

Sound Partners™

Grades K–3



Support for Early Readers

Before young children begin to read books, they develop an understanding of the parts of words—the individual sounds or phonemes. Children experiencing difficulty with letter-sound and decoding skills need help learning these skills. *Sound Partners* is a way to provide individual instruction in essential early reading skills to those children who need it most.

Tailored Tutoring Solution

Sound Partners is a research-based, supplementary tutoring program that provides individual instruction in phonics-based early reading skills. *Sound Partners* benefits students learning to read in grades K–1. It also provides effective, targeted intervention and support for students in grades 2–3 who have yet to master decoding skills.

Designed for one-on-one tutoring, *Sound Partners* offers direct, systematic, and explicit instruction in foundational reading skills. Through lesson activities and storybook reading practice, students work to improve alphabetic, phonemic awareness, decoding, word identification, and spelling skills.

Research-Based and Aligned to the Science of Reading

Sound Partners uses research-based strategies that align to the science of reading. Through scaffolded practice in phoneme blending and segmenting, it builds decoding, word identification, and spelling skills. The program integrates these skills into storybook reading practice, applying word-reading strategies in context, and includes oral reading sessions to reinforce learning.

Kindergarten instruction emphasizes alphabetic and phonemic skills with applications to blending and segmenting. First grade instruction extends from alphabetic, phoneme blending and segmenting, through reading more complex words.

By following a consistent routine and gradually progressing to more complex content, *Sound Partners* ensures a structured and effective approach to literacy instruction.



Proven Efficacy

Sound Partners meets the criteria for the Evidence for ESSA “Strong” category for “Solid Outcomes.”* Follow-up studies** found the positive effects were maintained two years later in word reading and comprehension. Numerous independent reviews of the program’s research have also confirmed its efficacy.

Sound Partners:

- Uses lessons designed specifically for tutors, paraprofessionals, and assistants with detailed guidance about how to deliver the lessons
- Follows science of reading-based strategies with an explicit Scope and Sequence
- Lessons are highly interactive with tutor modeling and student practice opportunities
- Lessons are 30 minutes per day, four to five days per week

***Sound Partners* exclusively incorporates Bob Books readers, an award-winning series that supports literacy development.**

*Vadasy, P. F., & Sanders, E. A. (2011). Efficacy of Supplemental Phonics-Based Instruction for Low-Skilled First Graders: How Language Minority Status and Pretest Characteristics Moderate Treatment Response. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 15(6), 471–497.

**Vadasy, P.F., & Sanders, E. A. (2013). Two-year follow-up of a code-oriented intervention for lower-skilled first-graders: The influence of language status and word reading skills on third-grade literacy outcomes. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 26, 821-843.



Tutoring and Implementation Manual

Sound Partners is effective when tutors follow the Scope and Sequence at a brisk pace that engages the student. Maintaining a brisk pace allows for students to be working on skills not yet mastered while reinforcing previously taught skills through varied practice and repetition.

The Tutor and Implementation Manual includes detailed information about providing immediate corrective feedback, instructional techniques, and additional tutor guidance.

Guided Lessons

Students engage in the lessons through interaction with their tutor, sound cards, and an interactive student text. Lessons are laid out in a consistent pattern to support tutor delivery and enhance student engagement in the learning activities.

During the lesson, the tutor observes the student's progress to individualize the instruction and appropriate level of support.

Additional Lesson Implementation Tips

Say the Sounds

Progress in letter-sound identification is critical to success in the *Sound Partners* program. Cumulative review of the sounds is built into the lessons using structured, easy-to-follow lessons.

When students are writing the words, help them form the letters correctly by having them watch you. Use a handwriting chart that shows the sequence of letter strokes for correct letter formation. In early lessons particularly, have the student refer to the card in all writing/spelling activities to help establish correct and efficient handwriting.

If students are not learning letter sounds as quickly as sounds are being introduced in the lessons, add extra practice. For a few minutes at the beginning of each tutoring session, have the student practice a group of letters that the student finds challenging. Letter Sounds Cards: Have the student point to a letter or if saying the letter name, then the key word. Then the sound, letter name again.

NOTE: It is critical that you, the tutor, model correct letter sounds. A recording on letter sounds can be used for training.

Sound Segmenting and Spelling

The ability to segment words is particularly useful to children who just beginning to write and spell. Whenever students are difficult spelling a word, encourage them to orally segment sounds in the word before writing it. Use the segmenting to help the student represent each sound with a letter. These can be very difficult for some students, but all students can benefit with repeated practice.

Why is segmenting important?

Using segmented boxes as a visual cue provides a concept of teaching children how to break words into individual phonemes. It helps make students aware that words are made up of sounds. Students begin segmenting as they are simultaneously learning that each sound is associated with a letter of the alphabet or with a combination of letters. In the *Sound Partners* K-1 program, students build up to segmenting four-phoneme words including initial or final digraphs.

The tutor asks . . .

If a student is absent, should I skip the lessons they missed, or repeat previous lessons? When a student is absent, the tutor should pick up where they left off at the student's last lesson. Often this is where the student should be. If the student has been having difficulty, or has had a long absence, the tutor may need to go back and repeat lessons, starting at the point where the student is about 90% accurate on lesson content.

Individual Lesson Components

Each of the *Sound Partners* lessons consists of a combination of the following activities. Students practice reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding) sounds and words, and reading connected text.

Description	Instructional Techniques	Points to Remember	Correction and Support Procedures
Say the Sounds			
In the Say the Sounds activities, students practice saying the sound associated with a letter pair and writing the letter(s) associated with a sound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the student point, say the sound. Trace the letter, then have the student trace the letter with a finger. Have the student write the letter (say the sound) not the letter name.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model any sound in a box. Focus on sounds, not letter names. Require finger pointing. Model correct writing strokes. Have the student repeat correct sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use modeling or refer to any word to correct errors. Provide extra practice on mixed sounds or sounds the student confuses.
Why? Alphabet knowledge is a prerequisite for learning to read and spell.			

Lesson 32

Say the Sounds

Let's review.

Point to each letter. Say the sound.

Write the letter that makes the _____ sound. Write it three times.

Choose three or more sounds to practice. Circle your best letter.

For any letter the student has difficulty writing, use the following steps:

Trace the letter with your finger.

Now you trace the letter. Say the sound. Say the name.

Sound Segmenting and Spelling

Listening only.

I'll point to and say the sounds in this word.

jam

jam jam jam

jam

Now you do it. Say the word, and point to each box while you say each sound. Then say the word fast.

Dictate each word.

Use:

jam	rob
bog	die

Now you spell.

Use:

jam	pad
cat	rip

Read your words.

Lesson 32 (cont.)

Word Reading

jam

Point as you sound out each word, then say the word fast.

Arrows under words are no longer provided, but continue to have the student point while blending left to right.

Add this step for extra practice with sounds the student finds challenging.

What sound does _____ start with?

What sound does _____ end with?

Now you spell.

Choose three words for the student to say aloud, write, and read.

Sight Words

This new sight word is he.

Now you read it.

Point and spell it.

What is the word?

Add he to the flash cards and review as needed.

Sentence Reading

Read these sentences with me. Point to each word.

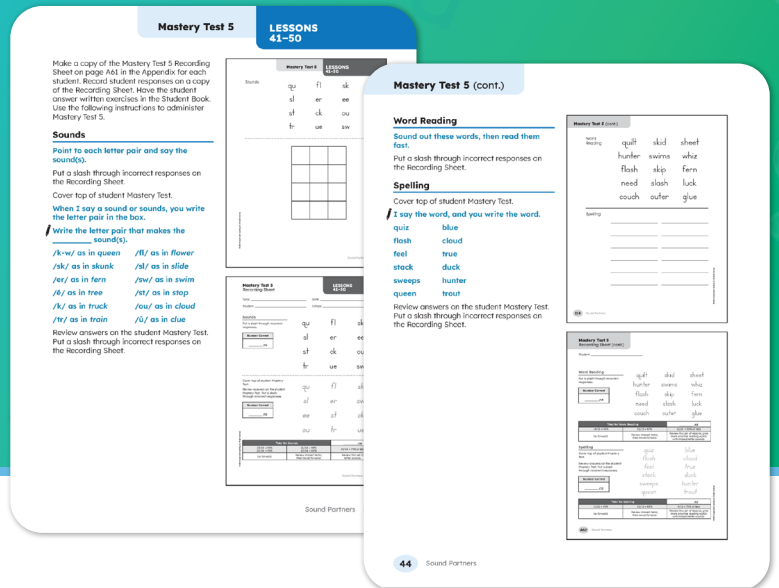
Headings in the Tutor Lesson Book clearly define each part of the lesson.

The corresponding pages from the Student Lesson Book are embedded into the Tutor Lesson Book to make it easier to follow along with the student. The Student Lesson Book is interactive, allowing students to write in or follow along with their finger to increase student attention and accuracy. Book reading is included in lessons to reinforce skills and comprehension through repeated readings.

The Tutor Lesson Book contains step-by-step directions for delivering the instruction. The tutor script is in blue text.

Mastery Tests

Mastery Tests are included in both levels. These tests are designed to be administered after each set of lessons to assess students' grasp of the skills taught. Data can be used to drive instruction and share progress with classroom teachers, literacy teams, and parents/caregivers.



What's Included in the Sound Partners kits?

Kindergarten

- Tutor Lesson Book
- Student Lesson Book: Lessons 1-70
- Tutoring and Implementation Manual
- Bob Books, Sets 1 and 2



First Grade

- Tutor Lesson Book
- Student Lesson Books: Lessons 1-60 and Lessons 61-108
- Tutoring and Implementation Manual
- Bob Books, Sets 1-5



*Bob Books images provided courtesy of Bob Books Publications.

Training

We are committed to a long-term partnership with every district that implements our solutions. A free, on-demand recorded training is available for all users of Sound Partners. Additional support services are available for purchase. Districts can choose from a menu of training and support options including in-person, online, or a combination of both.