Unit Two – Word Detectives Use All They Know to Solve Words

October/November - 4 weeks (Level 3 Reading Benchmark: E/F/G)

Welcome to the Unit

The RWP has designed this unit to support your children’s word-solving skills in several ways. First, it provides an opportunity, very early in the year, to revisit the strategy work children learned last year but may have forgotten. Second, it provides an opportunity for you to teach children some strategies that will help them read more challenging books. This is critically important work at this stage because when children read books above level C, they need word-solving strategies that leverage their burgeoning phonics knowledge.

As you make plans for this unit, then, think about what many of your children are doing now when they encounter hard words in books. Think about the relationship between writing, reading, and phonics. Think about how you will support this work in all components of the literacy block and beyond, not only during reading workshop. The most important goal, of course, will be to make sure your readers are active problem-solvers. This is the hardest work most new readers will do.

Overview

**Essential Question:** How can I use all the strategies that I know in ways that let me understand and figure out words in the books that I read?

- **Bend I: Detectives Have Many Different Ways They Solve Words**
  *How do I get better at using strategies to figure out hard and new words while I am reading?*

- **Bend II: Fixing Words When Something Is Not Right**
  *How do I get better at making sure that my reading makes sense as I read? How can I be sure each page that I’m reading fits with the whole book?*

- **Bend III: Partners Help Each Other Read**
  *How do my partner and I work together so that we help each other read better?*
In Bend One of the unit, you will rally your students to be the best word detectives they can be so that they can tackle any “bumps in the road.” You’ll begin by teaching children word-solving strategies that involve knowledge of a book’s meaning: previewing the book, previewing the page, anticipating how a page will go before reading it, and relying on their understanding of the whole of the book in order to problem-solve words. Next, you’ll shift children’s focus to word solving by relying on knowledge of language structure—that is, anticipating the kinds of words that come next as they read. While they won’t need to identify nouns and verbs, children will think about what would sound right in a book. You’ll shift to integration of visual information in this reading process work by teaching multiple strategies for problem-solving words using knowledge of word parts and known words, including high frequency words. You’ll conclude this bend of teaching with the work of orchestration of strategies, showing readers how to be flexible and efficient word-solvers using all that they’ve been learning about being word detectives. By this point you will be providing instruction during independent and partner reading time through small-group instruction based on your informal assessments. This will continue throughout the unit, with changes to groups and instruction made as needed.

As you and your readers move into Bend Two, you will lift their level of independence with word-solving even more by expecting them to be monitoring and fixing up their own reading. One of the most important aspects of the reading process is the ability to know when something isn’t quite right, and for first graders this is a big responsibility. Up until now they’ve been looking to you to let them know if their reading is correct or if they need to fix it up. Now you will teach them how to check on their own reading by asking themselves questions as they read; Does it make sense? Does this look right at the beginning and end? Then you’ll bring them back to the work they did in Bend One of solving word problems, showing them how they can fix up their mistakes by using those same strategies. Before leaving the bend, it will be important to teach them that readers not only check their words as they read, but they also check to make sure they understand the whole book. This way you can provide some explicit instruction on retelling to connect to the work you’ve probably been doing during read alouds.

In Bend Three the work of the previous units is strengthened through partner reading. While readers will continue to read independently using all that they’ve learned, you will focus your instruction on partner reading. Up until this point they’ve probably done partner work similar to that which you introduced in Unit 1, so now you will show them how to use what they know about problem-solving words to coach their partners. You’ll suggest prompts they can use so that they are supporting the reader without doing all the correcting for them. You will also provide instruction on ways to prepare for reading with a partner and then ways to retell together which will allow them to clarify what they are reading about as well as begin to extend ideas—work that will be happening in greater depth in upcoming units.
Unit Two - Word Detectives Use All They Know to Solve Words

**CCSS/LS Standards Addressed in this Unit**

Your students will build upon three major standards in this unit: RF 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4. Standard RF 1.2 sets the expectation that students should demonstrate an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds. Another important standard addressed is RF 1.3 which lays out the expectation that children know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words, specifically common consonant digraphs (Standard 1.3a), regularly spelled one-syllable words (Standard 1.3b), words with inflectional endings (Standard 1.3f), and irregularly spelled words (Standard 1.3g). While working toward these standards, you will also be addressing Standard RF 1.4, which expects children to read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. Specifically, Standard 1.4c is addressed in Bend Two when readers learn to use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding.

**Getting Ready**

- Create a schedule for when and how often you will meet with your reading groups.
- Decide where you will meet with small groups and gather any tools you might need, like whiteboards, dry erase markers, and magnetic letters.
- Give each student an individual word wall that can be customized based on needs. You might also put sight word cards on book rings for children to practice reading these words with automaticity.
- Look around your room and decide which charts you will revise during this unit and which charts are no longer needed. Some other charts you might make could be about the reading process (monitor, search, cross-check, self-correct) and using more efficient word-solving strategies.
- Make small versions of a key strategy chart so partners can use it to help each other when they get stuck (in bend 3).
- Gather some books to use as demo pieces during minilessons, such as *Walking in Spring* by Beverly Randall (Level E).
- Return to a familiar big book like *The Gingerbread Man* by Brenda Parkes to practice fluency and find some that are at the benchmark levels to model efficient word-solving strategies.

Much of your planning and preparation for this unit will come in the shape of looking across assessments to guide your whole group and small group instruction. Please see Assessment, below.
Formal and Informal Running Records

Because September was filled with assessments and routines, this unit will be your chance as a teacher to get into the nitty-gritty of powerful, differentiated instruction. You will need to use all of the information you collected through your September assessments—and even collect some new information—to help guide your students toward strategies that fit their specific needs. By the end of this unit, you should see that students have moved several reading levels since the start of the year. This may mean doing some follow-up informal running records to shed light on student progress and stumbling blocks.

When you do running records, whether you are just looking on as a child reads his or her just-right book or you have brought the child to a specific book, it is important that you see what happens when the child reads a book level that will be a bit hard for the child—the strategies he uses and does not yet use become easier to identify. In other words, when a reader is stretched a little, what he still needs to be taught becomes more obvious. You will be able to see whether each child relies especially on phonics, on the meaning of the story, or on the syntax of sentences to cope with difficult books.

Building Automaticity with High Frequency Words

If you did not have a chance to administer a high frequency word list, you will want to be sure that you do one for each student. This will let you know what words you can work on during word study and how students are building more automaticity in reading words with a snap. You will find a series of word lists to use with your students on our website (readingandwritingproject.com). Be sure to start where the kindergarten teachers left off. Look across your class and build lists of words to work on this month. Also plan to pick a few words a week that differ from the words you place on the word wall for small groups of students to work on, to help you strategically work on individual needs.

Bend I: Detectives Have Many Different Ways They Solve Words: Using Knowledge about Letters, Sounds, Patterns, and Snap Words to Read

To rally your students around the goal of reading more challenging books, you could borrow a metaphor that educator Kathy Collins once shared with her first graders: "Bike riding is different if you're riding straight up hill (the bike gets wobbly and you need to get off), if you are riding downhill (when you ride without even pedaling) and if you are riding
on level ground (pedal, pedal, pedal).” You might ask your class, “Do any of you ever feel like some books are uphill books? Exhausting, no-fun books that make your reading all wobbly?” Then tell them that they should aim to read “Flat-road” books—ones that require just the right amount of work. From here you can announce that this unit will help them deal with “bumps in the road” they encounter while reading by turning them into word detectives for whom no word is too hard to figure out.

You'll want to make sure that your readers have partner reading time following their independent reading time on a daily basis. This increases stamina and engagement for reading and provides an opportunity for readers to deepen their comprehension of the books in their book bags. Continue to reinforce the routines they learned in Unit 1 for reading together and talking together. Specific instruction for lifting the level of this work will take place during Bend 3.

**Teach children some ways to preview books**

At this point, you might look around your classroom and observe how many students look over their books before actually turning to the first page to start reading them. Chances are that at the start of the unit, the number will be small because many of your students will be so excited about being able to read longer, harder words and books!

Students should always search for the meaning of the story before they even open up the book and you can teach them that. Say, “Today I want to teach you that even before you begin reading a book, you can look at its title, cover, pictures, and even make connections to other books like it to help you read the words.” By helping students get themselves ready to read, you are actually helping them figure out new and tricky words. In *Walking in the Spring* by Beverly Randall (Level E), there is a photo on the cover that previews much of what the family will encounter as they take a walk. Ask kids to study the cover and see what they are noticing. This will give them an idea of what this family will see on their walk and will help them when they come to a “bump in the road.” When kids study the cover and the back of a book, make predictions, and take picture walks to set themselves up to read, they are setting themselves up to solve words, too. If the reader has the bigger story of what you’re reading in mind, when she comes to a hard word, she can think, “What was I thinking this might say based on how this book will go? Does that help me figure out this word?” and often it will!”

"Today I want to teach you that even before you begin reading a book, you can look at its title, cover, pictures, and even make connections to other books that are like it to help you read the words."

"Today I want to teach you a secret experienced readers know: when you know what the book is all about, then when you come to a hard word, you can think about what’s happening in the story and then ask yourself, "Hmmm...what word would make sense here?"
To do this, remind readers of what they learned in the first unit about getting ready to read. While you may decide to teach a minilesson reviewing ways to get ready and referring back to a chart already created, you could also simply give these reminders through mid-workshop teaching points and through the read-aloud and shared reading work outside of the reading workshop.

*Teach children to use meaning, syntax and visuals to solve words*

Once your students are in the habit of searching for the meaning before they read the story, you will want to teach them that readers need to use several sources of information (just like a detective does) when they get to hard words—tricky spots—in their books.

By teaching children a variety of strategies and processes for determining which words are tricky, solving those words and then checking their reading, you stretch their Depth of Knowledge (DOK) work. Hovering over students, waiting for them to make mistakes, pointing out those mistakes immediately and then jumping in to help—asking them to simply apply a given strategy when prompted—keeps them at a DOK Level 1. Instead, you will want to help children develop “self-extending systems” (a term coined by Marie Clay) that allow them to recognize their challenges, choose from and try a variety of strategies, and then check their reading independently. This constitutes much higher—DOK Level 3—work.

To support children in using meaning to figure out words, you can teach children to use illustrations to help them figure out hard words. At levels E, F and G the illustrations become more complex—the picture often tells what is happening and how characters are feeling. Therefore, you might teach readers to think about what has been happening, look at the illustrations and ask themselves, “What might be written here?” Then, they are apt to be better able to read the words on the page. On page 4 of *Walking in the Spring* it says, *You can see white blossoms on the apple trees.* While looking at the photo of blossoms, the reader will want to look at the first part of the word, “blos,” and think about what would make sense. As they read “You can see white blossoms on the apple trees,” prompt them to go back and reread to see if what they have read makes sense, sounds right and looks right.

You will want to teach readers to shift between using strategies for reading with meaning and strategies for searching their knowledge of language structure. For example, when a child encounters a tough word, she can think, “What kind of word would make sense and sound right here?” To support this kind of work, you could set your children up to “guess
the covered word.” Guess the covered word is a method described by Patricia Cunningham in *Month by Month Phonics*. For example, if given the sentence “The cat jumped _______ the fence,” children should use what makes sense and their knowledge about language to determine that a preposition goes into that spot. You could then ask your kids to guess the word and think about the letters they expect to see in that word. Write their guesses, right and wrong, above the covered word. Then, uncover only the part of the covered word that matches the word work you know kids are using. Encourage checking and self-correction during this work.

At this point in your students’ reading development, they will need to rely on all that they have learned about letters, sounds and words in addition to using meaning and syntax knowledge in order to problem-solve in efficient ways. You might begin by reminding children of their ever-expanding knowledge of letters and sounds, and suggesting that they draw on this to word-solve. In subsequent RWP minilessons, you’ll remind students that looking closely at words is a big part of what we do as readers. Also, children can draw on the phonics work they learn to do (at their respective spelling stages) during word study in reading workshop to help them read books.

You will likely have also begun work aimed at strengthening your students’ high frequency word vocabulary. Here too, you will want to remind children to use these words to help them read. Knowing some words in a snap builds students’ confidence. There are a number of snap words in *Walking in the Spring* (you, can, see, on, are, to, get, etc.). Make sure that these words have been introduced, explicitly taught and added to the word wall. This work is fundamental to the Common Core Foundational Reading Standards. Per CCSS RF 1.4, first graders should “read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension” ;a knowledge of “snap” words will help children read with increasing accuracy and fluency. While your small-group work will support children in using specific word study strategies, your whole-group teaching will be an important way to rally your kids around using all they know.

One key word-solving strategy involving the use of visual information (letters, words) that will support the majority of your readers is looking for parts of words as they read rather than sounding out words letter by letter, which is the least effective strategy kids can use.

CCSS RF 1.3e addresses this skill, highlighting the importance of moving readers away from sound-by-sound reading to using syllables and word parts to figure out unknown words. Only about 45% of words in English are phonetic, so simply saying, “Sound it out” will
probably not work. Children who are now reading in levels E and F will also need to harness the patterns they know to help them read unknown words. Your spelling inventory data will help you to identify which patterns your students know so that you can expect them to use that knowledge as they read. For example, if kids are spelling words with digraphs and blends correctly, you will want them to use that knowledge when reading words. If they come to a word that begins with a blend or a digraph, such as blossom, you'll want students to read bl as a blend, not letter by letter. A child who reads the sentence “She did not want to stay.” should be trying to see the “st” and then “ay” parts of the word and then use those parts to read the whole word by blending them together. Keep in mind that while the main instruction is focused on the visual information of word parts, it is critical that you are using meaning and syntax as you model so that readers are seeing how you orchestrate multiple sources of information. Explicit minilessons on this orchestration can come later in this bend. Also, keep in mind that this is the point in a child’s reading development that they’ll begin to track with their eyes rather than their finger, as this will allow them to read with increasing fluency. However, they may need to use their finger when problem-solving a word so it is important to check on this when coaching readers and prompt them to read with their eyes if they are relying too much on their fingers to track.

As students move into higher reading levels, they will be reading longer words with more syllables. According to CCSS RF 1.3e, students should be able to decode two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables. Children in the RWP classroom should now understand that every part of a word needs at least one vowel. You will need to teach them how to use this knowledge as they read longer words. For instance, the word “starting” could be overwhelming, but by using the picture and knowledge of what is happening in the book as well as breaking it up into two parts, “start” and “ing” it is much easier to decode. After teaching this, you can coach kids to transfer this learning and apply this strategy when they come to a tricky word in their own independent reading.

Another important strategy to teach is using known words to figure out unfamiliar words. During word study, students most likely have been sorting words under anchor pictures and words, that is, ones that are designed to help children sort new words. You might help students use anchor words to help them figure out words as they are reading. For example, if students have been studying spelling patterns with _ed and they know the word “bed,” you can say, “The word you are trying to read is like the word “bed” as they are problem-solving the word “sled.” You might also prompt, “Does that word look like a word you know?” when a child is stuck.

Remember that if your support is too heavy, your students will not learn how to apply this strategy the next time they find a tricky word. Teaching students to prompt themselves with a variety of strategies at the point of difficulty brings their DOK up to a Level 2 or 3.
because they will be using a process to figure out the word independently, rather than simply applying a prompted strategy. If, however, you need to provide more support at the beginning, you might make the word “bed” with magnetic letters right next to what the child is reading then ask, “What word is this?” The child will then likely say, “bed,” at which point, you can say, “Look at the word you are trying to read. What part is the same?”

You’ll also show students how they can use high-frequency words to help them read new words. The words “she” and “can,” for example, have the “sh” digraph and the “an” spelling pattern that is in so many other words. These strategies for using visual information such as parts of words and making connections between words are used most successfully by readers reading above level C. Therefore, if you have readers reading at lower levels, you can reference the appendix for suggestions for supporting these readers.

**Be a Word Detective!**
- Does the picture help?
- What would make sense?
- What would sound right?
- What are the parts?
- Is it a snap word?
- Is it like a word you know?

We have found the important thing here is to demonstrate how readers use more than one strategy at once to tackle the hard words and tricky parts of books. It is essential that your students have the mindset and the tools to tackle tricky words with vigor and independence in all components of the day, transferring these skills from one to another. This is the most intellectually demanding work they can do—what Webb calls DOK Level 4.

**Build children’s automaticity for SNAP words**

Of course, as children tackle hard words, you’ll also want to make sure that they do not need to work hard to tackle every word. More than half the words that readers at this age encounter are the same thirty-six words! Remember that many of your children probably have more than twenty-five words under their belt from kindergarten. Lots of other words they encounter are ones they should know with automaticity. It is important that by this time your children all have a substantial repertoire of words they know “in a snap.” These words will be a great help as they read. In addition to a number of regularly spelled words, first graders should be able to “recognize and read grade-appropriate, irregularly spelled words” (CCSS RF 3.g). This unit is a good time to rally children’s enthusiasm for extending their high frequency sight vocabularies.

Some of your children may need help on high frequency words. Perhaps you’ll give each of these children word rings with cardboard cards strung on a chain, holding together the
words you hope that a particular child can read in a snap. Perhaps one child will have fifteen words on that word ring, and twenty-five on another. Children can remove the words they know perfectly so as to focus on the words they almost know. Other children may benefit from having known and unknown words on the word ring to reinforce the known words and build confidence. It can also be helpful to provide readers with individual word walls which they can read as a warm-up for reading and can also refer to during reading. Sometimes readers know these words in isolation or in the context of the word wall but have difficulty recognizing these words automatically while reading. It is important to remember that putting words on the word wall is not enough. They need to be introduced and explicitly taught. Patricia Cunningham, in Month by Month Phonics for First Grade, recommends that when placing a word on the word wall the procedure should be: kids glue their eyes to the word (visual), cheer for the word (auditory) and then write the word (kinesthetic). If you add 5 words a week, this process should take no more than 5 minutes a day and will be time very well spent. You can consult the RWP website for high frequency word lists.

Children who need special help with high frequency words could also play games to practice reading these words. One child can sit with another, looking at the word wall, and the first can say, “I spy a word that is…” and then give hints until the other child guesses the selected word. You can simply give these children a pointer and ask them to take time every day to read the words on the word wall. Some teachers try to make this fun by suggesting children take on different voices each time they reread the word wall. One partner can say to the other, “Read the word wall in a witch’s voice” or, “Read the word wall by meowing the words.” These are silly instructions, but the point is for these words to become automatic for children, and some children will benefit from repeated practice. Of course, the best way for children to learn sight vocabulary words is by seeing those words in real books at their just-right level, which is the essential thing they do during reading workshop.

The other important thing about increasing students’ high frequency word vocabulary is that these words give students a running start that often provides the necessary momentum to figure out tricky parts. For example, if a child is reading Walking in the Spring and encounters the sentence, “If you go for a walk down by a river, look for ducklings.” she is likely to be able to read, “If you go for a walk down by a river,” because most of those words are in her high frequency word vocabulary. You might tell students that when people work out they often use “spotters” to help them lift the heavy weights. Then say, “As we read the easy parts of the sentence it can give us a boost so we can read the tricky parts. When we come to the word ducklings, we are ready for that heavy lifting.
Differentiate instruction to support readers moving up text levels

Because this unit is especially assessment-based, you will lean on small-group instruction more than ever. There are additional suggestions about small groups in the Appendix. If you do not already have readers grouped by skill needs, now is the time to do that.

Once you have these groups, it can feel difficult to teach minilessons that are relevant to a span of readers. To differentiate your minilessons, think about ways in which you can support diverse readers during the active involvement. You might say, “Try this in your just-right book.” Some teachers find it helps to establish a seating chart that groups children, giving each cluster an appropriate book with which to work during the active involvements. Both shared reading and read-aloud will also provide opportunities for the class as a whole to do more close-in, scaffolded work with grade level books. For example, at this this time of year, the benchmark is level E/F/G so you may have your kids work with a book like The Gingerbread Man by Brenda Parkes during shared reading lessons.

Most of your readers will be reading around level E from the start of the year. Those students who are below this level will need tailored instruction through guided reading, shared reading, and small-group strategy lessons to help them move along right from the start of the year. At the end of two months of teaching, some of your readers have already grown one or more reading levels. In any case, fine-tune each reader’s selection of texts with books that are just right and clarify where a child can go to find more such books.

If you have readers who are just beginning to move into conventional reading (levels A, B, C), aim to lead many guided reading sessions with them. If possible, work with the most vulnerable children several times a week in small groups. During guided reading sessions, choose a book the children will be able to read easily with just a little support, give them a book introduction to this and then let them each read the book alone (yet alongside each other) while you lean in to coach one child’s reading and then the next. Keep in mind that these beginning readers will be reading just-right books with relatively supportive illustrations accompanying the book. While much of your word-solving instruction will focus on using pictures to help them attend to meaning, make sure these readers also attend to print. These students may only know beginning sounds and ending sounds. If your children have demonstrated a solid grasp of initial and final sounds on the spelling inventory, this would lead you to teach them that when they come to a hard word, they should look at the picture and the first sound of the word, thinking of words they know that look and sound like that. You might demonstrate this by looking, for example, at the sentence, “I like to eat popcorn.” Cover most of the word “popcorn” with just the letter p showing at the beginning and the letter n at the end of the word. Say, “I’m looking at the first letter of this word. /P/. That is the first letter sound of the word I’ve read. /P/ /p/. Let’s see. What could it be? It should be something that I eat. Play dough? Pizza? Popcorn?
Let’s check the picture! I see popcorn. Let’s say ‘popcorn’ and think about what we hear at the end. Now let’s check the ending part.” Pointing to the “n” you might say, “What does that sound make?” Then show children how they can think about their guesses to pick which one makes sense, sounds right, and looks right. Once you have introduced these books in guided reading, you will want to make sure that the books are in the book baggies so kids can practice the strategies you have taught them and to reread the books with fluency.

You may want to do some small-group strategy lessons with your stronger readers in which you teach reading strategies appropriate to their level. Take a close look at the books they are reading and determine any challenges the books present. Your Assessment-Based Prompts for Skills, Strategies and Habits document will, again, help you to observe what children need to work on and to then choose prompts that scaffold towards independence. Remember that at higher levels, readers will encounter challenging words, but they will also struggle at times to make meaning from books. When a group of children in your room face the latter challenge, you could pull them into a small group and use a shared book to teach them how to hold onto more text across pages. As you read across one or more pages, stop and ask the children to think about what they just read and describe this in a simple sentence. For example, a child who is reading the book Walking in the Spring, might stop at the end of the first few pages and say, “This is a book that is about a family seeing flowers when they go for a walk.” However, if you ask her to think about the whole book, the title and how the pages go together, she is more likely to come up with a summary that encompasses the meaning of the whole story, like, “This is a book about a family that sees many things they never saw before because it’s spring and the flowers are coming out and baby animals are born on the farm.” This kind of close reading instruction will support children to retell in more sophisticated ways as they move into more complex books. CCSS RL 1.2 and 1.3 both concern students’ ability to retell and talk about key details in a book. This work will likely be the focus of some of your small groups with readers who are moving up levels quickly. Of course, you will want to be sure that you help these advancing readers be able to talk about the main idea and key details of their books before you continually add more complex books to their reading diets.

### Bend II: Fixing Words When Something Is Not Right

As you confer with your students, and rejoice at their growing problem-solving abilities, you may be tempted to say things like “Good job” and “That’s right” each time they read a word correctly. Students themselves reinforce this reaction by looking to us for help or reassurance when they stop at a word or are confused. We caution you to resist the urge to tell a child when a word is right, because your most important reading goal is to get kids to do their own monitoring (CCSS RF 4.c). When we teach students how to self-monitor we
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support their independence. If we always tell them when a word is right or wrong, they simply learn to depend on others, not themselves, in the face of challenge. Instead of depending on us to confirm, you will want to ask them, “Were you right?” so that they will self-assess and realize that the strategy they have employed is successful. Our goal as teachers is to set our students up to reach the higher level, independent strategizing work that the DOK outlines in Levels 3 and 4.

*Channel children to fix words when they don’t make sense*

We at the RWP have found it is essential that your students learn how to check their own reading. It is extremely important that they learn to stop when something doesn't make sense in a story, or when something doesn’t sound or look correct. They can ask themselves questions like, “Does this go with the story? Does this sound like a book?” As students read, call out little prompts to remind them to do this work. Some students will know exactly what to do when you say “Check it.” Others will need a little more prompting such as, “You said ‘Mom want in the car.’ Does that sound right?” After fixing a word, students should reread the sentence to make sure that this time it sounds right. Be on the lookout in your classroom for kids who are stopping and finding parts that sound wrong or that they just don’t get. Celebrate them—shout out the powerful work they are doing in Mid-workshop teaching points. Share how they worked hard to figure something out in a share session. Encourage kids to bring difficulties to their partners that they fixed up or need more help in fixing.

Readers who are monitoring for sense more consistently are ones who you'll see occasionally pausing or stopping after reading a tricky word, rereading, asking their partner for help during partner reading, or searching for more information. You'll want to celebrate this and then move into teaching ways to self-correct as they read. As readers begin to self-correct, they will often read an entire sentence before going back to fix-up a word. As they become stronger with this aspect of the reading process, they will self-correct closer to the error.

One habit you'll want your readers to develop to help with self-correcting is rereading. Often the act of rereading a sentence provides readers with an opportunity to consider the meaning and syntax again before they do the visual work of looking at the parts of the words.
Teach children to monitor for comprehension

Teach readers that while working on tricky parts in books, it is essential that they make sure they continue to understand. They can, and should, check on this by retelling books to themselves at different points along the way. You may want to devote a few minilessons to teaching children how to retell stories well (CCSS RL 1.2). Remind your students that they can retell across their fingers by using cue words such as “first,” “then,” “next,” “after that,” and “finally.”

If students get stuck as they retell, teach strategies for getting back on track, for instance, touching and retelling the big thing that is happening on each page (although this strategy works best in shorter books with lots of picture support). In Find Yourself a Friend by Gracie Porter (level F), a boy asks all of his family members to play with him but they are all busy. Each time he asks and they say they can’t, he goes to his room and finds a book that takes him on an imaginary journey. You might model a retelling that sounds like, “First the little boy (his name isn’t mentioned) asks his mom to fix his toy, but she says she can’t because she’s busy with the baby. Then he asks his dad, his brother, his sister and his uncle, but they’re all busy doing other things. Every time someone says “no” he goes to his room and finds a book that takes him on an adventure. Finally, he realizes that a book will always be there as a loyal friend.” In this retell the story is being retold and information is being synthesized. Teach your students to be resourceful and use illustrations in the book to remind them of the story as they say, “Oh, yeah, this is the part when....” You might also teach students to retell the lesson or message of the story when they are finished reading. Think aloud and model what the lesson is, such as “Books will always be our friends and take us on great adventures.” It’s important for kids to hear models of this type of retelling before they do it in partnerships. This supports CCSS RL 1.2 and is great work for partners to do together which you can begin in this bend and continue in Bend 3.

As you analyze your running records, notice whether or not students are self-correcting as well as rereading as they read, and look to see that students are monitoring consistently rather than sparingly. You may notice that your students are consistently searching for meaning, structure, and visual information but never monitoring and correcting. If this is the case, spend more time in this bend.

You may say to kids, “Sometimes when we read, we know all the words, but we forget to think about, what is this part saying? or What does this really mean? Readers often reread..."
as they are reading to check in with themselves and make sure that they know what is happening or what the book is saying.”

**Differentiate instruction to support readers moving up levels**

You may find from your running records that you have students who are not quite ready to move to the next level. This might be because they read painfully slowly, because they don’t read with 96% accuracy, or because their inference skills are not yet strong. Children like this should be reading mostly books that are just right, but also a few that are a notch harder that they can read and reread. Be sure to pull these kids into a small group and scaffold the reading of these instructional level books through shared reading or book introductions. Some of these small groups may need coaching for a series of 2 or 3 days.

You may find small group interactive or shared writing is another method that helps many of your emergent and beginning readers, and perhaps your English language learners. One way to introduce them to the new, more complex characteristics of their instructional level books is to create a more complex text with them. Just as you have been doing since the beginning of the year with the whole class, you can gather a small group to compose a text, telling the story of something that happened in the classroom: “We found a frog in our classroom. We put him in a cup. Then we let him go.” Then you’ll want to move to the construction of the text. Repeat this class news and then suggest the children join you in counting the words. To work on leaving spaces between words and on pointing one to one, you might say, “I am going to write one line for each word. Say the story with me again and watch how I make one line for each word.” As children say it again, write a line for each word. Then invite children to join you in writing the news.

Another possibility for a text would be a retell of the shared reading book that children have read during shared reading sessions. By retelling the book, kids can practice strategies for writing words they have encountered in reading. This will strengthen and help transfer what they have learned in shared reading. Rely on children for the high-frequency words they are apt to know, and briskly fill in the other sections of words on your own. Make sure every child is active. If one child comes up to write the word “put,” every other child can meanwhile “write” that word on a knee, a patch of rug, or a whiteboard. Each time a word is complete, encourage the children to reread what has been written. Make sure the text sounds right and makes sense in the story. This whole interactive writing time will only be about seven to ten minutes long at the most. At the end, add the text to the classroom library, and give small copies to students in the small
group. While the text may be a higher level than the books some children would otherwise read, the fact that they helped create it makes it supportive reading material.

**Bend III: Partners Help Each Other Read**

At this point in the unit your readers have a growing repertoire of strategies for problem-solving words and are becoming more independent as they more consistently self-monitor and self-correct using their strategies. During partner reading time you’ve probably noticed readers helping each other even more than they did in the previous unit. Often this may look like one partner correcting a word for the other partner. This is a great time to lift the level of this work by having readers take more responsibility for prompting their partners to problem-solve, monitor, and correct their reading.

*Channel partners to coach each other*

Teach partners to use the strategy charts in the classroom to help each other as they read. Teach them how to “coach” instead of telling each other the words, perhaps teaching them phrases like “Fix it!” or “Check it!” or “Try that again.” While partners are busy helping each other monitor, you might also remind them to pay closer attention to vocabulary. “Are there words that are new for you and your partner?” you might ask. “Can you talk about those words and use the pictures and the story or information in the book to help you understand what that means?” (CCSS LS 1.4).

This close attention to vocabulary will become increasingly important as children read books at higher text complexity levels. It will also help students support each other during partner time and engage for longer stretches of time with their eyes glued to the print. You’ll probably want to connect this coaching work that partners do to their independent reading time, showing them how to imagine what their partner might say to them when they get stuck on a word.

At this point you will probably have a partner chart available, ideally with photos of your student partnerships, to support reading partners:

**Reading with a Partner?**
1. Set up - One book, in the middle
2. Read together - echo, choral, take turns
3. Coach your partner:
   - “Try it again.”
   - “Does that make sense?”
   - “Look at the first part.”

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4. Retell

**Spotlight the importance of rereading for smoothness**

As children encounter tricky parts and work through them, teach them how to go back and reread until the book goes smoothly. You’ll need to model with a sentence or two on a chart. Demonstrate how a reader gets to a tricky part, uses all she knows to figure out the word(s), and then goes back to read it smoothly. Teach children that when we read smoothly, instead of haltingly or v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y, we are more likely to understand what we are reading. It’s important to let partners know that as they read a book over and over again across the week, their voices should become smoother and smoother until they no longer stumble on tricky parts and they get to a comfortable-to-listen-to speed. If by the end of the week, a book doesn’t feel smooth to a child, he should plan to keep the book in his baggie for another week. This is another great way that partners can support each other’s growth, cheering each other on as words get smoother or supporting each other to make a decision to hold onto the book. In other words, just as reading out loud to someone else can help a writer make her writing smoother, reading a book out loud to a partner can help a reader make his reading smoother.

**Teach children the importance of preparing for partner talk**

Using small post-its can help readers prepare for their partner reading work—they can leave the post-it on tricky parts where they have trouble solving a word or are confused. While you won’t want to see readers marking a part without first applying their strategies, you can teach them to do this when they are completely stuck so that they remember get help during partner reading. They can continue to mark other parts as well: parts that are really important or that cause a strong reaction, or that are funny. This will lead to stronger retellings and stronger talk about the book.

Since you have already demonstrated in Bend 2 how to retell the important parts of the book to check for understanding, this can be something you show readers how to do together. They can retell by telling it across their fingers, touching important pages of the
book, or acting it out. Demonstrate how partners can fix up parts by filling in missing parts of the retelling or by using different words and phrases to describe the book.

All of this partner work will, of course, support your students as they develop the skills that will allow them to have productive conversations in which they follow agreed-upon rules of discussions, build on each other’s thinking and clear up any confusions as they think together (CCSS SL 1.1).

The big work of this unit will have been teaching students strategies to read with accuracy, fluency, and understanding by integrating sources of information. We at the RWP suggest one way you might celebrate your children’s new proficiency is to suggest that each of them find a just-right book they want to learn to read aloud well for a celebration. For several days, children will take this book home and practice reading it aloud in their best voice. Then, on the celebration day, you might have them read their books aloud to one another in small groups of four classmates. You might decide to invite kindergartners or older students to provide more of an audience. For students who are able to read more sophisticated, longer books, you could suggest that they either select an excerpt to read aloud or choose a poem or short book. In addition to reading aloud their selected books, students can also reflect on their reading work. They can name reading skills that they have worked on and may have even mastered. You could support this kind of sharing by giving kids sticky notes and asking them to place the notes in places where they really used a specific strategy to get through a bumpy part. You may also decide to have your children each share a new goal they have for themselves as readers.

Because we designed this unit to emphasize the strategies readers use to word solve on the run as they read, you’ll want to make sure your read-aloud complements this by focusing on the thinking work that readers do as they read. During this month you will likely do many close readings of a variety of information and story books. In these read-alouds, model and engage your students in the work that readers do before, during, and after reading a book. Emphasize that readers orient themselves to a book before reading it, thinking about what the book is apt to say. Teach that readers think about the genre of the book to help get ready to read. This is an important step in understanding books and preparing for the ideas ahead. Distinguishing the “major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information...” is also a first grade reading standard (CCSS RL 1.5). You’ll also want to reteach that readers pause to reflect on a book in the midst of reading, saying something to themselves such as, “Hmmm.. I’m just thinking, 'What was the most important part in this whole book?' or ‘What is this book teaching me?’ or ‘I’m noticing things about this character. Let’s see....’” During read-aloud, you might model this
by saying, "I didn’t really ‘get’ that part because I was daydreaming a little. I’m going to reread it because I think that will help me."

Children will probably be sitting next to their read-aloud partners (who may or may not be the same as their reading workshop partners). You’ll want to use read-aloud conversations to help children actively listen to their partners and grow their partners’ ideas, perhaps using phrases such as, “I agree with you because...” or “I disagree because....” CCSS SL 1.1 encourages us to make sure that children “participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners” and we know that this skill can be developed effectively during these read aloud talks. As independent readers, we hope our students will attempt to clarify parts of their books that they don’t understand or that are tricky. Use these or any other conversation starters to support partners in turning and talking in the midst of read-aloud. In time, you’ll find that children won’t need you to scaffold them in such a supportive way.

**Word Study**

By this time, you will be differentiating your word study instruction based on September assessments. You’ll want to make it very clear to your students that the reason they are working so hard to learn about parts of words in word study is so they can use this knowledge to problem-solve words in their reading and writing. As kids move into more complex texts (E/F/G), they begin to encounter more complex words. Therefore you will want to help your students to transfer all that they learn in word study to their reading and writing of texts.
Typical Concepts to Address for Students Reading E/F/G Level Texts:

| Phonological and Phonemic Awareness | Rhyming  
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(eg., can rhymes with fan)</em></td>
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</table>
|                                      | Blending letters and parts of words  
|                                      | *(e.g., b-a-t to get bat or f-an to get fan)* |
|                                      | Segmenting letters and parts of words  
|                                      | *(e.g., break bat into b-a-t or fan into f-an)* |
|                                      | Manipulating  
|                                      | *(eg., If I know can, I can spell man)* |

| Phonics | short vowel, same vowel spelling patterns  
<table>
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<td></td>
<td><em>(e.g., -at as in mat and cat, -ot as in hot and pot)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|         | digraphs  
|         | *(e.g., sh, th, ch, wh)* |
|         | blends  
|         | *(e.g., sl, sm, st, cr, cl)* |

Word Work

You’ll want to continue providing direct instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics this month. Remember, you are working towards building up students’ repertoire of phonological knowledge as well as their ability to deal with difficulty and problem-solving words on the run. These skills and standards are outlined in the Foundational Skills portion of the Common Core State Standards. You will want to plan for differentiated small-group word study in order to meet the needs of all your students, however most of your readers will still be working on blending and manipulating sounds (see concept chart above) while focusing on short vowel sounds in the middle of words. Most of your students will also likely need work on initial digraphs and blends as they move from level D texts to texts at level E/F/G (see examples in chart above). They will encounter words in these more complex texts that require the blending of one or two letters or word parts rather than letter by letter.

You will also want to continue to do some work in phonemic awareness, particularly since students will need to really start blending and segmenting sounds in the words they
encounter. According to the Common Core State Standards, students should be able to isolate, blend, and segment single-syllable words. For example, students should be able to hear and isolate the beginning sounds and ending sounds in a word such as “chop.” When working on blending, you say the sounds in the word, and the student has to blend them together to say the word. For example, if you say /ch/ /o/ /p/ the student should be able to say the word. Segmenting is often a more difficult task and requires a student to break a given word up into the particular sounds that make up the word. Many teachers use Elkonin Boxes, a method used in Reading Recovery to facilitate students’ ability to hear the individual sounds in words. When using the Elkonin Boxes you will want to help students represent each sound in each box using a chip, rather than the actual letters. As you or the student say the sound, the student can move a chip into each box. This allows students to notice how words can be broken up into various sounds, not just letters. For example the word ‘take’ would have 3 boxes and the child would move a chip into box one for the /t/ sound, then another chip would move into box two for the /a/ sound and a third chip in box three for the /k/ sound.

The first bend in this unit also stresses that kids need to keep building their repertoire of words that they “know in a snap!” so don’t forget to continue adding high-frequency words (3-5 a week) to your word wall, along with introducing and reinforcing words with individual kids who need more support with these words that they just need to know to be successful in the more complex texts they are encountering during their independent reading.

As you plan to address the varied needs in your classroom you might choose to utilize word study partnerships to leverage the work and to address what different students really need most. In a 20-30 minute word work block, your students can all be engaged in the same activities with words, but each partnership will be focused on the specific concepts or features that they need to work on. For example, groups can work on sorting pictures and words, but the pictures and words will differ according to the the particular sort each partnership is working on.

**Shared Reading**

Please see the template in the appendix for shared reading of *The Gingerbread Man* by Brenda Parkes which includes an emphasis on orchestrating sources of information and fluency, as well as word study. We are using the same book as in the first unit because as kids are learning to monitor their reading by using meaning, visual information and syntax, we want to provide opportunities for success. It’s important to introduce new books each week so kids will apply their new learning to unknown texts.