

# ELA Content-Specific Considerations for Unfinished Learning & Best Practices

## Vision

The central priority of acceleration work in English Language Arts is to ensure that all students in Rhode Island can read and write on grade-level. We recommend that this guidance be utilized in conjunction with the local education agency's set of high-quality instructional materials to ensure that instruction is rigorous and grade-level appropriate.

## Specific Considerations

- It is paramount that our students in grades K-3 receive systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction in [Structured Literacy](#).
- Prioritize remediation of foundational reading skills that focus on decoding (phonological awareness, phonics, encoding).
- The Common Core ELA State Standards are designed to promote vertical alignment across grade-level. Therefore, given this intentional design, instruction should focus on current-level work.
- High-Quality ELA Curriculum Materials should drive both in-person and remote instruction.
- Students should be given multiple opportunities throughout a week to read, discuss, and write about grade-level text.

The following guidance and best practices build upon Student Achievement Partner's Instructional Priority Content Guidance document. Utilize the RI Reentry guidance in concert with the SAP Instructional Priority Content Guidance as their guidance provides in-depth support for leaders in finding "new efficiencies in the curriculum that are critical for the unique challenges that have resulted from school closures and anticipated disruptions in the ear ahead, keeping at the forefront principles of equitable instruction that supports all students." Specifically, to inform and guide decisions:

- to design modifications to scope and sequence documents,
- to design professional learning scope and sequence for teachers,
- to design modifications to district-created instructional materials where used, and
- to support administrators in implementing equitable instruction and equitable structures.



# Best Practices<sup>1</sup>

1. **Prioritize the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge for each subject area and grade level now.**
  - K-12
    - Prioritize and accelerate **language comprehension**.
      - Integrate **vocabulary** instruction within and across content areas.
      - Provide multiple opportunities for oral read-alouds of expository texts to **build background** and topical knowledge.
      - Teach increasingly complex sentence **structure** and prioritize **grammar** to further comprehension by using strategies outlined within High-Quality Curriculum, or strategies such as [The Hochman Method](#).
    - Prioritize College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards in your current grade-level.
      - [Student Achievement Partners](#) notes “**some standards require greater emphasis than others based on the literacy research** about what matters most and the time and practice they take to develop.”
      - The following 14 CCR standards – CCSS RF.4, L.4, L.5, L.6, RI.1, RI.4, RI.9, RI.10, RL.1, RL.4, RL.10, SL.1, W.8, and W.9 should be prioritized.<sup>2</sup>
  - K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
    - Prioritize foundational reading skills with focus on **decoding**. Student Achievement Partners recommends 40 to 60 minutes daily should be dedicated to strong **systematic, cumulative, explicit** instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, encoding, and regular, repeated practice with decodable texts.
    - Prioritize opportunities for students to practice early literacy skills. Use online learning platform such as [Lexia](#), [Amplify Reading](#), or [Foundations Learning System](#).
2. **Plan your approach to identifying students’ unfinished learning in that prerequisite content knowledge and those prerequisite skills.**
  - K-12
    - Due to the interruption in curriculum last year, it is important to probe for missing background knowledge before beginning a unit. Ask students to share what they know about the topic of each unit. This should be informal and brief. Such pre-checks should not take more than 20 minutes of instructional time or be graded. The purpose is to leverage students’ background knowledge as they access complex texts about a similar topic.
    - In Grades 3-12, when students are more likely to be independently reading core texts, include periodic and informal measurement of fluency with grade-level text to monitor progress and provide additional supports.
  - K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
    - Gather data on all students during the first weeks of school.
    - Gather relevant diagnostic data using a [flowchart such as this one provided by The AIM Institute](#). Assess students using measures for letter knowledge, phonological and phonemic awareness,

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<sup>1</sup> Steps for best practices adapted from TNTP’s [Learning Acceleration Guide](#) *Recommendations for Accelerating Student Learning*

<sup>2</sup> Student Achievement Partners: <https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/2020%E2%80%9321%20Priority%20Instructional%20Content%20in%20ELA%20Literacy%20and%20Mathematics%20June%202020.pdf#page=62>

encoding, rapid naming, and decoding real and pseudowords in isolation from high-quality adopted materials to inform instruction.

- If high-quality materials are missing these assessments, use the following resources to support: [DIBELS](#) or [Acadience](#), or assessments from [Really Great Reading](#).

**3. Adapt your scope, sequence/pacing guidance for each subject area, and grade level to reflect where teachers might need to provide acceleration support.**

- K-12
  - Implement the following guidance provided by [Student Achievement Partners](#), organized by grade band: [K-1](#), [2-3](#), [4-5](#), [6-8](#), [9-12](#)
  - Begin by looking at your scope and sequences for current year instruction only. Given the intentional design of the CCSS, we do not recommend adapting scope and sequences to accommodate previous year or grade instruction.
  - Use the 14 CCR standards (CCSS RF.4, L.4, L.5, L.6, RI.1, RI.4, RI.9, RI.10, RL.1, RL.4, RL.10, SL.1, W.8, and W.9) to prioritize content.
  - Collaborate with your team to classify lessons as **“must do,” “should do,” and “aspire to do”** for a **unit** of study.
    - The **“must do,”** lessons will be the lessons aligned the 14 CCR standards recommended for prioritization.
    - Create a consistent pacing guide to execute all **“must do”**, many **“should do”**, and some **“aspire to do”** lessons by the designated end date for the unit.
- K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
  - Any weaknesses identified in letter knowledge, phonological and phonemic awareness, encoding, rapid naming, and/or decoding should become prioritized areas of instruction and remediation.

**4. Monitor your students’ progress on grade-appropriate assignments and adjust your supports for teachers and leaders based on student results.**

- K-12
  - Consider motivation, engagement, and data when determining supports for students.
  - Consider the reason behind student motivation, engagement, and data and determine if there may be an underlying learning difference that may not be immediately noticeable that require supports. For example, if students who struggle with word-level reading are showing weaknesses in reading comprehension, consider [technology supports](#) to create and maintain a Universal Design for Learning that removes any barriers to knowledge. For literacy, this includes considering digital supports.
- K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
  - Collect [formative](#) data during daily lessons to inform both whole-class and skill-based small-group instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, and decoding accuracy.
  - If your high-quality curriculum materials do not include formative assessments, students’ ability to decode and encode new words based on grade-level appropriate phonological awareness and phonics instruction can be tracked using [checklists](#).
  - Instruction should be adjusted according to this data with instructional prioritization placed on populations including multilingual learners and students who struggle with word-level reading. Use the [flowchart](#) to guide instructional decisions as students progress through skills.

