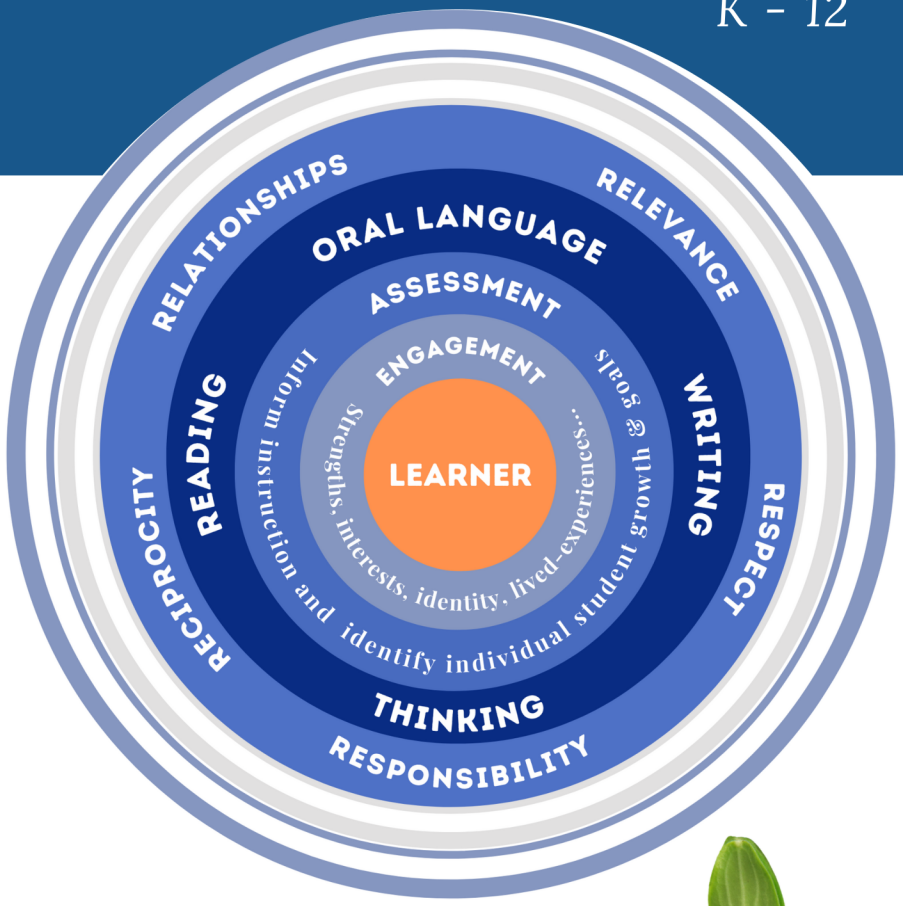
Greater Victoria School District

# Literacy Framework

K - 12




DRAFT 2023

Greater VICTORIA School District

We acknowledge and express gratitude to the Lekwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, for allowing us to live, learn and play on their lands.

## Intention of framework:

Creating inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that support and improve all learners' personal and academic success is the fundamental goal of the Greater Victoria School District Strategic Plan.

In an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment, each student's social, cultural and linguistic knowledge is valued and embodied in all learning. Every child feels seen, and heard, and their full identity is welcomed at school. When educators are culturally responsive, children and families in classrooms and community are not expected to fit in to a prescribed program, rather practice is shaped by the contexts and interests of the students.

The Greater Victoria School District recognizes that a comprehensive approach to literacy learning must be interactive and draw on evidence-based ***sociocultural**** literacy research.

Teaching is highly complex and continually evolves as research enhances new understandings and ways of doing. This literacy framework is a living document that will continue to evolve too.

### What is a sociocultural perspective?

A sociocultural perspective views learning as taking place through interaction, and collaboration. A sociocultural perspective emphasizes that our learning is significantly influenced through and from experiences.

## Purpose:

The Greater Victoria School District's Strategic Plan (2020-2025) outlines the following goals and strategies:

### Goal 1

Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support and improve all learners' personal and academic success.

Address the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners in literacy.

### Goal 2

Create a culturally responsive learning environment that will support Indigenous learners' personal and academic success.

Address the inequity of outcomes for Indigenous learners in literacy.

This Framework aims to identify core beliefs about literacy, as well as highlight culturally responsive, and inclusive literacy environments, instructional and assessment practices.

This Framework aims to serve teachers who bring literacy pedagogy and practice to life in classrooms, school leaders who are guiding school goals, and district team who plan professional learning opportunities and are striving for coherence for our one learning community.

# Literacy defined:

In British Columbia, literacy is considered contextual and cross-curricular in nature. The BC Curriculum defines literacy as the ability to critically analyze and make meaning from diverse texts and to communicate and express oneself in a variety of modes and for a variety of purposes in relevant contexts.

Specifically, literacy is the ability to understand, critically analyze, and create a variety of forms of communication, including oral, written, visual, digital, and multimedia, in order to accomplish one's goals.

Every educator, from kindergarten to grade 12 plays an integral role in a students literacy development.

BC's English Language Arts Curriculum:
https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts

# Guiding Principles:

• All children are readers, writers, thinkers, and communicators.

• Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story (FPPL, 2008).

• When a student's cultural and home-based resources are valued, we can leverage these resources as tools for literacy learning.

•Literacy instruction needs to be culturally responsive (instructional materials, assignments, and texts should reflect students' backgrounds and experiences).

• Differentiated literacy instruction requires assessing students' skills and strategies. Instruction should be responsive to the needs of the learner.

• Students need explicit instruction in how to use literacy strategies. Students use these strategies to create and comprehend texts in a range of contexts.

• Instruction that **gradually releases*** responsibility to students helps them acquire and apply literacy strategies to construct knowledge.

• Reading is an active, integrated problem-solving process of making sense of texts.

• Oral language creates a foundation for reading.

• Literate learners encode, decode, and engage in deep thinking about text.

• Reading, writing, speaking and listening are reciprocal and interconnected. All aspects of literacy work with one another.

**What is Gradual Release?**

Intentionally shifting cognitive work from teacher modeling, to joint inquiry to independent practice and application by the learner.

# Essential Components of Literacy in the Greater Victoria School District

## Literacy Environments

A culturally responsive learning environment is a place where every student belongs and feels personally connected to their learning. When educators are culturally responsive, we teach and learn within the contexts of culture, which means the classroom environment and practice is shaped by the contexts and interests of the students.

## Literacy Instruction

Culturally responsive literacy instruction is strength-based, raises expectations for every student and makes learning relevant for all. Really knowing each student is critical in how we plan and deliver literacy curriculum. When educators learn and understand the behaviors, backgrounds, and challenges of students, we are better equipped to address inequities. In addition, educators have a responsibility to continually evolve, and align instruction with advances in literacy research to improve student achievement.

## Literacy Assessment

To address the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners and Indigenous students as specified in the Strategic Plan, educators have the responsibility to ensure that student achievement data and authentic engagement guides the planning and design of literacy instruction.

Literacy Environments

Literacy Instruction

**Guiding questions to support the growth of comprehensive, culturally responsive literacy learning:**

How inclusive and culturally responsive is my literacy classroom? How do I know?

How inclusive is my classroom library?

How inclusive are my mentor texts for writing?

How often do I use gendered versus non-gendered language?

How equitable are class discussions? In what ways do I ensure all student voices are heard?

In what ways—and how often—do I reflect on my practice to ensure all voices are recognized and respected?

In what ways do learners communicate? In what ways do students represent their understanding?

Do students have opportunities to communicate in various modes? How could these modes be extended?

What opportunities do I provide for students to hear stories, poems, rhythms, chants, and songs? How do these connect to the child's culture?

What opportunities are there for oral storytelling (e.g., personal narratives, traditional stories, Coast Salish stories)?

Do students experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures?

What opportunities do students have to listen to one another?

How can students explore diversity of languages? How could I extend these interactions?

In what ways do I welcome the use of languages other than English in the student's environment (e.g., by encouraging bilingual students to use both languages or by singing songs in other languages)?

What am I doing to be a joyful literacy teacher, and share my love of learning?

Literacy Environments

## A Culturally Responsive Literacy Learning Environment:

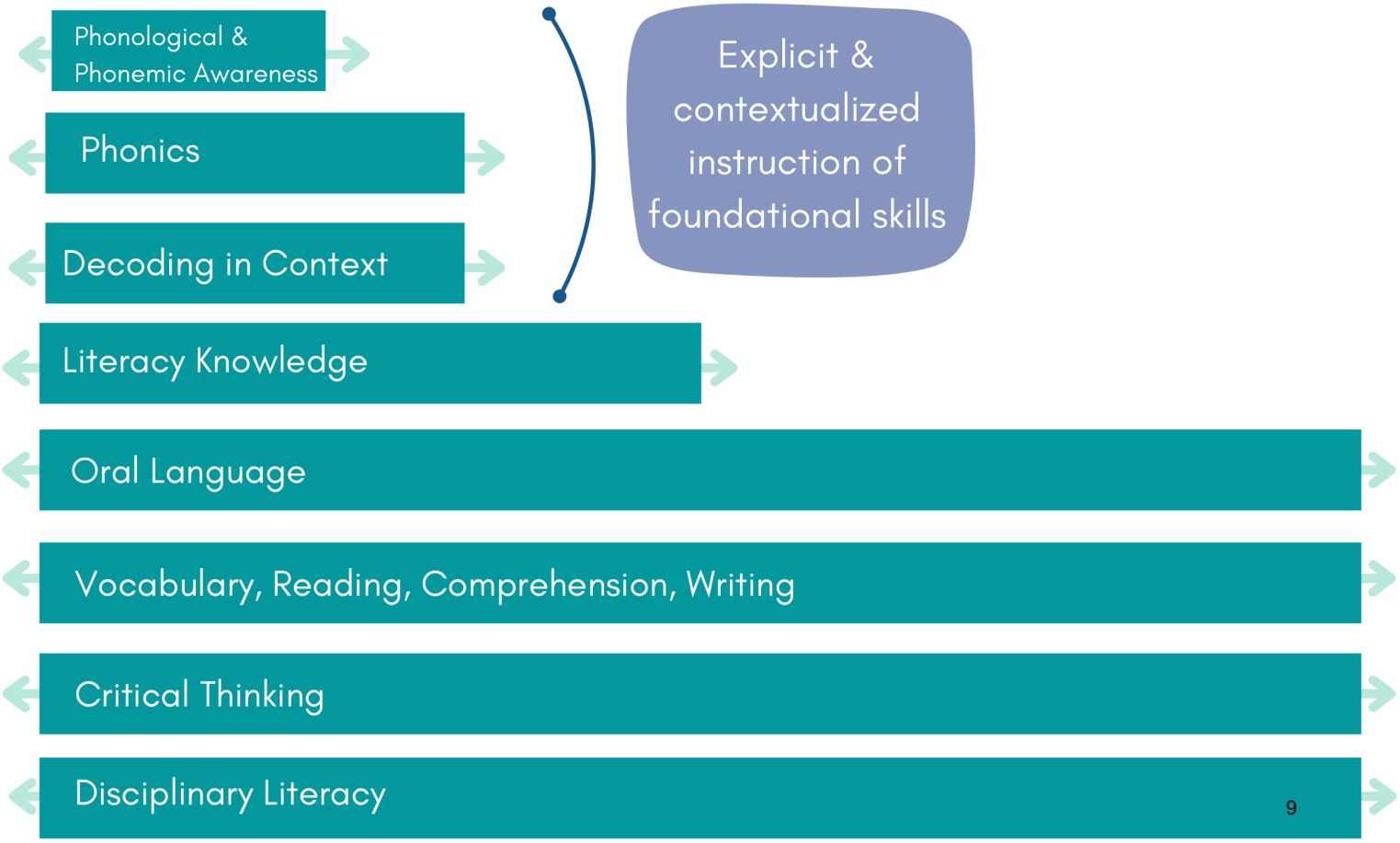
- is rooted in relationship
- embodies each students' social and cultural knowledge, experiences, passions and interests
- challenges students to work to their individual potential
- includes resources that promote an understanding of Lekwungen history, territory, and contemporary matters
- takes into account linguistic and dialect differences
- is differentiated to meet the unique needs of learners
- uses classroom books and sources that enable students to see themselves represented in the text they read
- provides students with choice in how they communicate, represent, and reflect upon learning
- promotes positive attitudes and joy towards literacy
- prioritizes literacy learning everyday
- fosters a safe/brave environment, which enables open expression of opinions, questioning, wondering, innovating, and creating so that every student's contributions are valued
- provides students with access to a range of materials and technologies
- groups students in flexible groups to meet needs, changing daily
- provides scaffolded instruction with ongoing feedback
- invites risk-taking and persistence
- differentiates entry points to engage all students in the learning

# Literacy Instruction

**Assess, Plan, Reflect, Revise**

Effective literacy instruction is active and explicit while being is responsive to each student's learning pathway. On-going assessment provides evidence of learners' understanding of instruction. Teachers respond to student progress by moving at a pace *led by each learner's development*, not a prescribed program. Responsive instruction sometimes includes using packaged programs when they are implemented for the purpose of matching targeted skills with a student's needs.

## Literacy Instruction Continuum



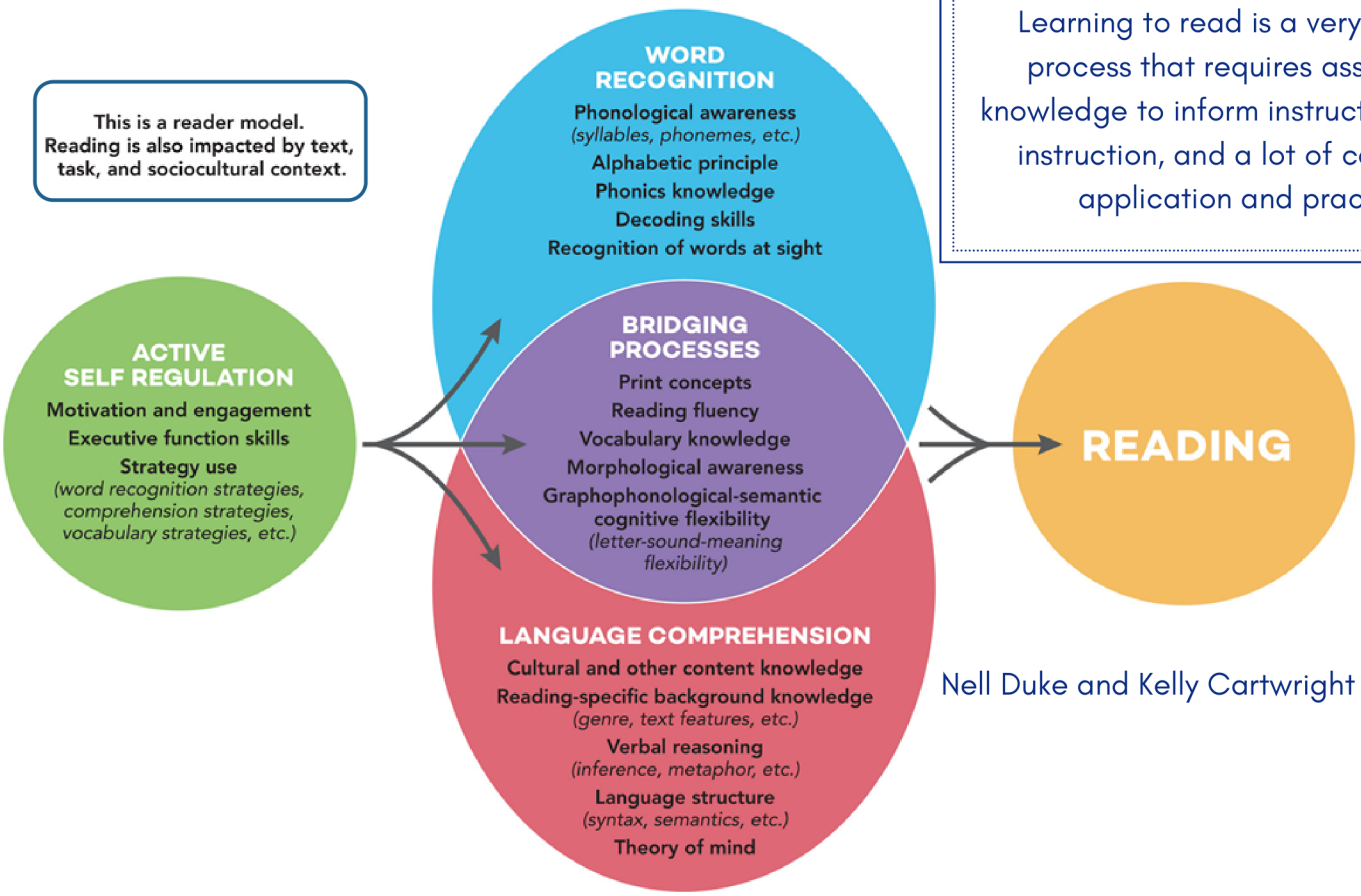
# Literacy Instruction

# Reading Instruction

Responsive teaching practices create equitable learning opportunities and ensure that all students are engaged in meaningful, joyful, and challenging work that leads to becoming self determining readers, writers, communicators and thinkers (Routman, 2018). As educators, we have a responsibility to find an entry point to learning for each student. Only once educators have established genuine relationships and created an engaging environment will students feel motivated and personally connected to their learning.

This is a reader model. Reading is also impacted by text, task, and sociocultural context.

Learning to read is a very complex process that requires assessment knowledge to inform instruction, explicit instruction, and a lot of contextual application and practice.




Nell Duke and Kelly Cartwright (2021)

This model shows the importance of the overlap and bridge of language comprehension ***as*** the child learns to decode.

Teachers can use this diagram as a guide depending on where students are at in their reading development regardless of age or grade.

**Motivation and engagement are a large piece of the learning-to-read process.**

# Literacy Instruction

The goals of literacy instruction in the Greater Victoria School District are to empower students to use literacy to gain knowledge to critically analyze and think deeply about information/ideas, express themselves and create new knowledge.

**Differentiated Instruction**

Differentiated instruction can enable all students to access the same classroom curriculum by providing entry points, learning tasks, and outcomes that are tailored to students' strengths and stretches. Differentiated instruction is not a single strategy, but rather an approach to instruction that incorporates a variety of strategies.

Key reasons to differentiate are: it improves students' access to learning, it motivates them to learn and it makes learning more efficient. Differentiated instruction helps address the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners and Indigenous students because each child has opportunities to represent their learning in a way that connects to them.

**Questions we can ask ourselves when differentiating our instruction:**

- What do I want students to *know*?
- What do I want students to *understand*?
- What do I want students to be able to *do*?
- What do I want students to think about?
- Who already knows, understands the content/skills?
- Who needs support to know/understand/do?
- What can I do for the student so that they can make continuous progress and extend learning?

Differentiated instruction is responsive when informed by ongoing assessment.
What can a differentiated classroom look like?
Watch the video here.

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**Responsive Instruction**

Responsive instruction that is grounded in a teacher's detailed knowledge of and respect for each learner. Focused, personalized, and intentional whole and small group instruction are the most responsive and impactful ways to support learners' development of core literacy skills. (Instruction that embodies learners' strengths, interests, and challenges relative to growth in literacy achievement.)

On-going assessments are essential and provide evidence of learners' responses to instruction. Teachers respond to student progress by moving at a pace led by learner progress, not a prescribed program.

When informed by ongoing assessment, responsive instruction provides scaffolds to move learners towards independence in reading and writing, and allows learners the opportunity for concentrated instruction and intervention which is targeted to their stretches. No program in existence can meet the literacy needs of every student. Being responsive means using programs only when they can be implemented for the purpose of matching targeted skills with students' needs.

What can a responsive classroom look like?
Watch the video here.

**Explicit instruction**

Literacy includes explicit instruction of core literacy components (Phonemic Awareness, Decoding Skills, Phonics, Vocabulary, and Comprehension).

Explicit, gradually released instruction involves using highly structured and sequenced steps to teach a specific oral strategy with the goal of empowering autonomy and efficacy on the part of the student.

Learning to read requires being able to encode and decode text as well as engage in complex and deep thinking about text. Decoding enables students to figure out most words they've heard but have never seen in print, as well as solve words they're not familiar with. Phonics instruction (focises on sounds, letters and letter combinations that represent those sounds) is also essential for early learners.  Phonics instruction should occur in the context of real reading and through word work. Daily instruction in phonemic awareness is also a valued part of word work.

Phonological awareness, phonemic awareness and phonics in early grades helps students decode text. Decoding instruction can be embedded in the context of authentic text rather than bits of information learned in isolation.

What can explicit instruction look like?
Watch the video here:

## Multimodal Instruction

Multimodal instruction involves teaching literacy concepts using multiple modes and empowering students to represent their understanding and thinking in multiple modes. Examples of modes that can communicate meaning in some way include:

- Pictures
- Colours
- Images (graphs, charts, diagrams)
- Illustrations
- Digital platforms
- Audio recordings
- Speech
- Writing and print
- Music
- Movement
- Gestures and Facial expressions

What can multimodal instruction look like?
Watch the video here.

## Inquiry and play-based Instruction

Opportunities to play enables children to work out their ideas and thinking and use what they already know to deepen their understanding and further their learning. Neural pathways in children's brains are influenced by and advanced through the exploration, thinking skills, problem solving, and language expression that occur during play.
Teachers can create opportunities for embedded literacy instruction during play and inquiry by:

- inviting story-making as an integral part of the literacy plan
- formulating deep thinking questions
- selecting purposeful literacy rich materials
- inviting talk
- stimulating and supporting deep thinking
- thinking aloud about literacy concepts
- thinking aloud about multiple possibilities or solution
- documenting thinking and learning alongside learners

What can play-based literacy look like?
Watch the video here.

# Growing Literacy in the Greater Victoria School District

## Early Years & Elementary

Each component of literacy plays an integral role in nurturing student growth as readers, writers, thinkers and communicators.

Vocabulary & Background Knowledge

Comprehension

Literacy Knowledge

Decoding in Context

Phonemic Awareness

Phonics

Writing

Oral Langauge

# Growing Reading in the Early Years

## Creating Meaning

### Comprehension

- Tells a story from pictures
- Identifies main events and structure of a story
- Retells information from a non-fiction text
- Retells a story
- Connects personal feelings and emotions to literacy learning
- Connects background knowledge to text
- Makes inferences, predictions, and comparisons

### Literacy Knowledge

- Holds books correctly
- Understands the directionality of print
- Turns the pages
- Differentiates pictures from words
- Differentiates letters, words, & sentences
- Reads simple pattern books or poems from memory
- Matches voice to print
- Identifies and uses punctuation
- Identifies text features

### Vocabulary & Background Knowledge

- Develops language to describe experiences and ideas
- Oral language grows beyond subject-verb-object to include adjectives, and adverbs
- Connects to culture and family knowledge
- Connects to real world, and lived experiences

...Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Thinking...

What am I doing on purpose to foster literacy skills and competencies?

What do I need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence? (What re my next steps?

Contributions from Faye Brownlie, Harpreet Esmail, Erin Reid and Deb Vanderwood
Jan. 2022

# Growing Literacy in the Early Years

## Word Recognition/Solving

### Phonological Awareness

- Syllables
- Compound words
- Alliteration
- Rhyming

**Phonemic Awareness**

Segmenting

- initial/final/medial sounds
- 2 and 3 phoneme words
- 4 +5 phoneme words

Blending

- 2,3 then 4+phoneme words

Word Families

- add, delete, isolate, & substitute phonemes

### Phonics

**Matching phonemes to graphemes**

- Individual consonants
- Short vowels

**Consonant digraphs**

**Consonant blends**

**Short vowel patterns**

- CVC
- CVCC, CCVC

**Long vowels**

- silent E (CVCe)
- Vowel teams (CVVC)
- R controlled vowels
- diphthongs and other vowel patterns

### Decoding in Context

**Self-regulation**

**Using context**

**Using picture clues**

**Recognizes common sight words**

**Segmenting the word**

**Blending sounds**

...Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Thinking...

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What do I need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence?

Contributions from Faye Brownlie, Harpreet Esmail, Erin Reid and Deb Vanderwood
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# Literacy in the Middle Years

# Literacy in Secondary

# Literacy Assessment

Linked below are literacy assessments for grade 1, 3, 6 & 9:

Link for grade 1
Link for grade 3
Link for grade 6
Link for grade 9

The purpose of the assessments are:

To inform classroom planning and practice around:

- Supporting the reading/writing/thinking connection
- Reading for information
- Writing supported opinions
- Developing critical thinking

To inform school/team planning around:

- Goal setting
- Resourcing
- Planning professional development

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