

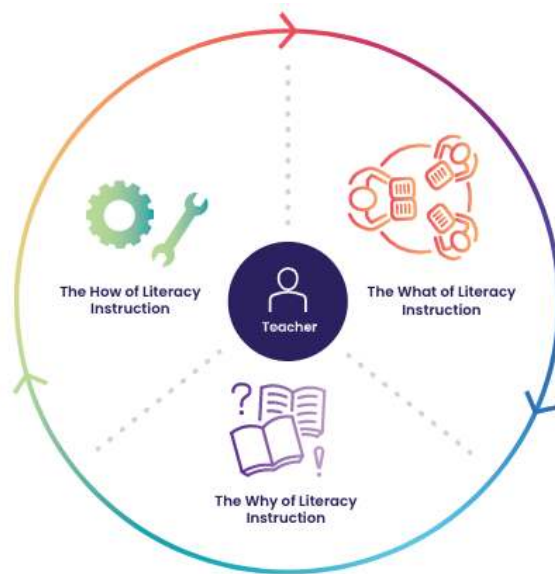
# LETRS<sup>®</sup>

## Texas Reading Academies

Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS<sup>®</sup>) is comprehensive professional learning designed to provide educators with deep knowledge to be literacy and language experts in the Science of Reading. LETRS teaches the skills needed to master the fundamentals of reading and writing instruction – phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and written language.

LETRS is accredited by the International Dyslexia Association and its concepts and instructional approaches are aligned with respected sources such as:

- The International Dyslexia Association’s Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (Moats et al., 2010)
- Elements of Effective Instruction (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2006)
- Classroom Reading Instruction That Supports Struggling Readers: Key Components for Effective Teaching (Denton, n.d.)
- *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders* (Texas Education Agency, 2018)



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Per House Bill 3 (HB 3), passed by the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature in June of 2019, all kindergarten through third-grade teachers and principals must attend a “teacher literacy achievement academy.” The Texas Reading Academies Content Overview can be viewed [here](#).

## Using This Resource

Districts and educators can use the table below to determine how LETRS aligns to each area of the Texas Reading Academies Content Overview, as well as additional content covered in the LETRS course of study.

Texas Reading Academies	LETRS® for Educators
<p>Science of Teaching Reading: Educators will apply the STR across teaching contexts to improve reading outcomes for all learners.</p>	<p>LETRS is grounded in the Science of Reading and instructs participants in theoretical models from reading science, including the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough’s Rope, and the Four-Part Processor. It answers the important questions of 1) how to teach the skills required for proficient reading and writing and 2) what happens neurologically when a student struggles to read and write. The course practically, systematically, and methodically addresses the systems of language underlying literacy, including phonology, orthography, semantics, syntax, discourse, and pragmatics.</p> <p><b>In addition...</b></p> <p>LETRS explores the reasons why many students have reading difficulties, including dyslexia, and the ways children learn to read. Case studies illustrate the progression of reading development – the influences of biological, genetic, cognitive, environmental, and instructional factors on learning to read and the components of effective reading instruction.</p>
<p>Establishing a Literacy Community</p>	<p>LETRS bridges the gap between deep meaningful research and the practical classroom application necessary to build a true literacy community. LETRS first builds a deep understanding of the science of reading, and then provides the tools educators need to teach language and literacy to each student. The online platform uses embedded video examples of authentic classroom footage demonstrating how to deliver the effective instruction that creates a literacy community and models how to apply concepts into practice.</p>

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<p>Using Assessment Data to Inform Instruction</p>	<p>Throughout LETRS, participants are presented with sample assessments and case studies and are guided through use of that data to plan instruction. Bridge to Practice activities in each chapter also provide opportunities for participants to demonstrate their understanding of course content by taking the research into their own classrooms or participating in case studies of realistic classroom scenarios. Participants synthesize new information, explore what changes might need to be made in their instructional delivery, and reflect on the implications of this new understanding.</p> <p><b>In addition...</b></p> <p>LETRS lays the foundation for tiered supports like the MTSS model by providing participants with insight on the research-based tools available for identifying students at risk for reading difficulties. It also helps participants understand best practices for addressing serious reading and writing delays students might experience. Participants discover that the ability to find students at risk and intervene early has evolved from progress in understanding the dynamics of reading development and the role that explicit instruction and data analysis play.</p> <p>LETRS demonstrates how to select and use screening tests, progress monitoring tests, and diagnostic surveys to identify students' risk and provide effective instruction.</p>
<p>Oral Language and Vocabulary</p>	<p>LETRS emphasizes the connection between oral language and literacy, helping participants understand that reading and writing depend on language abilities. Unit 1 and Unit 5 build on one another to provide participants with strategies for building oral language and leveraging students' vocabularies for stronger reading comprehension.</p> <p>LETRS outlines the connections between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension and introduces numerous techniques that enhance explicit teaching of a new word, including multiple meanings, sentence</p>

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	<p>dictation, classification, definitions, semantic feature analysis, and gradable/complementary antonyms.</p> <p><b>In addition...</b></p> <p>LETRS instructs participants in when and how morphology should be taught in the classroom, as well as how to distinguish morphemes from syllables. Morphology instruction focuses on the connection between word form, word derivation, and word meaning. If students are taught to understand morphology and to think about word origin and word meaning, they have more handles by which to code orthographic images to memory.</p>
Phonological Awareness	<p>LETRS outlines how to assess and teach phonological and phonemic awareness skills within a progressive sequence, explaining action steps to take when students do not make expected progress toward identified goals.</p> <p><b>In addition...</b></p> <p>Online components include examples of direct instruction for speech sounds and speech-sound manipulation (alliteration, segmentation, blending, substitution, reversal, etc.). The 44 speech sounds (phonemes) of English are introduced, including their place and manner of articulation, how they differ due to coarticulation, and what happens when dialect or language differences impact students' ability to read and spell.</p>
Alphabet Knowledge, Print Concepts, and Handwriting	<p><i>Alphabet Knowledge and Print Concepts</i></p> <p>LETRS emphasizes that students must be aware of individual phonemes in words to map alphabetic symbols to speech. LETRS shows participants how to provide systematic, cumulative instruction in all of the most frequent phoneme-grapheme (sound-symbol) correspondences, as well as the most common orthographic patterns that characterize English spelling. Participants learn the characteristics of students in the prealphabetic phase of reading and writing</p>

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	<p>development, and instructional goals and activities are suggested for students developing concepts of print.</p> <p><i>Handwriting</i> LETRS presents evidence for teaching manuscript, cursive, or both. Participants are introduced to a variety of word practice routines that can be implemented in the classroom to systematically teach letter formation and build handwriting fluency.</p>
Decoding, Encoding, and Word Study	<p><i>Decoding</i> LETRS employs knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences to support students in reading unknown printed words and emphasizes that readers must look closely at all the letters and recode them into sound and sense. Recognizing that students who are still developing basic literacy skills need decoding and phonics activities that allow them to learn those skills in a safe environment, LETRS provides examples of expert teaching, as well as demonstrations of pronouncing and teaching sounds, blends, letters, words, and phrases. LETRS also shows participants how to teach syllable patterns and identify and manipulate the six basic syllable types, and it walks through a multisyllabic word-reading strategy that can be used with students.</p> <p><i>Encoding</i> LETRS helps participants appreciate the logic of English orthography, its written spelling patterns and rules, and how to communicate that logic to students from several angles. Participants are introduced to Ehri’s developmental phases of reading and spelling and are presented with case studies that help distinguish the skills and needs of students at each phase. Regular patterns and apparent irregularities are presented in terms of the history of English and word origin, and participants are introduced to a variety of word practice routines that can be implemented in the classroom. Unit 8 relays the importance of teaching spelling explicitly and emphasizing language structure and orthographic regularities to support fluent writing. Participants are presented with the principles of spelling</p>

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	<p>instruction and a scope and sequence for teaching spelling patterns by grade.</p> <p><i>Word Study</i> LETRS emphasizes the need for short, frequent instruction of phonological and phonemic awareness skills that can easily be practiced during a 15- to 30-minute word study block. Proposed phonics lessons can also be broken up over two days in increments of 20-25 minutes each.</p> <p><b>In addition...</b> LETRS does not advocate for any particular curriculum. The research-based components described in LETRS can be implemented through any high-quality literacy or word study program already in use by school districts. LETRS provides participants with the skills and knowledge base needed to utilize these programs effectively and to determine which components of the phonics/word study programs available to them best meet the individual needs of students in their classroom.</p>
Reading Fluency	<p>LETRS presents research to explain how oral reading fluency makes silent reading comprehension possible and is an excellent early predictor of later reading difficulties or success. Fluency is gradually achieved by bolstering all aspects of the Reading Rope and facilitating their integration. Therefore, fluency activities at the word, phrase, sentence, and passage levels are taught throughout LETRS. Teachers are also shown how to base their instructional choices on the fluency data they have for each of their students.</p> <p><b>In addition...</b> LETRS also reviews the importance of building fluency in a systematic way – from letter naming fluency to automatic recognition of spelling patterns. Reading proficiency occurs when word recognition becomes automatic or “by sight.” The ability to recognize many words by sight during fluent reading depends on phonemic awareness and the ability to map phonemes to graphemes. In LETRS, participants refer to the mental</p>

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Reading Comprehension	<p>model of reading development as they discuss how fluent reading depends on automatic execution of both word recognition and comprehension skills.</p> <p>LETRS dedicates Unit 6 to teaching the multiple stages of reading comprehension instruction. It uses Hollis Scarborough’s Reading Rope model to depict the multifaceted nature of reading comprehension instruction. Going strand by strand, LETRS addresses how background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge must all be addressed in lesson planning and provides a wide variety of teaching activities in support of these multiple strands.</p> <p><b>In addition...</b></p> <p>Unit 7 of LETRS provides guidance for participants in selecting informational and narrative texts that are worthy of being explored in depth. Once these high-quality texts have been chosen, lesson plan templates are provided that help organize planning and time allocation, as well as effective practices for before-, during-, and after-reading activities. Strategies for measuring metacognition (visualizing, retelling, querying, etc.) are also discussed and demonstrated. Participants plan and implement their own lessons and examine strategies for adapting reading comprehension lessons for students with language disorders and/or low verbal reasoning skill.</p>
Composition	<p>LETRS Unit 8, The Reading-Writing Connection, presents the case for the importance of writing and why it is a challenge for many students. Participants are encouraged to adopt an integrated lesson framework for foundational skills and composition. LETRS reviews the importance of sentence generation as a foundational literacy skill and outlines the writing process for narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Methods for assessing student progress in writing and evaluating student writing using a checklist are discussed.</p>