








# Literacy Pillars: Overview

Effective literacy instruction includes the Five Pillars of Literacy (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension)<sup>1</sup> as well as Writing and Speaking and Listening. An ideal literacy block includes time dedicated to each instructional component of literacy. The table below serves as a general guideline for the amount of time<sup>2</sup> that could be devoted to each component and assumes that Speaking and Listening and Language standards are integrated throughout all literacy instruction.

<b>Phonological / Phonemic Awareness</b>  <b>10-15 minutes (K-1)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Phonics</b>  <b>15-20 minutes</b>	<b>Fluency</b>  <b>15-20 minutes</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>  <b>15-20 minutes</b>	<b>Comprehension</b>  <b>30 minutes</b>	<b>Writing</b>  <b>30 minutes</b>
 <b>Speaking and Listening:</b> Standards are integrated throughout literacy instruction.					

Instruction relevant to each of the above components should be delivered using both whole group and small group instruction. The table below provides an overview of the purpose and utility of each type of instruction as well as the recommended time frame for each.

- 1 National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. NIH Publication No. 00-4769.
- 2 Refer to your district and state requirements
- 3 Phonological/Phonemic Awareness is included in foundational literacy skills that are taught in Grades K-1. If a student has skill deficits in this area, address these deficits in small group instruction.



## Whole Group Literacy Instruction

*Approximately 115-135 minutes/day*

Whole group instruction provides the setting for efficiently introducing new material and key concepts to every student at once. As teachers provide effective whole group instruction and frequently follow their instruction with short-term assessments designed to check for understanding, they are able to determine the content and groupings of students for strategic small group instruction.

While whole group instruction should ideally include the same instructional approaches used in small-group instruction, (i.e. collaborative conversations, teacher or peer feedback, short independent breakout activities) the objective is to teach the same content to all students.



## Small Group Literacy Instruction<sup>4</sup>

*Approximately 30-45 minutes per day*

Small group instruction reinforces whole group instruction. It allows teachers and students to work closely together to practice skills learned during whole-group instruction and check for student understanding. This structure provides students with focused attention from the teacher and gives them opportunities to ask clarifying questions. Teachers can use this time to provide students with the targeted support needed to achieve proficiency in key skills and concepts. Small group instruction also offers an environment for teachers to provide students extensive opportunities to express what they know and receive feedback from other students and the teacher. Note that small group instruction is beneficial to *all* students and should be provided to each student in addition to whole group instruction.

Establishing routines and expectations is critical to the success of small group instruction. For a day-by-day implementation planner, view the [Building Routines for Small Group Instruction](#) guide.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.oswego.org/files/49/Small%20Group%20Reading%20Instruction%20booklet.docx.pdf>

