



Research Supporting Yellow Umbrella Reading

- *Carefully-leveled nonfiction*
- *Scientifically-based practices*
- *Standards-aligned content*

This guide has been created to give an overview of how Yellow Umbrella Books aligns with the research and findings of the National Reading Panel's Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction. Knowing that the acquisition of literacy is a very complex process, Yellow Umbrella Books provides up-to-date instructional materials that support a variety of strategies and fit with current National Standards.

Phonics

Children in the primary grades, and those who are having some difficulty learning to read, are the children for whom phonics instruction is designed. Current research continues to confirm the study of Jeanne Chall (1967) and the belief that the early and systematic teaching of phonics leads to higher reading achievement. The goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn and use the alphabetic principle—the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds. Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. It teaches children to use these relationships to read and write words. These types of relationships include the following:

- Graphophonemic relationships
- Letter-sound relationships
- Letter-sound correspondences
- Sound-symbol correspondences
- Sound-spellings

The many, varied approaches to phonics instruction include synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, analogy-based phonics, phonics through spelling, embedded phonics, and onset-rime phonics. Yellow Umbrella Books and Teacher's Guides Feature Supports for Phonics Instruction:

- Teacher's Guides highlight specific phonics skills that correspond with each title and include suggestions for teacher implementation
- Phonics instruction approaches include analogy-based phonics, embedded phonics, and onset-rime phonics

Fluency

Fluency is a critical component of skilled reading. The National Reading Panel findings show that repeated oral readings followed by feedback and teacher guidance help students make meaningful improvements in their reading expertise. Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus their attention on what the text means. Researchers determined that repeated and monitored oral reading (commonly called “repeated reading”) is an effective approach for developing fluency. In this approach, students read passages aloud several times and receive guidance and feedback from the teacher. Effective activities for repeated and monitored oral reading include:

- Student-adult reading
- Choral reading
- Tape-assisted reading
- Partner reading
- Leveled reading passages and instruction for calculating words per minute

Fluency develops as a result of many opportunities to practice reading with a high degree of success. It is essential to provide students with texts at their independent reading level, a text containing mostly words they know or can decode easily.

Yellow Umbrella Books and Teacher’s Guides Feature Supports for Fluency Instruction:

- Texts allow beginning readers to achieve fluency through the use of appropriately leveled reading texts, short text lengths, and repeated use of high-frequency words
- Teacher’s Guides encourage a variety of repeated readings, including the use of partner reading and choral reading
- School-to-Home books allow for continued practice at home

Vocabulary

Researchers have long recognized the importance of vocabulary instruction, noting that “growth in reading power means, therefore, continuous enriching and enlarging of the reading vocabulary” (Davis, 1942).

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary is described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Vocabulary is important in learning to read as well as to reading comprehension. Researchers often refer to the following four types of vocabulary:

- Listening vocabulary
- Speaking vocabulary
- Reading vocabulary
- Writing vocabulary

Effective vocabulary instruction utilizes both indirect and direct learning approaches. (Indirect learning involves daily engagement in oral language, listening to adults read, and independent reading. Direct learning involves specific word instruction and word learning strategies.) Direct instruction of vocabulary relevant to a given text leads to better reading comprehension.

Yellow Umbrella Books and Teacher’s Guides Feature Supports for Vocabulary Instruction:

- Listening Vocabulary and Speaking Vocabulary: Teacher’s Guide lessons offer repeated opportunities for verbal interaction between the teacher and the student on a page-by-page basis
- Reading Vocabulary: Student texts are designed with repetitive language and close photo-text matches to allow opportunities for decoding unknown words
- Writing Vocabulary: Suggestions for writing activities are included in the lesson plans for each Yellow Umbrella Book, where students are encouraged to use content vocabulary in open-ended writing activities

Phonemic Awareness

Studies show that phonemic awareness and letter knowledge are the two best indicators of how well a child will learn to read for the first two-year period of instruction (Share, Jorm, Maclean, & Matthews, 1984).

A child's level of phonemic awareness on entering school is widely held to be the strongest single determinant of the success that he or she will experience in learning to read—or, conversely, the likelihood that he or she will fail (Adams, 1990).

Research clearly indicates that phonemic awareness can be developed through instruction and, furthermore, that doing so significantly accelerates children's subsequent reading and writing achievement (Ball and Blachman, 1991).

Phonemic awareness helps students of all abilities learn to read and learn to spell. Effective phonemic awareness instruction teaches children to notice, think about, and work with (manipulate) sounds in spoken language. Teachers use many activities to build phonemic awareness, including:

- Phoneme isolation
- Phoneme identity
- Phoneme categorization
- Phoneme blending
- Phoneme segmentation
- Phoneme deletion, phoneme addition
- Phoneme substitution

Yellow Umbrella Books and Teacher's Guides Feature Supports for Phonemic Awareness Instruction:

- Teacher's Guide lessons feature decoding strategies for sounding out words
- Teacher's Guides' Text Features section highlights multiple phonemic skills that can be addressed in conjunction with each book, including where phonemes are positioned in words, letter blends, and word building

Text Comprehension

Comprehension can be viewed as the “essence of reading” (Durkin, 1993). The ultimate goal of reading is comprehension.

Comprehension is the reason for reading. Research over 30 years has shown that instruction in comprehension can help students understand what they read, remember what they read, and communicate with others about what they read. Comprehension of subject matter does not occur automatically once students have “learned to read.” Teachers should emphasize comprehension from the beginning, rather than teaching only “the basics.” Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. The following six strategies have a firm scientific basis for improving text comprehension:

- Monitoring comprehension
- Using graphic and semantic organizers
- Answering questions
- Generating questions (reciprocal teaching)
- Recognizing story structures
- Summarizing

Effective comprehension strategy instruction is explicit. In explicit instruction, such as guided reading, teachers tell readers why and when they should use strategies, define which strategies, and determine how to apply them.

Yellow Umbrella Books and Teacher’s Guides Feature Supports for Text Comprehension Instruction:

- Teacher’s Guides provide lessons designed for guided reading and include specific content questions to use throughout the lesson to monitor and assess student comprehension
- Texts allow beginning readers to achieve comprehension through the use of appropriately-leveled reading texts
- Teacher’s Guide lessons feature multiple comprehension strategies instruction, including using prior knowledge, asking and answering questions, using photo cues, and implementing various decoding strategies

References

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