



95 Phonics Core Program®

Introduction

95 Phonics Core Program® (95 PCP®) is an engaging Tier 1 foundational skills curriculum that is built on the science of reading. The instruction in 95 Phonics Core Program is explicit, systematic, and cumulative and is based on a gradual-release model. 95 PCP provides everything an educator needs to teach phonics, including explicitly written instructional dialogue, repeatable and replicable routines, opportunities for teacher modeling, and independent practice and purposeful application to help students achieve proficiency.

95 Percent Group is deeply committed to third-party efficacy research to ensure our products lead to positive student outcomes. Evidence of 95 Phonics Core Program’s effectiveness, including an ESSA Level 1 study, can be found [here](#).

95 Percent Group’s Publisher’s Response

95 Percent Group is grateful for The Reading League’s (TRL) evaluation of 95 Phonics Core Program and their recommendations for enhancements. Overall, we are pleased with the results of the review and TRL’s recognition of 95 PCP’s alignment to the science of reading. There are some criteria for which we’d like to provide additional clarifying information.

1A: Word Recognition Non-Negotiables

1.2: Guidance is given to memorize any whole words, including high frequency words, by sight without attending to the sound/symbol correspondences.	2
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95 Percent Group Response:

95 Phonics Core Program employs sound-symbol correspondence, a methodical research-based approach for teaching phonics skills. Sound-symbol correspondence is a routine within every lesson and is used for all words, including high-frequency words.

The Dolch word list categorized by grade level and organized in frequency order was used to select the high-frequency words for all levels of 95 PCP. Regularly spelled high-frequency words are utilized throughout the curriculum as pattern words and introduced in the same order as their respective phonics patterns. For the limited set of high-frequency words that do not follow a distinct pattern, these words are taught as "heart words," words where some portion of the spelling is not decodable and must be learned by heart. In 95 PCP, high-frequency words, regardless of their regularity, are taught using a similar process so that they can be orthographically mapped. High-frequency words, including those with irregular spellings and those with spellings not yet introduced, are taught by drawing attention to both regular and irregular sounds.

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

1.22: Words with known sound-symbol correspondences, including high frequency words, are taught as whole-word units, often as standalone “sight words” to be memorized.	2
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95 Percent Group Response:

The score of 2 was given for kindergarten only. To provide additional clarity, kindergarten students become responsible for decoding and encoding all high-frequency words with a regular pattern once all the letter-sound correspondences for the word have been taught in the program. Because students receiving instruction from 95 PCP learn letter-sound correspondences and blending to automaticity in kindergarten, they will be able to decode and encode 40 regularly spelled HFW from the Dolch list.

1D: Fluency

1.41: Rate is emphasized over accuracy; priority is given to the student's ability to read words quickly.	3
1.42: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	2
1.43: Fluency is practiced only in narrative text or with repeated readings of patterned text.	2

95 Percent Group Response:

95 Phonics Core Program emphasizes reading accuracy, phrasing, intonation, expression, and automaticity as the hallmarks of fluent reading. Our instructional design and approach to fluency is informed by the understanding that:

1. Fluency occurs when the reader recognizes nearly all the words in a text.
2. Readers achieve fluency when they not only have a sufficient word bank of known words but also have the skills to decode new words efficiently.
3. Mastering the alphabetic code is foundational to word recognition automaticity, which in turn is critical to becoming a fluent reader.
4. Phonics decoding is the fundamental prerequisite for developing skill and fluency in reading and comprehension.

To help students accurately and fluently read connected text, 95 Phonics Core Program follows a structured, step-by-step approach. Fluency development begins at the word level, progresses to phrases, and then advances to sentences and paragraphs. Instruction emphasizes accuracy over speed, using a process called “Transfer to Text” to help students recognize pattern words within a text. Words Per Minute (WPM) is intentionally excluded from these activities, as the primary focus is on building accuracy.



In kindergarten, explicit instruction on blending sounds into words begins in Lessons 5 and 6, with students practicing with the teacher before reading words independently by the end of Lesson 6. Word reading for accuracy is explicitly embedded throughout the program. In grades 1–3, students work on fluency at the word and phrase levels using 1-minute timed readings and fluency grids that include both high-frequency and pattern words. In grades 4 and 5, fluency practice continues with weekly word lists.

Optional Additional Fluency Practice: 95 Fluency Packs (with weekly practice) are included as an **optional** additional resource on the One95 Literacy Platform, which houses ancillary instructional resources that are available to teachers online. The Fluency Packs are designed to be used **after students achieve accuracy**, and they also provide additional practice and review opportunities. 95 Fluency Packs are optional tools teachers can use and are not recommended to be used during the 30-minute 95 PCP lesson.

Assessment

5.9: Phoneme awareness is not assessed.	2
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95 Percent Group Response:

Phonemic Awareness is assessed in the kindergarten Unit Assessments. In addition, all teachers who use 95 Phonics Core Program have access to 95 Phonemic Awareness Screener for Intervention™ (PASI) to pinpoint gaps in skills mastery. Information about how to access these assessments is provided during our product launch training that is recommended for all clients.

Assessment

5.10: Decoding skills are assessed using real words only.	3
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95 Percent Group Response:

95 PCP formative and summative assessments monitor students’ progress on the weekly or unit skill focus. While these assessments include real words, they are specifically designed to measure how well students generalize learned phonics patterns rather than memorize words. Instead of traditional spelling lists for memorization, students are taught strategies such as finger-stretching, sound-spelling, and syllable mapping. They also learn to recognize syllable pattern attributes to support both spelling and reading of pattern words.

When teachers must investigate why a student may be performing below expectations, they can administer the 95 Phonics Screener for Intervention™ (PSI). This free assessment is available to all 95 PCP users and provides data that pinpoints specific skill gaps. **The PSI includes nonsense words as part of its evaluation process.**



Assessment

5.11: Oral reading fluency (ORF) assessments are not used.	2
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95 Percent Group Response:

For educators who don't have a state- or district-mandated oral reading fluency (ORF) measure in place already, 95 Phonics Core Program includes 95 Fluency Packs. The packs include weekly practice and reading passages and are included as additional resources on the One95 Literacy Platform.

95 Fluency Packs provide guidance on how to use Words per Minute exercises to monitor student progress on learning fluency skills. In the exercises, the teacher assigns the student a text to identify how many words per minute the student can read accurately during a "cold read." Then, the teacher creates a goal for the student.

For educators already using a state- or district-mandated ORF measure, 95 Phonics Core Program's unit assessments provide additional data points. 95 PCP's unit assessments include comprehension questions. Students' answers to them provide insight into a student's reading fluency, as the ability to demonstrate text understanding is connected to reading fluency.

Assessment

5.13: Multilingual learners are not assessed in their home language.	4
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95 Percent Group Response:

95 Phonics Core Program instruction is intended to teach all students the sound-spelling correspondence of words in English to facilitate the development of reading and writing. Because 95 Phonics Core Program is taught in English, its assessments are presented in English.

While the program does not explicitly teach phonics in languages other than English, multilingual learners benefit from the phonological structure 95 Phonics Core Program teaches. English learners require acquisition of the 44 phonemes and their corresponding graphemes in order to become proficient in decoding and encoding.

95 Phonics Core Program follows the best practices of effective, guided instruction for all students including but not limited to students who are struggling, English learners, and advanced students. Accessible via the One95 Literacy Platform, 95 Phonics Core Program educators also have access to knowledge-building on cross-linguistic similarities and differences. This ancillary resource includes each letter of the alphabet and, depending on their native language, what educators might expect students to know or need additional support with for the associated phoneme(s). The knowledge in this ancillary resource should be kept in mind when instructing and assessing multilingual learners as they learn the English language.