

What is **Word Study** in Kindergarten?

Word Study is a very important part of our Kindergarten day. It is the part of reading instruction where we study sounds, letters, words, and how they work together. Word Study focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling patterns, sight words, vocabulary, word structure and, in kindergarten, even handwriting. Here are a few components of word study kindergarteners need to master:

Phonemic awareness: Phonemic awareness is working with sounds without the symbols (letters). Students should be able to identify and create rhymes, say the beginning sound of a word spoken, separate sounds in words (segmenting) and put sounds together to make a word (blending). As these skills are mastered we begin to work on identifying medial sounds, ending sounds, substituting sounds, etc. Skills continue to increase in complexity in this area as well as the others.

Phonics: Phonics is simply the system of relationships between letters and sounds in a language. It involves matching the sound to the symbol or symbols. When your kindergartener learns that the letter B has the sound of /b/ and your second-grader learns that “tion” sounds like /shun/, they are learning phonics. Written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sounds of letters and letter combinations will help your child decode words as he reads. A strong phonics foundation will also help your child know which letters to use as he writes words.

SPELLING: Spelling in kindergarten is mostly phonetic, meaning students are taught to write the sounds they hear. Spelling words for them or waiting until they memorize the spelling of a word **before** they can use it would teach students that writing is not something they can do independently. Spelling patterns, rules and exceptions will be learned as they progress as readers and writers.

Sight words: Learning to read and write sight words is also part of word study. Learning these high frequency words increases the speed and fluency of reading. These words should be known instantly on sight, not sounded out.

What does **Word Study** look like at GRE?

In Kindergarten at GRE we are using a program called **Foundations** for whole group instruction and **Words their Way** for differentiated instruction.

Foundations

Gold Rush has adopted Foundations this year to be used in the primary grades.

Foundations® is a **multisensory and systematic phonics, spelling, and handwriting** program that targets K-3 students. Our daily schedule includes 30 minutes outside the reading block for word study using this program. During this time, we will use Foundations for explicit, whole group instruction on foundational skills kindergarteners need to meet grade level standards. It will be effective in ensuring that all students are given instruction on grade level material no matter their reading level or development stage.