

Do Your Decodable Readers Check the Boxes?

Decodable readers are specially designed books that contain a controlled set of words with phonetically regular patterns. These books are carefully crafted to align with phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction, allowing emerging readers to use the foundational reading skills they have been taught in supportive texts.

Not all decodable texts are created equal, nor are all texts appropriate or designed to serve as decodable readers for beginning readers. Review this comprehensive checklist to see if your readers are truly decodable texts that align to the science of reading.



An Intentional and Systematic Scope and Sequence

The scope and sequence should move students through simple to complex phonics patterns, beginning with three-letter words with only a few, limited strong consonants and only one short vowel. From there, the scope and sequence should gradually build in more complex patterns.



Phonetically Decodable Text

Decodable books should be just that, decodable. Ensure your text selection includes 100 percent decodable text.



Predominantly Single-Syllable Words

The sequence should build gradually in complexity, from single syllable words (tap, duck) to multisyllable words (bunny, happy) and words with suffixes (tapping, jumpy), matching the phonics scope and sequence.



Low Word Count

Overall, decodable readers should incorporate a low word count to support hard-working readers. The goal is to develop self-efficacy for reading via successful encounters with text.



Integrated Review of Previously Taught Pattern and High-Frequency Words

Integrated practice opportunities of previously learned words are provided and patterns are reinforced in subsequent stories.



Appropriate Length and Linguistic Complexity

Stories should begin with a few brief, simple sentences and a picture. Gradually, sentences should increase slightly in number and complexity to develop reading endurance.



Targeted Pattern Words

Targeted pattern words allow opportunities to practice the newly introduced alphabetic code. There should be a variety of words that follow the target phonics pattern for students to decode, and not just the same words repeated. Decodable texts should include opportunities to read words with morphemes (suffixes, prefixes, bases) when students are ready because research shows the link between reading and morphology. Ensure students are ready for the patterns the text is presenting.



Offers a Variety of Words That Follow the Targeted Phonics Pattern

Texts should include a variety of words that follow the targeted phonics pattern and not just the same words repeated. If the same word is used repeatedly, it can sound more like a predictable text where students are not getting the opportunity to decode.



Irregular Words Introduced Gradually

Irregular words should be introduced gradually across the sequence of books. Only one or two irregular words should be introduced at a time.



Built-in Teacher Support

Do your decodable readers build teaching instructions into the page footers as well as provide a teacher guide that elaborates on teaching tips? They should provide readily accessible teaching instructions and coaching tips to guide teachers, paraprofessionals, tutors, and parents with evidence-based teaching practices.

Recurring and Diverse Characters

The series should integrate a recurring cast of main characters and include stories with characters from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Supportive Illustrations

Illustrations support the story and engage the reader, but they do not entirely “give away” the words, so children must apply their decoding skills to unknown words. Students should not be guessing words based on pictures or context.

Stories Can Be Read Independently

Once students understand the alphabetic principle and have been taught the targeted phonics pattern, stories can be read independently.

Include Pre- and Post-Reading Activities

Pre-reading activities help ensure success before children read the story. They guide students through the application of the alphabetic principle to reading words, phrases, and sentences. This provides concentrated practice with sound-symbol associations, as well as practice with irregular, high-frequency words. Pre- and post-reading activities in phonological awareness, decoding and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension should be included to engage students and check their understanding.

Opportunities for Guided Discussion

Your decodable texts should include opportunities to review the text through guided discussion. This encourages not only fluency, but thinking about the story to improve vocabulary and comprehension. Discussion questions allow students to develop oral language and an appreciation for reading.

Need a solution that checks the boxes?

The *Power Readers* and *Supercharged Readers** series are designed to support all beginning readers or students who need additional support. Inspired by research in literacy, language, linguistics, and learning science, the series integrate decoding with fluency, vocabulary, morphology, and comprehension.



The *Power Readers* series is comprised of 28 decodable stories with pre- and post-reading skill-building activities. As stories progress, students work on the systematic building of phonological awareness, decoding and irregular word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, morphology, and comprehension. *Power Readers* can be used alongside any core reading program for K–1 students or for strategic or intensive reading reinforcement in lower-elementary grades.

voyagersopris.com/power-readers



Supercharged Readers is a series of 37 decodable and controlled-text chapter books. Building on the alphabetic code learned in *Power Readers*, it follows an intentional sequence that builds on syllabic and morphemic principles to help students access increasingly challenging text. *Supercharged Readers* is designed for students in grades 1–2, and can be used for strategic or intensive reading practice for students in grades 1–4.

voyagersopris.com/supercharged-readers



*As mentioned in LETRS® professional development as a resource to support phonics instruction.