

The Balanced Literacy Classroom

Introduction

Many schools want the benefits of a well-structured reading program but still want to maintain a balanced literacy classroom with guided reading, reader’s workshop, literature circles, or book studies. Schools also may want to adjust the scope and sequence of a program to match their calendar or testing needs but are not given the resources to make the process manageable. Schools customize their literacy programs because it helps develop students’ strengths and supports their needs. It is a responsive and rewarding way to teach.

On Reading Street and Calle de la Lectura Texas, customizing this approach is possible. Section 7 of First Stop helps teachers create a program that balances direct skill instruction with a variety of approaches to meet students’ needs. Teachers can use the Guide on the Side as a roadmap for research-based instructional routines. The Customize Literacy tab at the back of every Teacher’s Edition provides flexibility to make curricular adjustments and still follow Reading Street with fidelity. This guide explores the information in First Stop, Guide on the Side routines and activities, and each section of the Customize Literacy tab in the Teacher’s Editions to help teachers create a program best suited for their school, themselves, and most importantly, their students.

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First Stop

In First Stop, teachers learn how to organize and carry out a customized literacy program. Section 7, Customize Literacy on Reading Street, explains that when using assessment tools and observations, teachers learn about students’ strengths and weaknesses. This data allows them to make better grouping decisions. The groups may address strategy and skill instruction, children’s interests, children’s social abilities, or students’ instructional levels. The charts in Section 7, Alignment with DRA2 and Leveled Reader Skills Chart, help match materials and text to groups. Reading Street Texas is aligned with DRA2; use the chart to match Reading Street instruction to DRA2 benchmarks. The Leveled Reader Skills Chart provides Fountas and Pinnell reading levels if teachers are using guided reading groups. This chart allows teachers to

search for text by skill, strategy, vocabulary, and content so that they can match the right reader to each student. Also notice that TEKS are identified for the comprehension skills and strategies. First Stop is a great place to begin when customizing a program, but the Customize Literacy tab in the Teacher’s Editions can be an even greater benefit.

Guide on the Side

Guide on the Side is a great alternative to the Reading Street Texas Teacher’s Editions. The Teacher’s Editions are divided into two volumes per six-week unit. For the balanced literacy teacher, a suggestion is to start the unit in the Teacher’s Edition for the first three weeks of instruction, and then use a balanced literacy approach for the next three weeks. Guide on the Side provides the support needed to teach skills and strategies that correspond to unit objectives. It provides support for progress monitoring, grouping, differentiation, and ELLs. Teachers have research-based strategies, routines, and example lessons at their fingertips. Flip to the skill being taught, such as Main Idea and Details, and there are routines and tips for instruction. Corresponding Reading Street materials are listed, but teachers are free to select their own literature.

Customize Literacy Tab

There are four sections in the Customized Literacy tab.

Section 1: Planning

Planning and pacing instruction is always a challenge, especially when trying to meet state standards. The Pacing Guide in the Customize Literacy tab makes this easier. It provides the program’s instructional sequence for the grade. The scope and sequence is designed to use as is, or it can be adjusted to match a calendar, curriculum map, or testing schedule.

Grade 4 READING	UNIT 1					REVIEW WEEK	UNIT 2	
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 1	Week 2	
Comprehension Skill	Sequence	Author's Purpose	Literary Elements (Character, Setting, Plot)	Author's Purpose	Main Idea/ Supporting Details		Cause/Effect	Draw Conclusions
Comprehension Strategy	Summarize	Questioning	Background Knowledge	Story Structure	Text Structure		Background Knowledge	Story Structure
Vocabulary Skill/ Strategy	Suffixes/ Word Structure	Endings/Word Structure	Multiple-Meaning Words/ Dictionary	Synonyms/ Antonyms/ Context Clues	Suffixes/ Word Structure		Prefixes & Suffixes/ Word Structure	Unfamiliar Words/ Dictionary-Glossary
Fluency Skill	Expression	Phrasing	Tempo/Rate	Expression	Phrasing		Phrasing	Expression
Spelling/ Word Work	Short Vowels VCCV	Long a and i	Long e and o	Long e	Long u Sounds		Adding -s, -es	Irregular Plurals

Here’s a scenario where the Pacing Guide would be helpful:

A school follows a curriculum map. A Grade 4 teacher uses Reading Street Texas but is also responsible for teaching content in the order outlined by the curriculum map. On the map, it states to teach cause and effect at the start of the year since it ties well with social studies content. On the Pacing Guide, cause and effect is the first lesson in Unit 2. The school may decide to teach Unit 2 before Unit 1 to meet the goals of the curriculum map and still follow the program.

Within the Planning section, there is also a TEKS Teaching Record Chart. Use this chart as a checklist to mark the dates of instruction for the skills and strategies taught. This record-keeping system allows teachers to document that they are reaching objectives and state standards. It is helpful for report cards, locating a student's work for a specific skill, or when meeting with school administration.

Section 1 Planning

TEKS Teaching Record Chart

This chart shows the critical comprehension skills and strategies you need to cover. Check off each one as you provide instruction.

Reading/Comprehension TEKS	DATES OF INSTRUCTION	
1.4.A Confirm predictions about what will happen next in text by "reading the part that tells."		
1.4.B Ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts.		
1.4.C Establish purpose for reading selected texts and monitor comprehension, making corrections and adjustments when that understanding breaks down (e.g., identifying clues, using background knowledge, generating questions, re-reading a portion aloud).		
1.7.A Connect the meaning of a well-known story or fable to personal experiences.		
1.7.B Explain the function of recurring phrases (e.g., "Once upon a time" or "They lived happily ever after") in traditional folk and fairy tales.		
1.8 Respond to and use rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration in poetry.		
1.9.A Describe the plot (problem and solution) and retell a story's beginning, middle, and end with attention to the sequence of events.		
1.9.B Describe characters in a story and the reasons for their actions and feelings.		
1.10 Determine whether a story is true or a fantasy and explain why.		
1.11 Recognize sensory details in literary text.		

CL6 Animals, Time and Space • 1001

Section 2: Instruction

Section 2 Instruction

Facts and Details

TEKS

1.4.B.1 Ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts.

1.4.B.2 Identify important facts or details in text, whether read or heard.

1.4.C.1 Use text features to find specific information.

Objectives

- Children identify details as small pieces of information that tell more about the main idea or the big idea.
- Children use details and facts to identify, summarize, and to determine importance.

What is it? Details and facts are small pieces of information that tell more about a main idea in nonfiction and more about characters, settings, and plot events in fiction. At Grade 1, children are using details to help them summarize main ideas, determine importance, and visualize.

How Good Readers Use the Skill

Authors use a range of details to tell more about their subjects. And while some details are really interesting, they may not be all that important. Distinguishing important facts and details is a critical thinking skill. Good readers identify and use details and facts to help them comprehend what they read. They use facts and details to support opinions and judgments about what they read.

Tools for Teaching

Prerequisite Skills

- A *Tip to Washington*, D.C., 1.A, pages 96-109
- A *Southern Forest*, 1.A, pages 128-143

Leveled Readers

- See pages 24-29 for a list of Leveled Readers

Mini-Lesson

Teach the Skill

Use the **Explicit Mini-Lesson** on 1.A, page EHS to visually review details and facts.

Remind students that:

- details and facts are small pieces of information that can tell more about the main idea.
- facts can be proved true.

Practice

Copy these sentences on the board and read them aloud with students.

- A volcano is an opening in the earth where melted rock rises.
- The best volcanoes are at Volcano National Park.
- Volcanoes are like angry giants when they erupt.
- Volcanoes spew rocks, lava, ashes, and dangerous gases.

Ask: What are all the sentences about? What details do the sentences provide about volcanoes? Could some of these details be facts that can be proved? Which ones? Explain that some sentences (2 and 3) are opinions and can't be proved.

Write: students have difficulty facts and details, then... ask: How could you prove that?

Apply

As students read, tell them to identify facts and details.

Writing

Give students a topic and have them list details about it.

CL6 Teachers • 1004

There are some schools using guided reading, reader's workshop, literature circles, or book studies as their selected methods of reading instruction. Reading Street and Calle de la Lectura Texas provide opportunities for teachers to break away from the weekly lessons in the Teacher's Editions so they can continue delivering instruction in the format best suited for their class. In addition to Guide on the Side, the Instruction section of the Customize Literacy tab provides mini-lessons to teach reading skills and strategies. The mini-lessons are not tied to a specific story, so students have opportunities for self-selected reading and teachers can make literary choices that meet students' needs and interests.

Suggested texts are presented when teaching mini-lessons. These are selections from the Student Editions or leveled readers. Use the Leveled Reader Database on texasreadingstreet.com or texascaledelalectura.com to locate appropriate texts for each lesson. Teachers can also use a story or

novel that they have in mind. The Instruction section allows for flexibility with delivery and text selection while still maintaining program integrity.

UNIT 1

Key

T Tested Skill

Target Skill

Get Ready to Read

Read and Comprehend

Language Arts

Texas Skills Overview

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2
	 Because of Winn-Dixie Realistic Fiction pp. 26-37 A Film with a Message of Hope Movie Review pp. 42-43	 Lewis and Clark and Me Historical Fiction pp. 52-67 Ellen Ochoa: Space Pioneer Movie Review pp. 72-73
Question of the Week	What experiences bring diverse people together?	What opportunities can be found in new places?
Amazing Words	attention, kindness, variety, similar, distinct, courteous, teach, understanding, social, introduce	pioneer, traveled, experiences, foreign, improve, settlers, territories, seek, prepared, failure
Word Analysis	Word endings -ed	Suffixes -er, -er
Literary Terms	Point of View	Sensory Words
Story Structure/Text Features	Sequence	Setting
Comprehension	T Skill Sequence Strategy Summarize Review Skill Cause and Effect	T Skill Author's Purpose Strategy Questioning Review Skill Sequence
Vocabulary	T Skill Affixes: suffixes	T Skill Word Endings
Fluency	Expression	Appropriate Phrasing/ Punctuation Cues
Writing	Realistic Story Trait: Word Choice	Expository Composition Trait: Organization
Conventions	Declarative and Interrogative Sentences	Imperative and Exclamatory Sentences
Spelling	Short Vowel VCCV Long a and i	
Speaking/Listening	Dramatic Re-Telling	Introductions
Research Skills	Map/Globe/Atlas	Skim and Scan

The Big Question What can we discover from new places and people?

	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
	 On the Banks of Plum Creek Historical Fiction pp. 84-99 Laura Ingalls Wilder Online Reference Sources pp. 104-107	 The Horned Toad Prince Trickster Tale pp. 116-129 The Fox and the Tiger Fable pp. 134-135	 Letters Home from Yosemite Expository Text pp. 144-155 The Bison of Caprock Canyons Magazine Article pp. 160-163	 Interactive Review
Why do we want to explore new places?	What can we discover in the landscape of the Southwest? coast, route, landscape, sights, landmarks, desert, valleys, enormous, magnificent, navigate	What can we discover in the landscape of the Southwest? frontier, rodeo, cacti, plains, mesa, coral, creeks, range, grassland, sagebrush	How does Yosemite reflect the unique qualities of the West? earthquake, eruptions, volcano, granite, oak, magma, lava, wildlife, sequoia, wildflowers	Connect the Question of the Week to the Big Question Review Amazing Words for Unit 1
Word ending -ing	Compound Words	Related Words		
Forecasting	Dialect	Imagery		
Conflict/Resolution	Rising Action	Description/Definition		
T Skill Literary Elements: Character, Setting, Plot Strategy Background Knowledge Review Skill Sequence	T Skill Author's Purpose Strategy Story Structure Review Skill Literary Elements: Character, Setting, Plot	T Skill Main Idea and Details Strategy Text Structure Review Skill Author's Purpose	Review Unit 1 Target Comprehension Skills	
T Skill Multiple-Meaning Words	T Skill Synonyms and Antonyms	T Skill Affixes: Suffixes -ist, -ive, -ness	Review Unit 1 Target Vocabulary Skills	
Rate and Accuracy	Expression	Appropriate Phrasing	Review Unit 1 Fluency Skills	
Parody Trait: Voice	Friendly Letter Trait: Conventions	Personal Narrative Trait: Voice	Quick Write for Fluency	
Complex Subjects and Predicates	Compound Sentences	Clauses and Complex Sentences	Review Unit 1 Conventions.	
Long e and o	Long e	Long o	Review Unit 1 Spelling patterns.	
Advertisement	Report	Media Literacy: Debate		
Alphabetical Order	Illustrations, Captions, Label	Print Sources		

Section 2 Instruction

Using Multiple Strategies

Good readers use multiple strategies as they read. You can encourage students to read strategically through good classroom questioning. Use questions such as these to help students apply strategies during reading.

Answer Questions

- Who or what is this question about?
- Where can you look to find the answer to this question?

Ask Questions

- What do you want to know about _____?

Predict/Confirm Predictions

- What do you think this story or article will be about? Why do you think so?
- What do you think you will learn from this selection?
- Do the text features help you predict what will happen?
- Based on what has happened so far, what do you think will happen next?

Section 2 Instruction

Glossary of Literacy Terms

This glossary lists academic language terms that are related to literacy. They are provided for your information and professional use.

A

alliteration the repetition of a consonant sound in a group of words, especially in poetry

allusion a word or phrase that refers to something else the reader already knows from history, experience, or reading

animal fantasy a story about animals that talk and act like people

answer questions a reading strategy in which readers use the text and prior knowledge to answer questions about what they are reading

antonym a word that means the opposite of another word

ask questions a reading strategy in which readers ask themselves questions about the text to help make sense of what they read

author's point of view the author's opinion on the subject he or she is writing about

author's purpose the reason the author wrote the text

autobiography the story of a real person's life written by that person

B

background knowledge the information and experience that a reader brings to a text

biography the story of a real person's life written by another person

C

cause why something happens

character a person, animal, or personalized object in a story

chronological order events in a selection, presented in the order in which they occurred

classify and categorize put things, such as pictures or words, into groups

climax the point in a story at which conflict is confronted

compare tell how things are the same

comprehension understanding of text being read—the ultimate goal of reading

comprehension strategy a conscious plan used by a reader to gain understanding of text. Comprehension strategies may be used before, during, or after reading

conclusion a decision or opinion arrived at after thinking about facts and details and using prior knowledge

conflict the problem or struggle in a story

context clue the words, phrases, or sentences near an unknown word that give the reader clues to the word's meaning

contrast tell how things are different

It is important to know that not all of a unit's targeted skills and strategies have corresponding mini-lessons, so use the Skills Overview pages in the unit front matter as a guide. Use the blue Read and Comprehend section to see all of the skills and strategies taught in the unit. Compare these pages to the mini-lessons in the Instruction section of the Customize Literacy tab. By using the Teacher Record Chart in Section 1 of the Customize Literacy tab to track the skills and strategies taught, teachers know which skills and strategies students still need to learn.

Teachers may want to reinforce some of those skills and strategies with instruction during a main selection reading or through the visuals in the EnVision It! Skills and Strategies Handbook. The Student Editions are great teaching tools as well. Use them in conjunction with the Teacher's Editions or alone as an instructional guide by referring to features such as Let's Talk About, Let's Think About, and Let's Learn It. And, refer to Guide on the Side for additional skill and strategy support.

The Using Multiple Strategies and Glossary of Literacy Terms pages are also in Section 2. The strategies pages provide questions to ask students before, during, and after reading to engage them with the text. The glossary is a good reference tool

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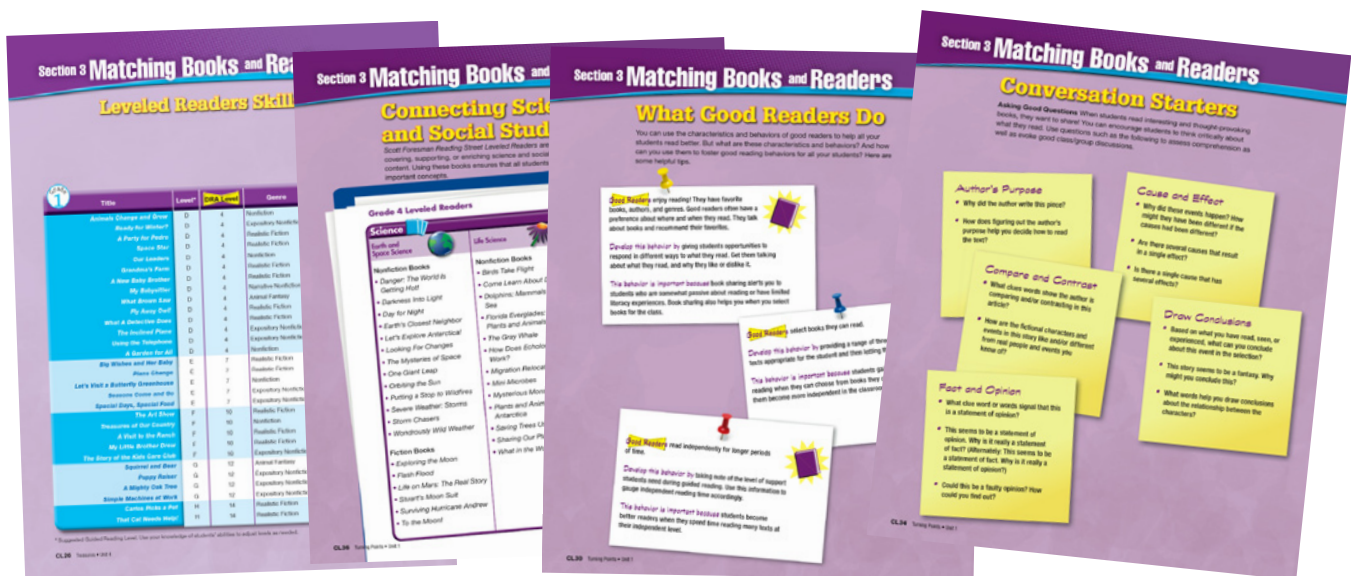
for professional use. It provides teachers with definitions of academic language in simple words so they can also share this knowledge with their students.

Section 3: Matching Books and Readers

Section 3 talks about matching text to readers. There are over six hundred leveled readers in the Reading Street and Calle de la Lectura programs. Therefore, there is always an opportunity to match books to students. The Leveled Readers Skills Chart is a list of all the leveled readers for the grade, similar to the chart in First Stop. Teachers are given the DRA and Fountas and Pinnell level for each leveled reader. They can also use the Leveled Readers Database on texasreadingstreet.com and texascaledelalectura.com to assist them in selecting texts for readers. Information about the skills, strategies, and vocabulary for each leveled reader is also listed in the chart so if a student is struggling in a specific area, teachers can find a text that will assist their instruction.

The Connecting Science and Social Studies pages are helpful in matching books to readers as well. Teachers can help students find books on topics that interest them or select reading for the next science or social studies lesson.

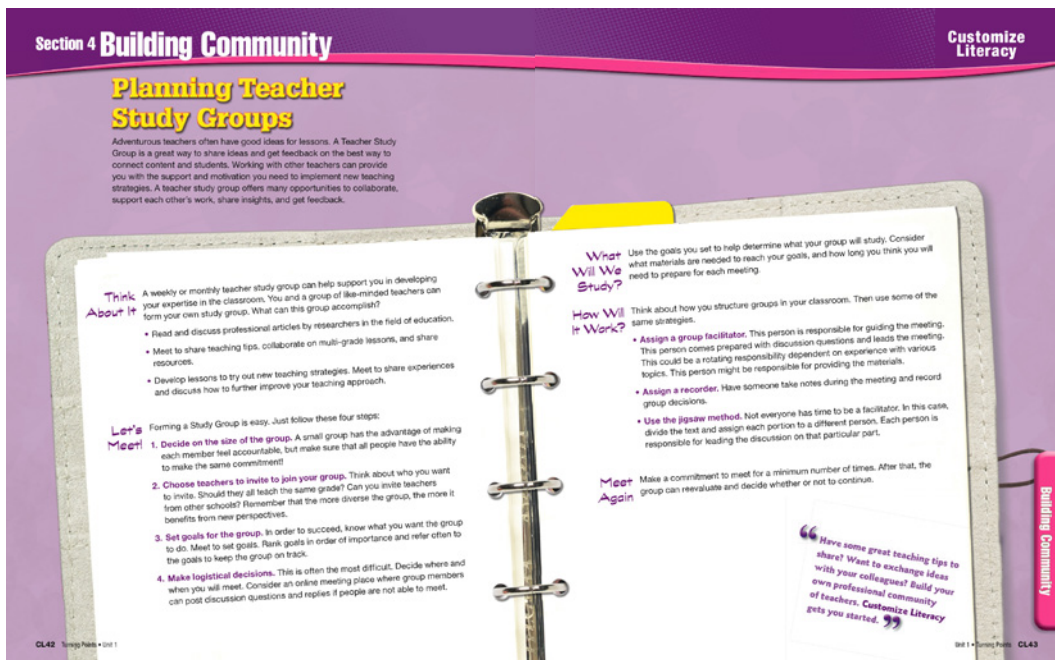
Not only is it important for students to have appropriate texts, but they should also use good reading habits. The What Good Readers Do and Conversation Starters pages will help teachers develop proficient readers. Read the good reader tips to see how to develop these behaviors in the classroom and why they are important. Use the conversation starters to engage students with the text. The questions allow students to share information about author's purpose, main idea, and more.



Section 4: Building Community

The Building Community section is where teachers find information about designing teacher study groups or professional learning communities. It provides basic guidelines and suggestions such as using a jigsaw method to share out information, a self-evaluation sheet for trial lessons, and professional books to read and discuss. This could be a school-wide effort or done among a

grade level. Teachers may be able to get Continuing Education Units for their efforts. At the very least, they will be able to support and connect with colleagues to discuss educational resources, collaborate, share lessons, and get feedback which is a powerful experience.



Review

This guide explained that on Reading Street and Calle de la Lectura Texas, teachers can customize their literacy programs. They can adjust the scope and sequence of the program to fit their school's needs or use mini-lessons to teach skills and strategies with the format and literature best suited for the class. Also, teachers can find text that matches students' needs and support them with questioning strategies and good reading habits. They can get a teacher study group started at their school by following the planning sheet in the Building Community section. It is the flexibility teachers need, while maintaining the Reading Street philosophy.