95 Phonics Core Program (Grades K–3)

95 Phonics Core Program (Grades K–3) is a comprehensive phonics curriculum, written by educators for educators and designed to equip students with a solid foundation for becoming strong readers. This program is designed to provide explicit and systematic literacy instruction, based on the science of reading. 95 Phonics Core program includes engaging components, an evidence-based scaffolded approach to phonics mastery, and the tools and knowledge teachers need to unlock the power of literacy for every child. The explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction is designed to develop strong readers and reduce intervention needs. Overwhelming scientific evidence supports its effectiveness in teaching the foundational literacy skills that are essential to reading and academic growth.

Figure 1. Samples of Teacher's Editions and Student Workbooks from 95 Phonics Core Program (Grades K–3).

95 Phonics Core Program covers multiple areas of instruction, which are outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Areas of instruction for 95 Phonics Core Program.

Area of Instruction	Grade Focus
Phonological Awareness	K–3
Phonics	K–3
Letter-Sound Correspondence	K–3

Area of Instruction	Grade Focus
High-Frequency Words	K–3
Fluency	K–3
Spelling	K–3
Morphology	K–3
Comprehension	K–3
Letter Formation	Kindergarten
Print Concepts	Kindergarten

✓ **Guide whole-class instruction with explicit phonics and word study lessons.**

95 Phonics Core Program is a systematic and explicit curriculum for grades K–3 within the Tier 1/core reading block, (**Figure 2**) linked across grades. It is designed to be used alongside a core comprehensive program to provide explicit phonics instruction—giving teachers the guidance, instruction, and support they need while ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to the strengths, needs, capabilities, and skills of their students.

Figure 2. *Lessons in 95 Phonics Core Program provide clear teacher guidance for explicit, systematic, and sequential instruction.*

Grounded in the science of reading research and research on student learning and student engagement, 95 Phonics Core Program **aligns with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills: Developing and Sustaining Foundational Language Skills for Grades K–3**.

✓ **Deliver curriculum grounded in a structured literacy approach.**

95 Phonics Core Program serves as a phonics and word study supplement that enriches existing literacy programs. It is based on the science of reading and the principles of structured literacy. Its lessons were meticulously crafted and intentionally structured to emphasize a clear sequence of skills, deliberate repetition and practice, and opportunities to build upon prior knowledge.

95 Phonics Core Program features a comprehensive scope and sequence of foundational skills. The scope and sequence skills are taught explicitly, starting with phonological and phonemic awareness, progressing to basic and advanced phonics, and ending with advanced word analysis.

A sample is pictured in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3. Scope and sequence sample from 95 Phonics Core Program (Grade K).

✓ **Support teachers in providing high-quality instruction.**

Teachers face a vast array of challenges each day—planning high-quality lessons doesn't need to be one of them. 95 Phonics Core Program provides everything educators need to teach phonics: pre-written, guided opportunities for teacher modeling, and group and independent practice to help students become proficient and to help students achieve mastery at their own pace.

Its lessons and materials have been carefully crafted to make teaching young learners more manageable. Because using an explicitly written phonics program is new to many teachers, 95 Phonics Core Program provides ample support for implementing its instruction as intended. It also supports teachers in developing their own content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Why did we design the curriculum this way? Because 95 Percent Group's mission is to empower teachers—supplying the knowledge, resources, and support they need to develop strong readers. We recognize that successful implementation of a program hinges on well-supported teachers. 95 Phonics Core Program offers high-quality materials and then goes the extra mile to provide educators with practical tools and guidance.

Embedded throughout the lessons are valuable Teacher Tips and instructional notes that impart advice on classroom management, corrective feedback support, differentiation strategies for diverse learners, and even engaging extension activities for enrichment. All are gleaned from the expertise of veteran educators, and they place a wealth of knowledge at teachers' fingertips, empowering them to navigate students through the program confidently and tailor its instruction to their unique classroom dynamic. With this comprehensive support system, teachers can rest assured of their ability to deliver effective instruction that maximizes student outcomes.

Teacher Tip callout boxes are embedded throughout the Teacher's Edition. An example can be found in **Figure 4** below.

Figure 4. Teaching tips provide educators with additional guidance throughout the year.

> 🍎 **Teacher Tip**
>
> Resist the temptation to skip the phonological awareness warmup. Daily exposure to thinking about sounds in words is critical for later word learning. In grade 2 lessons, the PA focus begins with phoneme segmentation and builds up to the more complex tasks of manipulation. A student's automaticity with adding, deleting, and substituting sounds within a word has a high level of correlation to reading proficiency. Remember that this is an auditory activity without print.

✓ **Provide students with meaningful opportunities to develop foundational skills.**

95 Phonics Core Program's instruction is structured to prioritize student learning and support. It incorporates a variety of strategies and resources that are of particular benefit to English learners and students with reading disabilities, with an aim toward helping these students engage with grade-level content and meet or surpass grade-level benchmarks. Students take part in a variety of activities, including group collaboration, hands-on learning with manipulatives, writing tasks, and the use of decodable reading materials.

The instructional routines found in 95 Phonics Core Program intentionally engage and guide students' attention to what they are learning and explain the why behind the activity. Every 95 Phonics Core Program lesson prioritizes student engagement because it is so critical for learning, routinely providing students with frequent and meaningful opportunities for active student response. Students ask and answer questions related to the instructional routine and ask and answer text comprehension questions that progress in

complexity, and respond to prompts, and take part in instructional exercises and activities using Student Workbooks.

✓ **Foster dynamic and supportive student-teacher interactions in learning.**

Continuous teacher-student interaction allows for immediate feedback, differentiation, and scaffolding tailored to individual needs. This ensures teachers can spend as much—or as little—time as necessary on a given skill. Balancing the pace of progress—which should be swift yet deliberate—is pivotal for student success.

In this way, teachers provide a supportive environment in which all students aim to achieve mastery of skills. Then the teachers slowly pull away the scaffolding—or gradually release responsibility for the skills to the students—as students began to use the skills independently.

Additionally, the Gradual Release of Responsibility Method allows for frequent progress monitoring, providing the educator with multiple opportunities to gauge students' acquisition of concepts, identify and address any misconceptions, and provide support to those who require additional assistance in mastering the content.

95 Percent Group believes in using the science of reading to empower teachers. For this reason, 95 Phonics Core Program is designed to supply all the knowledge, resources, and support teachers will need to develop strong readers. Its instructional and professional development resources, which reflect extensive literacy expertise, strengthen literacy outcomes by benefiting not only educators, but also students, parents, and caregivers.

✓ **Trust a solution approved by 11 other states.**

95 Phonics Core Program has received approval in numerous states, including:

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Idaho
- Kansas
- Missouri
- New Mexico
- Ohio
- Utah
- Virginia

✓ **ESSA Support for 95 Phonics Core Program**

95 Phonics Core Program offers consistent routines, accompanied by precise academic language and an intentional cumulative design that has garnered "strong evidence of effectiveness (ESSA Level 1)" and notably enhanced reading skills among students in grades K–2.

Teachers using 95 Phonics Core Program saw an increase in skill application, student engagement, lesson clarity, and student independence which led to significant gains in students performing at or above grade-level benchmarks.

See more at https://www.evidenceforessa.org/program/95-phonics-core-program/.

Appendix A: 95 Phonics Core Program Learning Environment

95 Phonics Core Program supports teachers in providing a structured, engaging, and supportive learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of all students. Read below to find out more about how various elements of intentional design are exemplified within the program.

Student Learning and Engagement

Visual Appeal and Consistency: Lessons use visually engaging yet non-distracting graphics and maintain a consistent format for easy navigation by both students and teachers.

Multimodal Instruction: The program emphasizes interaction between teachers and students, using various formats (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) to cater to diverse learning styles and enhance engagement.

Multiple Application Tasks: Activities encourage repeated practice to solidify information in long-term memory.

Multisensory Learning: Lessons incorporate manipulatives to engage all senses (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) in the learning process.

Explicit and Systematic Instruction

Clear Objectives and Structure: Lessons have clear learning objectives and are structured in accordance with the gradual release model, which employs I DO teacher modeling, collaborative WE DO practice, and independent YOU DO application of a skill. Instruction is systematic, and fundamental skills are taught before more advanced concepts.

Gradual Release of Responsibility: This instructional model helps students develop independence and collaboration skills while ensuring they receive the support they need to persevere.

Discussions and Collaboration: The program encourages student discussions and collaborative learning opportunities.

Engagement and Focus

Active Participation: Lessons prioritize student engagement with activities designed to focus attention on key visual information for phonics recognition and reading fluency.

Information Presentation: Information is presented and practiced in multiple formats to facilitate transfer of skills and deepen knowledge.

Routines and Explanations: Instructional routines ensure student attention is directed to important learning objectives. Routines are explained to students, allowing them to focus on learning concepts rather than figuring out procedures.

Differentiation and Support

Structured Learning Process: Lessons structure the learning process with explicit skill modeling and ample practice opportunities, promoting accuracy and fluency before independent work.

Mastery and Monitoring: The I DO, WE DO, YOU DO model allows teachers to guide students until they achieve mastery. Student progress is monitored through written tasks and teacher observation.

Independent Practice: Students independently apply their knowledge in written tasks with manipulatives, encouraging self-reflection on their understanding.

Teacher Guidance and Flexibility

Lesson Design and Pacing: Lessons are designed with intentional timing and pacing to support student planning and time management skills.

Instructional Routines: These routines become student learning strategies and can be adapted for independent use.

Error Correction and Differentiation: Teachers can monitor student responses and adjust instruction or provide more practice as needed. The program offers guidance on identifying and addressing common errors, and the Teacher's Edition provides suggestions for differentiation.

Accommodations and Extensions: The program emphasizes continuous teacher-student interaction, allowing for flexible accommodations based on individual needs. Teachers can adjust the pace, level, and intensity of instruction, and the program offers resources for extending lessons for advanced students.

Appendix B: 95 Phonics Core Program Components

95 Phonics Core Program (Grades K–3) includes the following components:

- Phonological awareness instruction and practice throughout the K–3 grade-level years to develop and support accurate and efficient word recognition skills.

- Letter-sound correspondence which includes explicit instruction for articulatory gestures.

- Letter formation instruction and practice in kindergarten.

- Suggestions for developing print concepts while reading text aloud in kindergarten.

- Explicit instruction in blending CVC words in kindergarten and grade 1, and continues through all materials, following a carefully structured, sequential, and cumulative scope and sequence.

- Phonics patterns that are demonstrated and practiced hands-on with and without phonics chips.

- Phoneme-grapheme mapping and word chains.

- High-frequency word practice throughout the grades (based on the Dolch grade-level list).

- Writing words, phrases, sentences, and short responses to passage reading.

- Word and phrase fluency practice.

- Weekly spelling lessons designed to reinforce the week's phonics pattern, review previous patterns, and assess mastery of high-frequency words (decodable and irregular).

- Practice applying phonics knowledge in decoding text (both literary and informational) specifically written to provide maximum practice for pattern words and to review previously taught patterns.

- Instruction in morphological units, including derivational and inflectional suffixes, the most common prefixes and suffixes in grades 1–3, and the most common Latin roots in grade 3 (based on the work of Marcia K. Henry, author of Unlocking Literacy and a consultant to 95 Percent Group in the design of our vocabulary product, Vocabulary Surge).

- Instruction and practice in the use of comprehension processes through oral discussions and written responses after students read decodable texts.

- End-of-unit assessments are available and included in the kit for monitoring progress as well as to determine needs for reteaching and differentiated small-group instruction throughout the year.