

I WISH I KNEW...

KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten program is very different than the other grades for the following reasons:

- They have a 2-week “Welcome to Kindergarten” section where they learn one letter per day until the letter J. They continue with the letter K after the two weeks.
- Their anchor texts are their Big Books.
- Their comparative text is behind the main story in the Big Book.
- Day One is devoted to a Read Aloud in trade book form. They are the only grade level that has an actual Trade Book for Read Aloud.
- They do not have Trade Books at the end of Units 2, 4, and 6 (for the reason above).
- Day Two is their First Read and Day Three is their Second Read of a Big Book text.
- They do not have an Independent Read.
- They do not have explicit spelling instruction.
- They have a flip chart that they use for Opening Routines, Phonics, Vocabulary, and Writing instruction.
- They have Alphafriends to teach letter recognition and sound/spellings. The Alphafriends feature ball and stick printing and only lower-case letters.
- Their student book contains Words to Know (High Frequency Words), 2 decodable texts, and a “Your Turn” page. Book 1 only has the speaking/listening part of “Your Turn.” Book 2 has both the speaking/listening and the writing. Their student book DOES NOT contain the anchor texts like all other grades, but it does contain post-reading activities for the Big Books. Prepare for them to complain about the “consumable” nature of the book (even though it is non-consumable).
- Since their decodable texts are in their student books, there are not blackline masters for them to take home. Kinder teachers do not like this. They can, however, access them online.
- They do not have traditional Weekly Tests.
- They do not have a Write-In Reader for Tier 2 Intervention. They have “Teaching Resources”—a collection of Blackline Masters that are used in tandem with the lessons in the Intervention Tab.
- Writing Instruction includes modelling, shared, guided and eventually independent writing, but the progression is much slower toward independence.
- Kinder Sound/Spelling cards have Alphafriends on them rather than the pictures on the 1st-3rd cards. When long vowels are introduced, the cards will feature real pictures.
- Words to Know = High Frequency Words. Rich academic vocabulary is taught via Read Aloud texts and in Opening Routines.
- They have an additional Unit at the end of the year called “Review and Extend.” The purpose is to review key Kindergarten concepts and prepare for First Grade.

FIRST GRADE

- First Grade has a week-long “Welcome Back to School” section. The objective is to review key kindergarten concepts and get them ready for the year ahead.
- First Grade has 11 Big Books that are mainly used in the “Welcome Back to School” section and as a preview for every new unit.
- Words to Know = High Frequency Words. Rich academic vocabulary is taught via Read Aloud and in Opening Routines.

SECOND GRADE

- This is the only grade that has BOTH Words to Know (High Frequency Words) **and** Vocabulary in Context. Unlike grades K-1, the 2nd grade vocabulary cards have the Tier 2 vocabulary on them rather than the High Frequency Words.

GRADES K-3

- The Teacher Edition is organized by day of instruction. The reason for this is that phonics instruction is sequential, and these are the grades that still teach phonics.
- Every day starts with an Opening Routine. This is meant to be a warm-up, a snapshot, an interactive preview for the day to come. It is not meant to last more than 10 or so minutes. Teachers who struggle with time management often spend too much time on Opening Routines.
- Although the phonics instruction is sequential, teachers often think that *Journeys* should be taught in the rigid order laid out in the TE. Keep in mind that teachers have the freedom to teach spelling at the beginning of the day and grammar at the end, for example. Opening Routines can be a morning warm-up, outside of the ELA block, as another example. Phonics, however, is pretty sacred. The decodable reader, for instance, must follow the whole group explicit phonics instruction.
- Grade 3 does not have decodable texts or High Frequency Words, and their phonics instruction is not daily.

GRADES 4-6

- The Teacher Edition is organized by strand. All reading instruction is grouped together, followed by all spelling, grammar, and writing instruction set up by day. The reason for this is that teachers prefer the flexibility of this plan at the older grades. They can see the entire language arts strand at a glance in each lesson and don't have the rigidity of phonics to worry about. In grade 4 and onward, phonics instruction turns into "decoding" instruction.
- There are no Opening Routines in these grades.
- There are always three skills plus a Language Detective skill in Dig Deeper at these grades.

GENERAL FOR ALL GRADES

- The Weekly Planner has check marks next to the skills that will be tested on the Weekly Test. This is important, because if teachers plan to give the Weekly Test but do not teach the Vocabulary Strategy, for example, they will need to remove those questions from the test.
- *Journeys* is a National program and gives **general** time guidelines. The recommendation is that teachers have 90 minutes of core reading instruction. **THIS IS A COMBINATION OF WHOLE AND SMALL GROUP.** In addition, it is recommended that they spend 30-45 minutes on Grammar, Spelling and Writing per day. **THIS TIME DOES NOT INCLUDE INTERVENTION.** It is important that teachers know that this is a general recommendation, and *Journeys* can be taught with many types of schedules.
- **ALL INSTRUCTIONAL ROUTINES ARE HOUSED IN THE GRAB AND GO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOLDER.** Any reference to Instructional Routines in the TE sends teachers on a frantic search, so make sure to highlight this information. Instructional Routines are also linked in the Teacher eBook at point of use.
- **ALL GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS ARE HOUSED IN THE GRAB AND GO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOLDER.** They are also linked in the Teacher eBook at point of use.
- **PROJECTABLES ARE FOUND ONLINE, NOT IN THE GRAB AND GO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.** Teachers often think these are a paper or blackline resource, so be sure to highlight this information. They can also be found in the Resources of the Teacher eBook.
- All grades have a Read Aloud and it is intended to teach listening comprehension, oral vocabulary, and fluency (modeled by the teacher). Read Aloud is not meant to take a huge chunk of time. Many times the Read Aloud previews the anchor text and feeds into other activities later in the week. At grades 3-6, the Read Aloud passage includes all of the Target Vocabulary for the week.

- The First Read of the anchor text is heavily guided by the teacher. The objective is comprehension at a high level, ensuring that students get the gist of the selection. The teacher does the bulk of the reading and models thinking strategies through carefully selected “Think Through the Text” questions. **TEACHERS DO NOT NEED TO ASK EVERY THINK THROUGH THE TEXT QUESTION BUT SHOULD USE THEIR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT REGARDING WHICH QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS.**
- The Second Read is **NOT A COMPLETE RE-READ** but rather a strategic look-back at certain sections of text for a purpose. That “purpose” is the highlighted comprehension skill in the Dig Deeper section. Grades 4-6 have 4 topics (3 Dig Deeper skills that appear in the Student Book and one Language Detective skill that appears in the TE only) for the second read. It is important that teachers know that the **PRIMARY OBJECTIVE** is the main comprehension skill. It is connected to the Read and Comprehend section that appears before the selection. The **SECONDARY OBJECTIVES** are the other skills (author’s craft, domain-specific vocabulary, idioms, figurative language, etc.). These are not taught to the degree of the main skill.
- The graphic organizer pictured in the SE will be used during the Dig Deeper/2nd Read mini lesson to model application of the skill, as well as directed note-taking and close reading strategies.
- The program showcases one Fluency focus every week (accuracy, phrasing, expression, etc.) There is both an explicit lesson on Day 3 (Day 2 in Grades 4-6) and additional opportunities to model and practice the week’s fluency skill throughout the week.
- The Reader’s Notebook pages are optional and there are more than a teacher needs in a year. The Independent Read on Day 3 is always accompanied by a Comprehension activity from the notebook that is text-based.
- The Paired Selection is usually much shorter, and usually a different genre from the anchor text. The paired selection is an opportunity for students to practice close reading through a specific Text Focus, as well as strategies taught with the anchor text. It also provides connections to Social Science and Science topics, which are aligned to the grade-level standards.
- The Trade Books are intended to be taught roughly around the end of Units 2, 4, and 6. Teachers have the freedom to fit them in whenever they have a short week or feel the need to take a short break from the program. There are 30 lessons in *Journeys* and more than 30 weeks of school. **KINDER DOES NOT HAVE THESE TRADE BOOKS SINCE THEY HAVE A READ ALOUD TRADE BOOK EVERY WEEK.**
- The last Unit of *Journeys* for grades 3-6 is a magazine unit. This is an opportunity to review the key comprehension skills and strategies in a low-key, high-interest format (after high-stakes testing). All vocabulary in this unit is **REVIEW** vocabulary.

SMALL GROUP

The Small Group suggestions in *Journeys* are completely linked to the content in the Whole Group content and objectives.

- Vocabulary Readers are not leveled. They are:
 - 100% informational text
 - At-grade level
 - Filled with every new vocabulary word in the lesson
 - Taught differently to lower level kids than higher level kids
 - Intended to give students another context to see rich vocabulary
- Leveled Readers **MAY** include the same vocabulary but always reinforce the comprehension skill/strategy for the week.
- In grades 3-6, Leveled Readers only continue through Lesson 25. After that, the trade books for Unit 6 are taught in the small group setting. Grades K-2 have Leveled Readers until Lesson 30.
- Days 1 and 2 are very heavy whole group teaching days for teachers, which means their time for small group may be less than on Days 3, 4, and 5.

- Teachers who don't normally do small group instruction think that the differentiated plans in *Journeys* suggest that they meet with 4 groups a day. This is not the case and needs to be explained fully. *Journeys* gives options; teachers make decisions based on the needs of their students.
- Teachers will often press for the “how to” answers during your small group discussion, especially if they have weak classroom management skills. Prepare for this and remember that our job is to introduce them to the *Journeys* materials and practices. Resist the temptation to give opinions about the importance of small group and/or the best ways to manage small group instruction.

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Phonics instruction follows the research-based gradual release model: I do, We do, You do. Phonemic Awareness always kicks off a phonics block of instruction, followed by a phonics mini lesson (often using instructional cards) and ending with application.

- Decodable Texts follow phonics instruction and are placed in the Whole Group section. Many teachers choose to start the year with the decodable text as a Whole Group exercise but eventually take it into a small group for the kids who really need it at an intense level.
 - Kinder has 2 decodable texts per week (Day 3 and Day 4).
 - 1st grade has 4 decodable texts per week (Days 1-4).
 - 2nd grade has 2 decodable texts per week (Day 1 and Day 3).
- Sound/Spelling cards have two sides—an orange side and a green side. The orange side is aligned to 1st grade; the green side is aligned to 2nd/3rd grade.
- Phonics instruction stops after 3rd grade and becomes “Decoding” in 4th-6th grade.
- The Instructional Routines in the program (found in the Grab and Go Additional Resources) outline an effective, consistent, and research-based method of teaching phonics. K-3rd grade teachers should know that the routines ensure a consistent teaching routine across the grades.

WRITING INSTRUCTION

- There are two types of writing in *Journeys*:
 - Text-Based Writing: embedded in the weekly routines of the *Journeys* core program and linked to the reading of the texts. The objective is that students USE TEXT EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY CLAIMS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS.
 - Genre-Based Writing: focuses on one of three modes—Narrative, Informative, and Opinion (Argument at Grade 6). This writing is taught every day of the week and focuses on the nuances of conventionally correct, organized, and fluent writing.
- The Writing Instruction in *Journeys* is impossible to dabble in. One genre is taught for a complete 5-week cycle. Every week, a new trait is taught. The first 3 weeks focus on shorter products under the umbrella of the Unit's genre. The final two weeks include a full workshop where students work on a larger product for a longer period of time and publish it in final form.
- Day 2 of *Journeys* genre-based writing instruction always calls for teachers to return to the anchor text to analyze it for the trait that is taught on this day. THIS IS THE LINK BETWEEN ALL ELA ELEMENTS. THE READING TEXT IS ESSENTIALLY USED AS A MENTOR TEXT FOR YOUNG WRITERS.

SPELLING/GRAMMAR

- Spelling words match the phonics or decoding principle for the week.
- Students are encouraged to connect the Grammar principle for the week to their writing.
- Grammar includes a spiral review day.
- If districts bought the Language and Literacy Guide, it offers many additional spelling activities (written by Shane Templeton) as well as differentiated lists.