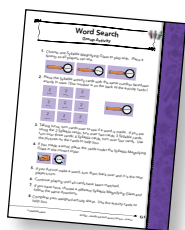
Ready! Set! Go! Literacy Centers are rooted in the five components of reading and are also aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Each center is differentiated, providing students an optimal learning experience at their individual learning levels. Basing the development of the centers on these components ensures that with focused, purposeful instruction and practice, the needs of all students in all areas of literacy development will be met.

On the following pages, you will get an in-depth look at each of the five components of reading. These overviews provide a clear and concise analysis of the components to assist not only in your literacy center-design and implementation but also in planning your overall reading instruction.



Word Search

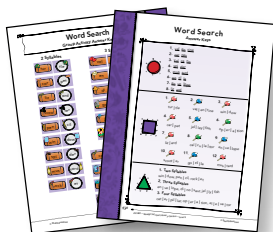
Multisyllabic Words



Group Activity



Differentiated Activity Sheets



Answer Keys



Activity Cards



Family Letter

With *Word Search: Multisyllabic Words*, students will count syllables as they decode multisyllabic words.

Center Objectives:

- Students will be able to separate words into syllables.
- Students will understand that words are broken up into syllables.

Center Standards:

- CCSS:** Use spelling patterns and generalizations in writing words
- Content:** Use phonetic and structural analysis techniques, syntactic structure, and semantic context to decode unknown words
- Language:** English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting

Materials:

- Group Activity (page 131)
- Differentiated Activity Sheets (pages 132–134)
- Answer Keys (pages 135–136)
- Activity Cards (pages 137–144)
- Family Letter (page 145)
- scissors

Recommended Literature:

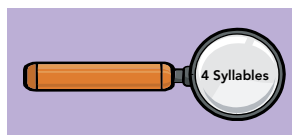
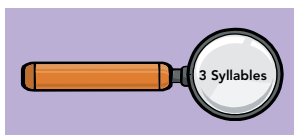
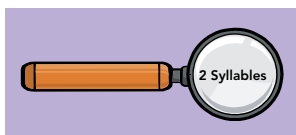
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Word Search

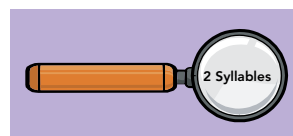
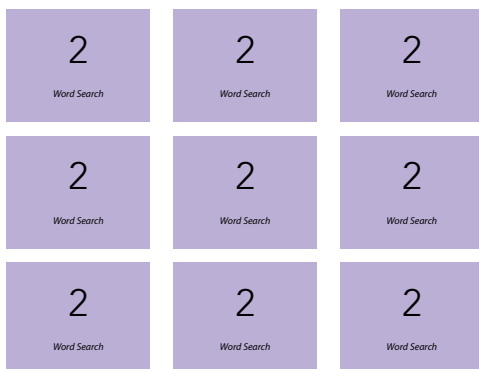
Group Activity



1. Choose one Syllable Magnifying Glass to play with. Place it faceup so all players can see.



2. Place the Syllable activity cards with the same number facedown evenly in rows. (The number is on the back of the activity cards.)



3. Taking turns, turn cards over to see if a word is made. If you are using the 2 Syllable cards, turn over two cards; 3 Syllable cards, turn over three cards; 4 Syllable cards, turn over four cards. Use the pictures on the cards to help you.
4. If you made a word, place the cards under the Syllable Magnifying Glass in the correct order.



5. If you did not make a word, turn them back over and it is the next player's turn.
6. Continue playing until all cards have been matched.
7. If you have time, choose a different Syllable Magnifying Glass and follow the same directions.
8. Complete your assigned activity sheet. Use the activity cards to help you.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Word Search

Directions: Read the words below. Write the syllables for each word on the lines. Use the activity cards to help you.

1. valentine _____

2. carpet _____

3. volcano _____

4. spider _____

5. mustard _____

6. gorilla _____

7. envelope _____

8. lizard _____

Word Search

Multisyllabic Words

Dear Family,

Your child is learning about multisyllabic words in his or her classroom. Recognizing and understanding multisyllabic words (words with more than one syllable) is critical in the development of your child's reading skills, particularly with fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Often, children who read well in previous grades with one- and two-syllable words such as *dog* and *rainbow* find themselves "hitting a wall" in reading when it comes to longer multisyllabic words such as *invention* or *watermelon* when they get to third grade. Try the activities below to help your child practice multisyllabic words.

Syllabication Separation

Have your child bring home vocabulary or spelling words he or she is learning in the classroom. Take time to review them with your child. Listen carefully to how they pronounce the words that have multiple syllables. If your child struggles, that is your cue to help him or her master not only the spelling and meaning of those words, but also the correct pronunciation of each word. You may wish to use a dictionary to help you. For example, when you look up the multisyllabic word *instruction* in the dictionary, it shows the following syllable breaks: *in-struc-tion*. Have your child look up each word that challenges him or her and write the syllable breaks as shown in the dictionary. Then practice each word until your child can fluently pronounce and read the word. Review each word periodically to ensure mastery and fluency.

Tip: If your child does well with multi-syllabic words up to four syllables, look up words with five or more syllables to challenge his or her decoding skills.

Pantry Pronunciations

Look in the pantry or refrigerator with your child. Many foods we buy have multisyllabic words such as *macaroni* or *spaghetti*. Use a dictionary to help your child decode these multisyllabic food items. When naming each item, clap together with your child for each syllable spoken. Once your child knows how many syllables are in a word, it is easier for him or her to decode the word.

Happy Playing!

