



Grade 4: Back-to-School Family Support Letter

Dear Family,

This year, *95 Phonics Core Program*[®] is being used to teach your child foundational skills for reading and understanding words. This program is taught for 30 minutes daily as a whole-class lesson. During each lesson, your child will receive direct and explicit instruction in:

- Phonics, which is a method for teaching the connections between letters and sounds, as well as the six syllable types.
- Morphology, which is the study of prefixes, suffixes, Latin roots, and Greek Combining Forms appropriate to your child's grade level.
- Fluency, which involves using phonics skills while reading grade-level text based on a variety of topics.

95 Phonics Core Program[®] teaches specific patterns in the English language. The brain excels at learning patterns, so the focus is on helping students identify and apply the patterns found in words. This may be a new way of learning to read and spell for both you and your child. Spelling patterns and morphological structures of words will be taught explicitly each week in class, and students will have multiple opportunities for practice. An explanation of each week's target pattern, along with a list of example words, will be sent home so you can support your student's success with learning the pattern. The focus of your child's at-home practice should be on building automaticity with the target pattern through activities and questioning (rather than through memorization).

Each week your child's mastery of the target pattern will be assessed through a word dictation test. The test will include 6-10 words that follow the target phonics pattern as well as 4-8 vocabulary words.

Use the following sample activities and questions to help your child master the weekly phonics pattern(s).

Read Aloud Time

- Have your child look for the weekly phonics pattern in words from the books he or she is reading.

Word Dictation

1. Say 1 word that follows the phonics pattern for the week (e.g., *instruct*).
2. Have your child say all the sounds in the word, all at once or syllable by syllable. For example, all the sounds in *instruct* are as follows: /ɪ/ /n/ - /s/ /t/ /r/ /ʊ/ /k/ /t/. **Note:** A letter in slashes, such as /t/, indicates the letter's sound rather than the letter's name.) Then have your child write the letter or letters that spell each sound.
3. Provide feedback by checking that your child has spelled the word correctly.
4. Repeat this process with more words. Examples of words that follow the phonics focus will be listed in the weekly **Family Support Letter**.
5. Finally, have your child practice reading all the words he or she spelled.



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Word Hunt

While your child is completing homework in other subject areas (e.g., science, social studies, math), encourage your child to hunt for words that follow the phonics pattern for the week. Keep a list of the pattern words identified, continue to add to the list, and practice reading the words throughout the week.

Syllable Mapping

Working with multisyllable words will be a primary focus this year. To support your child with learning how to spell multisyllable words, guide him or her by saying “Let’s write some multisyllable words.” Read these steps to your child.

1. The first word you will write is _____. (Say one of the example words from the Weekly Letter.)
2. How many syllables are in this word?
3. On your paper, write the first syllable. (Check that your child has spelled the first syllable correctly.)
4. On your paper, next to the first syllable, write the second syllable. (Check that your child has spelled the second syllable correctly.)
5. Slide your finger under the word while reading it aloud.
6. Now, use this word in a sentence.

Continue using this process with other words that follow the week’s phonics pattern.

Questions

1. Say a pattern word and ask your child to repeat it.
2. Ask a few of the following questions:
 - How many vowel sounds do you hear in the word?
 - How many syllables does this word have?
 - What is the phonics pattern we are working on this week? Does the word have that pattern? How would you spell that pattern in this word?
 - What does this word mean? Use this word in a sentence.
 - What is a synonym for this word, or a word that has a similar meaning? What is an antonym for this word, or a word that has the opposite meaning?

Thank you for your interest and support in teaching your child to read and spell!