

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project  
Reading Curricular Calendar, First Grade, 2014-2015  
Unit Five - Readers Can Be Their Own Teachers, Working Hard to Figure Out the Tricky  
Words and Parts in Books

## Unit Five – Readers Can Be Their Own Teachers, Working Hard to Figure Out the Tricky Words and Parts in Books

*February/March (Level 3 Reading Benchmark: H/I/J)*

### Welcome to the Unit

Welcome to spring of first grade! Your first graders entered your classroom in the fall looking and acting (and reading) much more like kindergartners, and in a few short months they will leave, ready to become second graders. Your main goal for this unit is that children realize they are, in fact, “big-kid” readers now. They have strategies to be in charge of their own reading, to set their own agenda, and to get through the hard parts all by themselves. They can move past the initial impulse to say, “Help me!” when faced with a tricky word or when meaning breaks down and instead take a deep breath, have a little courage and say, “I can solve this myself!” You’ll show your first graders that they can be their own teachers, solving their own reading dilemmas by drawing on the tools and strategies they’ve learned from minilessons and small-group work. And you’ll teach them strategies to balance their reading energies between word solving and meaning making so that their experiences with texts are well-rounded and thoughtful, efficient, and meaningful.

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## Overview

**Essential Question:** How can I find ways to get through the hard parts in books, all on my own, so that I can be in charge of my reading?

- **Bend I: Readers Are Brave—Using Everything They Can to Get Through the Hard Parts in Books**  
*How can I become the kind of reader that learns more about reading by facing challenges?*
- **Bend II: Readers Add New Tools for Problem Solving**  
*How can I make the strategies I use stronger, to read longer, harder books?*
- **Bend III: Readers Make Sure They Always Understand their Books**  
*How can I get better at understanding what I read in longer, harder books?*
- **Bend IV: Readers Can Show Off Their Reading**  
*How can I use everything I know about being a reader to share my reading with others?*

This unit builds on the work your children have done all year long. In some ways, this unit will feel like a review of the first word-solving unit of first grade, Unit 2: *Word Detectives*. And partly, yes, it is a review of some of that work. There are however some key differences. Your children are now reading more challenging books, with longer and more complex words. This requires strengthening the strategies they already know how to use, while integrating new strategies for harder books into their repertoire. In addition, readers will need to ensure they are not just monitoring for tricky words, but also monitoring for meaning. Proficient readers are able to problem solve on the run, orchestrating the reading process efficiently. This means readers need to not only solve words and accumulate the text, but they also need to do it quickly.

The biggest change however, is that in this unit you will ask children to rise to the challenge of becoming their own reading teacher, taking on the identity of an independent reader. You are handing over the reins, explicitly teaching that they need not wait for reminders, or ask for help, but can tackle a challenge head-on using what they know. As their own teachers, they will be applying and transferring all that they know about strong reading from across the year—from minilessons, conferences, small groups, word study time, and shared reading. They might even invent a few of their own strategies for dealing with challenging words and parts of books. You want children to see problems in books as

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opportunities for learning. Even when problems require multiple attempts, you want children to continue to work with perseverance and an understanding that through practice and hard work they become powerful readers.

In Bend One, you will support your students in developing the mindset needed to take ownership of their own reading. First and foremost your children need to understand that all readers encounter difficulty when reading and that *they* are the kind of readers who are brave enough to do something about it all on their own. In addition, this bend highlights monitoring and self-correcting in the reading process. Your children will learn to read attentively, stopping as soon as they notice something is wrong, pulling from the strategies they have been using all year to try to solve a problem, and checking to confirm the attempt. You will teach your readers to make multiple attempts if necessary, developing an attitude of perseverance.

In Bend Two, children will strengthen their ability to use meaning, structure and visual information by adding new strategies to their existing repertoire of ways to solve words. You will help students to understand that the strategies you teach are not random, but can be categorized under the three questions readers use when problem solving words: *Does it make sense? Does it sound right? Does it look right?*

Bend Three shines a spotlight on the importance of meaning. After a heavy focus on word solving, it is important to come back to this area, sending the message that word solving should never happen in the absence of meaning. In this bend, readers will learn and apply strategies that help them monitor for meaning. You will teach them to stop and problem solve when a *word* doesn't make sense, and also when a *part of the book* doesn't make sense. Readers will also learn how attending to pronouns, dialogue and punctuation can support them in maintaining meaning through longer, more complex text.

The focus of Bend Four is orchestration. This bend calls on students to pull together everything they have learned in this unit and to do it quickly! Children will learn to problem solve on the run while maintaining meaning and reading as fluently as possible. We suggest you wrap up this unit by providing your readers with an authentic purpose for powerful reading - creating audio books for your school community.

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## CCSS / LS Standards Addressed in this Unit

At this point in the year, many of your children are using strategies to help them solve tricky words and strengthen their comprehension. This unit supports students not just in decoding words, but also in determining meaning through a variety of strategies (Standard L 1.4). One of the primary focuses of this unit for students to monitor their reading for syntactical, visual and meaning miscues (RF 1.4c). Moreover, your students should be reading books with purpose and understanding (Standard RF 1.4a), cross-checking their comprehension and making sense of their reading. Finally, as your students move toward the end of the year benchmark, they will be reading books at levels I and J, which feature more significant events than they will have encountered in books at lower levels. This positions children to address Standard RL 1.3.

### Getting Ready

#### ***Set up Transitional Book Baggies for Students***

Book choice is key during this unit. It is important for your children to have a mix of fiction and nonfiction books to read. Research by Nell Duke and others shows that some struggling readers prefer reading nonfiction and make greater gains when given strategy instruction within this genre. According to the Common Core, students should be immersed in both genres to achieve success.

To provide readers with opportunities to do more problem solving, you will also want students to have access to books at their instructional reading level. You will want to be doing lots of small group instruction with higher level texts, and then making sure to add these books to students' book baggies so that they may reread these instructional-level books independently.

#### ***Reposition Any Reading Strategy Charts to Be Front and Center Again, Especially Those around Word-Solving and The Reading Process***

Use these charts as you and your students review and reflect upon the repertoire of old strategies, as well as new strategies they learn during this unit. If you have not already done so, consider organizing the strategies on your chart under the three questions: *Does it make sense? Does it sound right? Does it look right?* If necessary, you could cut apart the strategies on your current word-solving strategy chart and have your students sort the

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strategies under these headings in preparation for the unit. New strategies can be added across this unit to extend students' repertoire.

***Gather Together Fiction and Informational Shared Reading Big Books***

Shared reading will play a critical role in this unit. Ensure you have many shared reading books that are at benchmark levels H/I/J and a little above to reinforce the reading process (monitoring, searching, cross-checking and self-correcting), word-solving, and fluency (like *Mrs. Wishy Washy's Birthday*).

## Assessment

***Running Records***

Running records will become your most important resource in this unit. Given that your last periodic assessment window was in January, many of your students will have moved levels since then. Still, you can use these records as a starting point. Look through them carefully, not so much for the accuracy level, though it is important to keep this in mind, but more for the processing students are doing in their reading. Note that if you are looking at running records at an independent reading level, this information will be difficult to find. This unit is all about helping students handle challenges. Therefore you will need to study what children do in their reading when faced with a challenge. Look at running records at an instructional or even frustration level to discover this information.

Look through your analysis of miscues, asking yourself: *What are my students doing when they encounter trouble? Do they make an attempt? Are they checking their attempts? Are they making multiple attempts? What sources of information are they using? Do they use meaning, structure and visual information together, or lean more heavily on one area? How effectively are they using a source of information?* For example, you may notice a child often uses visual information, but only attends to the beginning of a word. Though she may be using visual information, she is not yet using it effectively. As you study the data, you will be looking for patterns in individual children's reading as well as across your whole class. This will help you to set up some initial small groups, as well as shape the teaching you will do in the unit.

As you begin to work through this unit, turn your focus to the information you can collect from informal running records. Make it a habit to take a couple of running records every day, with the books children are already reading. This can seem overwhelming, but it does not need to be. Remember you only need to study what a child is doing on a portion of the

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text (usually 100 – 150 words). Try starting a conference with a quick running record or begin a small group with students rereading for a bit, while taking a record on one student during this time. Study these records to see how children are growing in their ability to handle difficulty in texts. They will be an invaluable source of information to help you teach in a way that is responsive to your students' needs.

***Other Assessments to Continue Using Throughout the Unit***

You can also glean important insight from the Spelling Inventory or simply from studying children's writing to see how your readers are making sense of words and how parts of words work. These assessments will help you determine what to teach your whole class through minilessons, and what to focus on in small group work across the unit. It will also inform what types of small groups you form for word study/phonics time. This assessment-driven instruction is integral to the goal of continually moving readers toward grade level complex texts. Study these assessments closely, in tandem, to recognize patterns and/or difficulties that students are facing in solving words and monitoring for meaning. Ask yourself, "Did this child use spelling patterns or chunks to break the word apart, or was she going through the word from left to right, one letter at a time? What other strategies do I notice? Is she dropping the endings? Does she try strategies for more than one source of information, or does she try a visual-based strategy, say looking at the first letter, then another visual strategy, like looking at the ending, then another visual strategy, and another?" These types of questions can help you target instruction more explicitly in your work with students.

Use your notes from conferring and small group work as formative assessment data to keep an eye on how kids are progressing through the levels of text complexities. Who has stagnated and hasn't moved as a reader? Do you know what is holding those kids back? Which children could move if they just worked more on cross-checking? Which ones are finishing their books quickly and reading with strong fluency? If some readers' speed moving through books has increased, that, too, can be a sign they're ready to move up (CCSS RF 1.3-4 and RL 1.10).

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## **Bend I: Readers Are Brave—Using Everything They Can to Get Through the Hard Parts in Books**

At the start of this unit, many of your children will be moving into reading at levels G, H, and I. As they grow as readers, children face heavier demands at each new level. Sentences become more complex and vocabulary more sophisticated—meanwhile illustrations become less supportive. It is therefore critical that readers have the attitude and mindset needed to meet these demands. This bend will help students build the confidence and sense of agency required to tackle problems independently, right at the point of error.

You will likely kick off the unit by saying “Wow! Readers, you all have so many strategies to help you figure out tricky words in your texts. It’s as if you don’t even need me anymore because you can do something about it yourself. I think you are ready to be your own teachers. Teachers not only help others, we help ourselves! We use what we know, to take charge and solve any problem or obstacle in our way. As readers, you can do that too.”

**“Today I want to teach you that when reading starts to feel hard, readers take charge. As soon as they notice a problem they stop right away and say to themselves, ‘Try something! I can figure this out!’ Then they try lots of different strategies to tackle the tricky word.”**

It is important for readers to be able to rely upon a range of strategies. In this first bend, then, you’ll make a big deal of the fact that children already know a lot about how to get through the tricky parts, and you’ll emphasize strategies that help readers monitor for meaning. You might begin, then, by pulling out your ever-growing chart of reading strategies and saying to your students, “Look at all you know about how to read tricky words!” Then read the chart together and say, “You know to look across the pages in your books to think about what words might pop up based on what’s happening in each part. You notice patterns in the things people do and the ways that people talk in books to guess what words you might see. You also know that the letters in the words can help you figure out what words not only make sense in your stories, but also look right and sound right. To do this you look for parts of words that you know, rather than looking at each letter on its own, and sometimes you can use words you know in your books to help you solve new ones.” You will want to cheer and give “shout-outs” for favorite strategies, showing your excitement about how much your readers know. Then you’ll lean in close and say, “These strategies are ones you will use your whole life whenever you are reading and you encounter an unfamiliar word. Don’t give up when you don’t know a word. Say to yourself, ‘I know things! I don’t have to wait for anyone else to tell me what to do!’ You can be your own teacher and say, ‘Try something! Look through the word! Find a word you know!’ Stop

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whenever you are unsure and tell yourself what you might try in order to figure it out. You might need to try more than one thing!"

You will then want to remind your children that readers don't just make an attempt at a word and read on. Instead they read carefully, pausing and telling themselves to "check it."

**"Today I want to teach you that when readers think they've figured out what the word is they say to themselves, 'Check it.' Then they check: Does it make sense? Does it sound right? Does it look right? When it's wrong, they say 'Let's try again!'"**

You will need to make explicit the ways a reader can check an attempt not only by asking these three questions, but by also having specific ways of doing this. For example, when asking "Does it make sense?" a reader might go back and read the sentence over fluently keeping the story in mind. When asking "Does it look right?" you will teach your readers that sometimes they may need to do a *slow check*. You could say "Checking a word can happen as quick as a blink. But sometimes when you're asking "Does it look right?" you might need to do a *slow check*. In the same way you say a word slowly to spell it, you can run your finger under the word and say it slowly to check if all the parts of the word look right." For example, a child stretching out the word *show* and saying it slowly while running their finger under the word *share* in the text, will quickly realize that the middle or ending doesn't look right. She will then have to make another attempt.

By teaching children to stop when words are tricky, solve those words and then check their reading to make corrections on their own, you will be stretching their Depth of Knowledge (DOK) work. Rather than simply asking kids to apply a given strategy when prompted you will want to help children develop "self-extending systems" that allow them to recognize their challenges, choose and try a variety of strategies, and then check their reading independently. This constitutes much higher-level work (DOK 3).

While this process of checking happens automatically and with little conscious effort in proficient readers, children learning to read need to understand that it is sometimes necessary to slow down to verify a decision. As this act of checking becomes more of a habit, with many successful experiences, the process will speed up. During minilessons and shared reading, model the way a reader reads fluently until they encounter trouble, stops to make an attempt and then checks their decision before speeding up again.

During this bend, you will also want to have your students set goals for themselves, to develop the mindset of a reader who takes ownership for their own learning. Teach them to take charge of their own reading by thinking about what they do as readers and making a plan for areas to become stronger. To ensure this is a helpful activity, have students think



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about what strategies they use a lot, which ones they use sometimes and which ones they only do a little. Have your readers say to themselves, “I always... I need to remember to... One thing I can try is...” You may want to have some scaffolds to support this process. One way to do this would be to make mini versions of your classroom charts, and have students put a green dot beside the strategies they use a lot, and a red dot beside the ones they only do a little. Consider organizing the strategies on your chart under the three headings; *Does that make sense? Does that sound right? Does that look right?* The child who then marks looking at the first letter, breaking a word into parts, and looking for snap words as strategies she uses a lot, may realize she is often checking to see if a word looks right, and now *also* needs to make a plan to think about meaning.

Finish up this bend by reinforcing these strategies through partner work. Teach your readers that they can not only be teachers for themselves, but they can also use what they know about problem solving to be teachers for each other.

**“Today I want to teach you that when you’re reading with your partner you can work together to make your reading strategies stronger. As partners you can take on challenges together and help each other get through the hard parts.”**

Coach partnerships to “teach” each other by using the language from this bend. You will want readers to watch out for trouble, helping each other to stop immediately and say, “Stop. Something isn’t right. That didn’t make sense” or “That doesn’t look right.” Then have readers prompt each other to “Try something” selecting from the strategies on the chart followed by “Check it!” Celebrate and highlight the readers who persevere through a challenge, making multiple attempts on the same word and confirming their attempt.

By now your students should be self-monitoring, cross-checking, and even self-correcting quite a bit—they are starting to become “their own teachers.” It should look like this: a child reads, “The deer juggged over the fence and almost landed on the picnic table.” Then the child will scrunch up his face, and say, “Wait a minute! That doesn’t make sense.” (This is monitoring.) “A deer does not “jug” over a fence. The picture shows a deer jumping.” (This is cross-checking.) Then he says, “Let me read that again. Oh, it says “The deer jumped over the fence.”” (This is self-correcting.) (CCSS RF 1.4c). By the time kids are reading level H texts, you will want them to not only self-correct, but actually self-correct closer to the point of error. For example the child above might correct *jumped* for *jugged* before he reads the rest of the sentence.

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## Bend II: Readers Add New Tools For Problem Solving

Now that your students have had some time focused on the reading process, shift your attention to strengthening and expanding the word solving strategies they are using. While many of these strategies will be similar to the work students did in Unit 2, remember that you will now teach them what it means to use these strategies at higher levels.

When teaching into strategies that help kids to tap into meaning, remind your readers that they already know how to get ready for tricky words before they even start to read. First graders are expected to use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary (RF.1.4c). Considering texts at levels G and above have more and more words on a page, you will want to be sure to model how to say more as you get ready to read by considering this context. Start to do this by telling your readers, “You already know how to warm up to read a book, but now that you are reading longer books, you can warm up to read a page or part of your book.”

Since Kindergarten, children have been taught to look carefully at the pictures in a book before reading to predict what the text might be about. While attending to pictures is one way to prepare to read, remember that the texts at these levels offer less picture support, and in some books can actually be misleading. Teach your readers then, to also think about what is happening in the story and what might happen next before they start to read a page or part. In this way, they will keep meaning in mind as they attempt to decipher longer words. In books divided into chapters, they will also need to pay attention to the chapter headings and use these to predict what a page or section might be about. Readers can then use the pictures to support their thinking. You might say, “Readers, remember that you don’t just look at the pictures to get ready to read a part. Now that your books are longer, you will *also* need to think about what is happening in your book. This way, you can think about what might be happening on a page or in a part *before* you try to tackle the words.”

In helping readers to use context more effectively, also teach them that these longer fiction books have events that happen in several places or at different times of the day. As children are thinking about what might be happening in a part, they can also keep their eyes open for these changes, using the pictures and words to watch out for where and when the story is taking place.

Teach readers to also use structure as a source of information by considering the type of word that might come next. For example, in the sentence “At dinner time they all sat down and ate some spaghetti,” a child stuck on the word *spaghetti*, should be able to understand that this word is naming a thing someone could eat. By asking your readers to consider

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what kind of word it would be, they are able to use this knowledge along with the meaning of the story and the letters in the word to solve the problem.

Move now to revisiting the visual strategies your readers will need to tackle unfamiliar words at levels H, I and J. Remember that rather than approaching a word letter by letter, children should be looking at words part by part. This is especially important at these levels since multisyllabic words become much more prevalent.

**“Today I want to remind you that another way readers solve tricky words is to read across the word part by part. You can use your finger to help you break the word into parts. Say the first part, say more and say the ending. Then put it all together!”**

Model this with short pieces of text, demonstrating how the same strategy readers used to break up a word like *stay* (*st—ay*) can now be used with a more complex word like *afternoons* (*af—ter—noons* or *after--noons*). Encourage students to try more than one way to break a word into parts if needed. You can also teach students some specific ways to do this. Knowing each syllable has a vowel, it might help to break longer words into parts that also each have a vowel. Looking for CVC chunks is another way to look at a word part by part. Ensure however, that your readers are always working left to right across a word, telling themselves to “say the first part, say more and then say the end.” With each demonstration, show readers how as you are saying each part, you are also keeping in mind the meaning of the text. Once you have solved the word, ensure you “check it” by rereading the sentence, making sure it not only looks right, but also makes sense and sounds right. In this way you are always reinforcing the need to integrate all sources of information.

A word of caution - at lower levels, you may have taught your readers to look for the little words inside a big word when breaking a word into parts. While this can be helpful to read a word like *into* or *forget*, use this strategy sparingly. Struggling readers are apt to do this ineffectively, perhaps finding the word *me* in *come*. This is one of the reasons it is so important for readers to work through a word from left to right. However, even then a reader might try to read the word *someone* by breaking it into the little words *so—me—one*, or reading the word *to* in *touch*. Instead, it is more effective to teach readers to keep an open mind, trying to break words in one way, and then another, all the while keeping meaning in mind and asking “What would make sense?”

As students do this work of reading each part at a time, remind them to also pull from what they know from their word study. Say “I want to remind you that you already know so much about letters and patterns from word study. Remember this as you look closely at words and ask, ‘Do any of these letters go together to make special sounds? Can I use those

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parts to help me read this word?” While doing this work in Unit 2, you may have focused on recognizing short vowel spelling patterns (-ap, -an, -ot) in words. Now, you might focus on integrating the long vowel patterns that your children have been learning in word study (-a\_e, -ai-, ea) so that they can target words that will likely come up in the books at level G and higher (CCSS RF 1.3c). For example, if your children have learned that *ai* makes the long *a* sound, you will want them to notice that part in a word like “rain” and rather than sounding out the short *a* and short *i* sounds, rely on what they know about the *-ai* vowel team to solve the word. As words become more and more complex with inflectional endings, (for example: raining) you will want your readers to notice more than one recognizable part (the *-ai* team and the *-ing* ending). Again, encourage your students to be flexible as they do this work. Even if your students are not able to recognize whether the word has a short or long vowel sound, have them try both and then decide how to say the word, thinking about what makes sense.

**“Today I want to teach you that readers are flexible. You know that letters and groups of letters can make different sounds, so when one way doesn’t work, try another!”**

Another word-solving strategy you will revisit in this bend is how readers use words they already know to solve unfamiliar words. Again, remind your readers that they can ask and answer their own questions as they come to tricky words. Teach kids to ask themselves, “Do I know a word that looks like this?” They might even look across the word wall, or any word-family or word pattern charts, or lists of anchor words for spelling you might have on display, to remind themselves of familiar words that contain spelling patterns to help solve a tricky word (only if they really need to, of course). For example, if a child is trying to problem solve the word *saved*, but can’t think of a word he knows that looks like the word “saved,” You might say, “Look at our spelling pattern (or word family) chart. Do you see any words that look like this word?” Then when the child finds a word like “wave” that looks like the word in the book (*saved*) you might say, “Great, if you know *wave*, then you can figure out this word.” This strategy of analogy can also work to help a child figure out how to read a part of a word. For example, a child reading the word *frightened*, might read the first part (*fr*) and then get stuck. They could then think to themselves, “I know the word *light*, looks like this, so this next part must say ‘ight.’ After reading the last part, they then put the word together checking that it makes sense and sounds right. You can teach all your kids, “If you know one word, you can figure out other words—be your own teacher!”

**“Today I want to teach you that readers can think of a word or word part they know to help them read a word they don’t know. Think to yourself, ‘Is there a word or part I know that looks like this?’”**

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With all this focus on stopping to problem solve words, it is critical your readers understand that once a word has been solved, their attention has to move back to the meaning of the text. The best way to do this is to teach children to go back and reread the previous sentence or part, making their reading sound like talking. Watch out for students who slow down on every couple words. This can become a habit that is very difficult to break. While you will certainly have highlighted attentive careful reading in this unit, children need to know that their reading only slows down when there is a problem to solve and then speeds up again right away. Insist that anything your students know how to read is read fluently, and this includes rereading once a word is solved. Remind students to go back and reread sentences, or pages, to smooth out their voices once they've figured out the hard parts.

### Bend III: Readers Make Sure They Always Understand

At this point in the unit, you will want to make sure readers are attending to the rewarding work of “getting” their books. Along with reinforcing the ongoing word-solving strategies, you will want to teach your readers to also continually monitor for understanding. A child who is self-monitoring in a proficient, complete way makes sure that what she reads makes sense across sentences and from page to page. Sometimes when kids begin encountering more challenging texts, they respond by taking in less information. Teach your children to stop and think about what they are reading as they go, rereading when they need to clarify their thinking.

**“Today I want to remind you that readers make sure to understand all the parts of a book. As you read, ask “Am I getting it?” Then stop to name the *who*, *what*, *where*, and *how* to make sure. When you don't understand, reread for the details you've missed.”**

You will likely call together small groups of readers who are struggling with this. You may notice two common problems here. Some children read each word correctly, as they monitor and self-correct, but all that stopping makes it hard for them to hold on to the larger story. Others might read smoothly, but absent-mindedly, reading the words but losing the story. Another strategy you might teach is to have kids reread whole books that were tough on the first read. You might have children pause at the end of a book and say, “Now that I have read this once, do I need to read it again to really ‘get it?’” Especially at the levels that many of your students are reading now—G, H, I—the texts are getting longer, and children’s stamina for reading words and making sense at the same time may be suffering. By teaching kids to reread, we help them get the most out of these harder books as well as help them reach towards the current benchmarks, H, I and J.

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In addition to monitoring for the larger meaning of a book, students will also need to monitor for meaning in words. Simply decoding the words so that you can say them aloud isn't very helpful if you still don't know what the word means, and at the level your children are reading they are bound to encounter some unfamiliar vocabulary. According to the Common Core State Standards, students need to be able to "determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-one reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies (L.1.4)."

Encourage your readers to be their own reading teacher by staying on the lookout for new words to learn. Talking about the word as much as possible helps kids to form ideas about what the word might mean, making connections to what they already know, while drawing new information from the pictures, words, and overall meaning of the text.

**"Today I want to teach you that readers are always learning new words. When they get to a word that makes them say, 'Huh? I don't know what that means!' they stop and think about it. They look for clues in the pictures and words and try to say as much about the word as they can."**

You will want to model this for your students, giving them a list of ways to talk about words. You might say, "Readers talk about interesting words to know them better. They talk so much they become experts! You could talk about words by saying what kind of word it is, describing it, giving an example, saying a word that means the same thing, or even saying what it is not!" Have your children first try this out on a word they will most likely know. For example, if a text reads, "She put on her raincoat and went outside" ask them to talk about the word *raincoat*. They might say it is something you wear on top of your clothes to keep you dry in the rain. The fabric is a little shiny looking, and doesn't let water get through. Looking at a picture, they might comment that it is often yellow, but not always, using an example of a classmates' patterned raincoat. Another name people use for it is rain jacket, and although it does the same thing as an umbrella, it is definitely not an umbrella! This act of talking about a word, helps children to deepen their understanding of what a word might mean, and start to think more flexibly about the meaning of words, even understanding that some words mean different things in different contexts. This is especially helpful for English language learners. Emphasize too, that even when we feel as though we know what a word means, talking about it helps us to understand it *better*. Once children have tried this with known words, model how they can do the same with an unknown word, using the pictures and clues in the text to help them.

Teach your readers to also mark unknown or important words with a post-it as they are reading. This will help you to assess the extent to which readers are monitoring for their

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understanding of vocabulary, and working to extend their vocabulary through reading. Add this to their repertoire of things to do in partnerships, saying, “Readers, another thing we can do with our partners is teach each other new words. You can mark new and important words in your books as you read and then talk about them with your partners to understand them the best you can.”

Another thing that tends to change in levels H, I and J texts is the amount and complexity of dialogue your students will encounter. Therefore, you will want to teach students strategies that will help them to make sense of the sentences with dialogue that often make for tricky parts in the book for many kids—and grownups, too! You might teach your readers to pay attention to who the dialogue is assigned to (he said, she said), and where these dialogue tags are placed. Show your readers examples of dialogue tags placed before a character speaks, in the middle of a character speaking and after a character speaks. You might also want to point out that sometimes the book doesn’t even tell you who is talking—you just have to keep track by picturing the characters in your mind, matching the voice in your head to the characters’ feelings, and maybe even reading those trickier parts with dialogue aloud to yourself until things are more clear (CCSS RL 1.6).

**“Today I want to teach you that when readers are reading fiction they pay attention to who is talking. They use the clues the author gives them to imagine the conversation. The author might tell them who is talking before the character speaks, while they are speaking or after they speak.”**

As the texts get more complex, pronouns also warrant more attention. Teach your readers to attend to these words as they read. You might say, “Readers, watch out! Sometimes when authors are talking about characters, they use the character’s names and sometimes they don’t. The author might use other words like, “he” or “she” or “they” to talk about the characters instead. As readers we have to pay attention to those little words and think ‘Which character is the author talking about right now?’ Then you might need to reread to find out!”

Monitoring for punctuation can also support your readers in maintaining meaning. By the time they get to these reading levels, your students will be adept at stopping at the ends of sentences and noticing how ending punctuation may change the way a sentence is read. Now teach them to watch for commas, grouping words in meaningful ways within a sentence. You might say, “Authors put words together in certain ways to help us understand what they mean. They do this by using commas to tell us how to read a sentence in a way that makes sense. Sometimes when you are reading and it doesn’t make sense, you can go back and reread asking yourself, ‘Is there a comma I missed?’ Then reread, taking a little rest at the comma.” Demonstrate for your students how missing a

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comma can change the meaning of a sentence and cause confusion. For example in the book *Mr. Putter and Tabby Pour the Tea*, show students the sentence “Oh, no one wants cats sir,’ said the pet store lady.” Starting at the top of the page so students are carrying some meaning, first read the sentence as if the comma is after the word “no.” Then stop and say “What? That doesn’t make any sense. Oh no, one wants cats sir? I’m confused.” Then reread pointing out the comma. “Oops. I missed a comma. This will help me read the sentence in a way that makes sense. Now I get what the pet store lady means. She’s telling Mr. Putter that *no one* wants cats.” You may also want to point out some of the different ways that commas are used, showing examples in texts. Your readers are most likely to encounter commas in a list, and commas before dialogue.

### Bend IV: Readers Show Off Their Reading

In this final part of the unit, you will encourage kids to show off their reading skills, by putting the emphasis on fluency. Your goal in this bend is the orchestration of reading, using multiple sources of information to problem solve, monitor and self-correct, while hanging on to the stories and information in their books, and doing it all on the run. Essentially, this is the part of the unit where we pull out all the stops insisting that students keep doing the great reading work they have been practicing this unit, but now do it quickly. The best way to do this, and infuse your classroom with some energy is to give kids an authentic purpose for their reading, in this case, reading for an audience.

Let your students know that they will be practicing their reading skills, getting ready to read for an audience. You may want to start by doing a little inquiry, having your readers think about what kind of reading they like to listen to when they are an audience member and naming the qualities of that reading. Highlight the ideas that the reading sounds like talking, is interesting to listen to and sounds smooth, without too many stops to problem solve. Then say, “You can read like this too! Be your own teacher and start practicing right away.”

**“Today I want to teach you that readers show off their best reading when they read for an audience. Just like you’ve been trying to do on your own, readers push themselves to pull together everything they know about solving tricky words and parts. And... *do it quickly* to keep their audience listening.”**

Teach your readers that they should also think about the ways that different books sound to make some important decisions about how they read their books. You could say, “Readers ask themselves, ‘How should this book sound?’ before reading to an audience. You can think ‘What kind of book is this?’ making your voice sound like characters talking



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in a fiction book, or an expert teaching in an information book.” You will want to teach your students that they can also think ‘How should I read this part?’ while thinking about the big feeling in that section. For example a reader might read slowly in anticipation, or speed up with excitement. Let your readers know that authors give us clues to tell us how a part might be read. They could watch out for dialogue tags, look closely at the pictures and think about the meaning of the words in that section.

Children can also become audience members for each other during their partner reading time. You could have one partner read a part of a text, while the other partner listens carefully and then gives some feedback. Then the reader can try again keeping the feedback in mind before switching roles. Teach them to be teachers for each other by using prompts from a classroom chart.

**“Today I want to teach you that partners help each other to do their very best reading. Your partner can be your audience! Listen to each other read a part and then give feedback to help make it even smoother. You can say ‘Make it sound like talking! Reread that part again!’ ‘Show the feeling more!’ or ‘Let’s read that part together.’”**

Wrap up this unit by giving kids an opportunity to read texts for others - just like a teacher! One way to do this would be to have children make their own audio books. In order to make this project manageable both in terms of time and access to technology, we suggest you set up a few stations during reading workshop in which a few students at a time take turns audio or video taping themselves reading, allowing you to cycle through the class within the week. You can extend the space for this activity by also offering the same station during choice time.

After students have recorded their books, you can connect the audio or video recordings to a QR code. Several apps such as QR Encoder and QR Journal are free and easily allow you to do this. These codes can then be printed and affixed to the books. Anyone with a mobile device can then scan the code and listen or watch the book being read. These completed audio books could then be displayed in a school library, added to your classroom library, or presented to another class during your celebration.

If you don’t have easy access to technology, you might choose to invite kids to make a list of people they want to read to and then choose just the right books or parts of books for those audiences. You can have children practice reading the chosen books while partners listen in and coach, just as they have been doing. By the end of the week children will be excited to make appointments with loved ones and perform their reading. Consider having children write invitations drawing people to the classroom or some other special place, such as “My

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bedroom at 7:30—I'll read to *you* this time!" This could serve as a nice way to celebrate the fact that your readers are reading longer books that others will actually want to hear. Ending the unit in either way will allow children to show off and feel proud of all they can do as readers.

## Word Study

This unit of study continues to support students' transfer of word knowledge into their reading, so you will want to continue to build their knowledge of words this month during your twenty- to thirty-minute word study block.

### ***Typical Concepts to Address for Students Reading H/I/J Level Texts:***

<i>Phonics</i>	<p><b><i>In spelling, your writers will practice...</i></b></p> <p><i>R-controlled vowels</i> (e.g., <u>her</u>, <u>car</u>)</p> <p><i>Long vs. short vowels</i> (begin with hearing the difference between short and long sounds)</p> <p><i>Long vowels: CVCe</i> (e.g., <u>make</u>, <u>time</u>, <u>tube</u>, <u>home</u>)</p> <p><i>Inflectional endings</i> (e.g., <u>played</u>, <u>playing</u>, <u>wished</u>, <u>waited</u>)</p> <p><b><i>In reading, the H/I/J level texts will also require readers to have knowledge of...</i></b></p> <p><i>Vowel teams CVVC</i> (e.g., <u>rain</u>, <u>heat</u>, <u>fruit</u>) words with double consonant letters (<i>running, ladder</i>)</p> <p><i>Contractions</i> (<i>I'm, can't, we're</i>)</p> <p><i>Possessives</i> (<i>bird's nest</i>)</p>
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	<p><i>VVC phonogram patterns (e.g., keep, good)</i></p> <p><i>Compound words (blueberry, backpack)</i></p> <p><i>Plurals (y to i, add -es - pennies)</i></p> <p><i>Taking apart longer words in various ways (syllables, onset rime, etc.)</i></p> <p><b>Vocabulary</b> <i>Comparatives (-er, -est)</i></p> <p><i>Homophones (bare, bear)</i></p> <p><i>Prefixes and suffixes (redo, reread; brighter, brightest)</i></p>
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### **Word Work**

You'll want to continue to provide word study instruction and practice opportunities across the day through word study centers and shared reading. You may provide more support through small-group instruction during reading workshop. In each unit, we'll give an example of one of these methods for teaching particular word study features.

You'll likely be working with many readers in small groups during this unit, especially focusing on guided reading for your readers who are below level or who are moving toward benchmark, especially levels H and I. Your book introductions for these guided reading sessions provide an excellent opportunity for word work that will directly support readers as they navigate the instructional level text and other texts they will soon be reading at that level. There are many phonics features that readers need have knowledge of at this point in their reading life as they will encounter a variety of inflectional endings, a range of long vowel patterns, words with double consonants, and multisyllabic words which they will need to decode efficiently ((RF 1.3b, e). As you provide an introduction to what the book will be about, you'll draw readers' attention to two or three words in the book and possibly pull them out to do some work with magnetic letters or on a whiteboard. As readers read, prompt them to look across the words in parts or syllables. Take note of continued challenges with decoding words, and at the end of the session you can provide additional phonics instruction. Keep in mind that readers need to use all three sources of information (meaning, syntax, and visual information) and your teaching point at the end of the lesson may focus on the orchestration of strategies including the use of visual information such as phonics features. For example, when teaching readers about words

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with double consonants such as ‘hopping’ and ‘ladder,’ you’ll want to remind them that as they are taking apart a word, they need to also be thinking about what has been happening and how the sentence goes to figure out what would not only right but also what would make sense and sound right.

### ***Shared Reading***

During this unit, you’ll increase the amount of time you are spending in shared reading to support children’s transfer of word knowledge to their own independent reading. For example, when looking at your data you may notice that students need to do more work with searching for meaning. During the shared reading lesson, prompt students to search meaning by saying things like, “What is the character doing and where is she?” or “How does what just happened go with what we’ve already read?”

There is an entire repertoire of strategies that one might use, depending on the selected text. You might begin with something familiar, such as talking about what’s happening in the pictures and the story before reading the words, and then stopping after each sentence to think, “What just happened? Does that make sense?” Invite kids to join you as you model rereading sentences by breaking them apart to study them closely. You might focus on using punctuation as a clue. You could say, “Oh wait, a question mark means he’s asking something. I better go back and figure out what would make sense.” You might also choose to read a sentence with awkward phrasing that makes it difficult to understand, and then ask kids to try rereading the sentence several different ways with different combinations of words “scooped” together until it makes sense and sounds right. In shared reading at this time of year, we often teach kids to “scoop” up the words to read smoothly rather than choppily; you might even draw a curved line underneath all the words in a phrase to help kids understand phrasing. Here’s a tip: Level I, J and even K books often contain line breaks that support phrasing; teach kids to take advantage of this feature by reading all the way to the end of the line rather than word-by-word.

Perhaps you’ll teach a lesson where you do a close-in shared reading of a text containing some sentence variety and some longer, more complex sentences. There is a weekly plan in the appendix for your reference.