



INTRODUCTION

What is the KIPP K–8 Literacy Blueprint?

The KIPP K–8 literacy blueprint (blueprint) is KIPP’s ideal instructional design for a K–8 literacy classroom. The blueprint aligns to KIPP’s instructional vision and the instructional shifts in the Common Core State Standards. It includes three sections:

1. [K–8 Literacy Recommendations: Components and Timing Recommendations](#)
2. [Literacy in the Life of a KIPPster](#)
3. [Literacy Component Details](#)
4. [Personalized Learning](#)

When and how can audiences use the blueprint?

Teachers and leaders can use this tool to:

- Design an instructional vision for literacy
- Develop systems to support literacy instruction
- Understand the rationale for KIPP Foundation’s time and curricular recommendations

Scheduling

These sample elementary and middle school schedules are intended to be a starting point for planning the structure of the school day, as it is recognized that there are different needs and constraints across the network. These schedules include both the teaching and learning prioritized in the literacy and math instructional blueprints as well as the enabling systems for teacher development. Before using, please read the notes (first tab).

BLUEPRINT OVERVIEW

Recommendations at a Glance

The table below summarizes the recommended components of a K–8 literacy block.

Rationale for Recommendations

The following sub-sections provide a rationale for each recommended literacy block component and associated resource. See Appendix A for more detail.

MORNING MEETING (MESSAGE TIME PLUS®) 20 MINUTES

- Through modeled writing and shared reading, students practice foundational skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and grammar in their zone of proximal development through differentiated questioning.
- High performing schools have used Message Time Plus program® since 1988, including multiple KIPP schools.
- Flexible. Teachers can use it to model a specific genre of writing or to introduce particular content. Used also in content areas and the literacy block.
- Supports students' approximation to adult conventions, thus accelerating students' development, vocabulary knowledge, etc.

PHONICS/WORD STUDY (OPEN COURT) 20 MINUTES

- Development of phonemic awareness and phonics is critical for students to become fluent readers
- Learning to encode and decode in primary is key for future comprehension
- Systematic approach is required for phonics instruction
- Proven track record of success with high-performing KIPP and other schools
- Research-based scope and sequence

VOCABULARY (MARZANO) 15 MINUTES

- Systematic vocabulary instruction in all content areas is essential to students' development as readers, writers, and speakers.
- Ensures that students have 30 high utility academic terms from each content area stored in long-term memory, plus related words and cognitive verbs.
- Comprehensive and systematic method to teaching and learning high-leverage vocabulary on a school-wide level.
- Accelerates learning as all content teachers and students leverage the same approach.
- Promotes teacher development such that teachers are selecting words, developing assessments, and selecting the appropriate activities for student practice.
- Integrates highly-acclaimed work of Isabel Beck and Margaret McKeown that is highlighted in CCSS publications.

CLOSE READING VIA READ ALOUD AND SHARED READING (KIPP WHEATLEY) 45 MINUTES

- Increases vocabulary, develops analytical skills, increases knowledge of text and the world, demonstrates fluent reading, promotes oral language development, and creates a community of readers.
- Rigorous text-dependent questions
- Variety of genres and a balance of high-quality fiction and informational texts.
- Thematic modules build student knowledge and vocabulary on a particular topic.

GUIDED READING (SCHOLASTIC GUIDED READING LIBRARY) 25 MINUTES/STUDENT

- Supports fluency, decoding, comprehension skills and strategies, and discussion skills.
- Differentiates instruction, explicitly teaches all aspects of reading instruction
- Small-group reading instruction and individual coaching in a student's zone of proximal development



- Increases the amount of independent reading in school.
- Scholastic library provides large a variety of text types

CHOICE-BASED INDEPENDENT READING (CLASSROOM LIBRARIES, KIPP WHEATLEY INDEPENDENT READING TEXT LISTS) 30 MINUTES

- Strategy and skill instruction, with conferencing
- Students read authentic texts on their independent level, synthesize multiple skills, and build reading stamina
- Increases long-term love of reading and volume of reading
- Creates opportunity for teachers to confer with students, further differentiating instruction.
- Practice the discrete meta-cognitive and critical thinking skills necessary for reading comprehension.
- Research shows that the more time students spend reading, the better readers they become.

WRITING (KIPP WHEATLEY) 45 MINUTES

- Students write in a variety of genres and with significant frequency to ensure development of writing skills and stamina.
- Explicit modeling, gradual release of responsibility, and independent practice
- Writing for authentic purposes and the use of authors as mentors
- Consistent and systematic approach to sentence construction and word choice
- Reinforces and expands content knowledge as students respond to reading

PERSONALIZED LEARNING 25 MINUTES/STUDENT

- Scheduled at the same time as Guided Reading, where students are receiving instruction in small groups based on their needs
- Online learning programs that align instruction to individual student needs
- Differentiated instruction for remediation, intervention, and extension where progress is based on mastery
- Individualized instruction so students can work at their own pace

LITERACY IN THE LIFE OF A KIPPSTER

The vignette below illustrates how the components of the KIPP Literacy Blueprint come together to create a cohesive, rigorous, and joy-filled day that revolves around great books and standards-based instruction.



Sage is a second-grader at KIPP. She arrives at school for breakfast and community meeting at 7:30am. Her day starts by 8:00am, as her class gathers together on the rug for Message Time Plus®. They are working within the KIPP Wheatley module “Making a Difference,” so Sage’s teacher has chosen to write today’s message as a biography of Claudette Colvin. She has planned to include words with affixes and roots, a language standard that appears in many of the module’s texts, and linking words to expand academic vocabulary and that students will find helpful during writing.



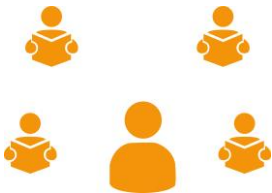
At 8:20 am, students stand up and run through the letter sounds for phonics, doing the motions as they make each sound. Students play a quick root word game with partners and then read a decodable book. At 8:40 am, Sage returns to the rug to play a game of Jeopardy! with this week’s vocabulary words, step six in Marzano instruction. After playing a few rounds as a team, she works with her group to continue playing and pulls out her notebook to add an additional detail to her drawing for the word protest.



By 9:00 am, Sage and her classmates return to the rug for a read aloud of Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story by Ruby Bridges. As they listen, the teacher asks text-dependent questions requiring students to use evidence from the text to support their discussion of character analysis. Students return to their seats with a copy of the text. Sage does a second reading and records the gist in the margin, making note of her questions and tricky words. A group of Sage’s teammates work on the questions at a small table with the teacher, but Sage continues independently. Finally, Sage reads the text again and prepares to discuss Ruby Bridges’ motivation for writing this biography. She brings her copy of the text back to the rug so that she can reference it during the class discussion.



At 9:45 am, Sage participates in a mini-lesson on using linking words when crafting an argument about text and providing evidence to support the claim. Sage works on her draft paragraph detailing why Ruby Bridges is a strong leader.



At 10:30 am, students begin reading independently as the teacher confers with individuals and groups using exit ticket data from the earlier reading lesson and re-teaching skills required for character analysis as needed. Sage reads Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles, a thematically-aligned text at her independent reading level. As choice-based reading ends, guided reading begins.



For the next sixty minutes, Sage and the rest of the students in her grade level are separated by reading levels into the four classrooms. Each teacher has groups of children at a similar reading proficiency, which lightens the guided reading planning load. The students in each class rotate between guided reading with the teacher, independent reading, and using Lexia Core5 on computers. Sage’s group is reading Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins by Carole Boston Weatherford and noticing the relationship between the setting and the plot of the story.

LITERACY COMPONENT DETAILS

Message Time Plus®

For more detailed information on each of the steps, see Children’s Literacy Initiative.

Step 1: Planning

Planning for Message Time Plus® occurs before the lesson and planning notes are recorded on a lesson plan template. The students are not present.

Step 2: Thinking Aloud

Although labelled as step 2, this is actually the first step that a teacher would implement in a Message Time Plus® lesson (with the students).

Step 3: Writing and Reading

This step occurs as the teacher is writing the message and the students are simultaneously reading the message.

Step 4: Predicting and Assessing

Step 4 is happening simultaneously as Step 3. While modeled writing and shared reading are occurring, students are making predictions, the teacher is offering feedback, and the teacher is assessing students “on the fly.”

Step 5: Re-reading

After each sentence that is written, the teacher guides the students to re-read, allowing them to put all the words they read into a meaningful sentence that “sounds right.” This re-reading happens again after the entire message is written. With each opportunity to re-read, the students’ reading becomes more automatic, accurate and smooth.

Step 6: Analyzing and Scaffolding

After the message is composed and read, the teacher calls three to five students to the message board for an individualized “scaffolding experience.” During or after the scaffolding of three to five individuals, a brief and focused whole class mini-lesson also occurs.

Step 7: Re-reading the Message

After analyzing the message, the students are guided to re-read the message one final time. The final re-reading allows the students to see the individual elements of the message that they focused on during Step 6 in a meaningful context, while further increasing their ability to fluently read the message.

Phonics/Word Study

Open Court provides a foundation for reading developed through phonological and phonemic awareness, explicit phonics instruction, and fluency practice.

Foundational Skills Kits include:

- complete lesson plans
- English Language Learner supports
- assessments
- technology resources
- letter cards for the classroom and small group
- decodable books
- big books
- independent practice pages and activities

Vocabulary

Marzano’s Six Steps to Teaching Vocabulary



1. Provide a kid-friendly description, explanation, or example of the new term.



2. Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.



3. Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the term or phrase.



4. Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their notebooks.



5. Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.



6. Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with terms.

Wordly Wise 3000 is an online program that helps students master academic vocabulary. Each activity provides immediate feedback that coaches students towards the correct answer. Engaging lessons give students multiple exposures to each word, leading to long-term retention. The data dashboard provides reports for teachers and administrators on student usage, progress, and mastery.

Close Reading

During KIPP Wheatley reading lessons, in kindergarten through second grade, read alouds are a time to practice close listening and dig deeply into high-level, standards-based instruction in order to deeply understand text. Students also practice close reading with shared, grade-level texts.

Guided and Small Group Reading

Guided Reading allows a teacher to work with small groups of students on their instructional level. During rotations, students have an opportunity to receive instruction on a skill or strategy specific to their needs and reading level, before getting a chance to practice with the teacher beside them as a coach. In order to effectively implement a guided reading program, high-quality leveled libraries are critical. During this small group time, other students might rotate through an instructional technology center and choice reading center. This is another time of day to reinforce discussion habits.

Choice-based Independent Reading

In order to increase a student’s volume of reading, knowledge of the world, and reading stamina, choice reading time must be built into the school day. This can happen during guided reading rotations or can be built as a routine into other times of day, depending on your schedule. During this time, students have the chance to read texts of their choice. Teachers can begin the block with a skills-based mini-lesson and use independent reading time to confer with individual students and small groups. Structures like Accelerated Reader quizzes or reading journals can hold students accountable for their reading during this time.

In order to deliberately build knowledge, students should read in the same topic that they are studying during KIPP Wheatley. Reading at least four texts on a topic (whether it is the current module or a future module) greatly increases student understanding and vocabulary.¹

Writing

Research shows that reading and writing are mutually reinforcing skills. Writing about what students are reading helps them to make sense of texts’ complexities and helps them to internalize their overall significance. Therefore, it’s essential that reading and writing instruction be tightly integrated. Students will learn explicit frameworks for constructing narrative, explanatory, and argumentative writing products that draw on the essential themes and unique features of the texts students are reading. Only after they have learned the processes for constructing these different types of writing will they focus on the stylistic and mechanical features of their writing.

NoRedInk is an adaptive online learning program used for teaching grammar, usage, mechanics and style to students in 4th through 12th grade. The content is common core aligned, and teachers have access to a data dashboard that shows student usage, progress, and mastery. Teachers can also custom build assessments and lessons on prioritized objectives.

Personalization

Already used successfully in many KIPP schools, Fountas and Pinnell’s [Leveled Literacy Intervention](#) (LLI) provides resources for small group supplementary instruction. LLI lessons include phonics/word study, reading, and writing, as well as vocabulary and fluency. LLI is available for all reading levels and includes home reinforcement activities as well as specific supports for English language learners. This support should take place outside of the grade-level literacy block so that it supplements what is happening in class and students are not missing grade-level instruction.

Lexia Core5 is an adaptive online learning program that delivers literacy instruction for grades PK-5. The lessons change depending on student performance, but all instruction is designed to build skills necessary to reach grade level proficiency. The data dashboard allows teachers and administrators to monitor student usage, progress, and mastery. The program delivers instruction based on student performance within the following domains:

- Phonological/Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Word/Structural Analysis
- Automaticity/Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

Some of the reasons why this program is being recommended are:

- Strong instructional design and content

¹ Marilyn Jager Adams. (2009). *The Challenge of Advanced Text: The Interdependence of Reading and Learning*. NY: Guilford Publications.

- Instruction adapts to student performance with differentiation and remediation strategies building toward grade level common core standards
- Implementation aligned to recommended models
- Solid platform and technical foundations
- Close relationship with KIPP Foundation and many KIPP schools/regions
- Positive feedback from both KIPP users and other networks

Newsela is an adaptive online learning program that provides teachers, parents, and students with over 1,000 current event articles scaled at five different Lexile levels. Students read articles covering a wide array of topics then complete accompanying Common Core-aligned quizzes. Newsela is also working to create text sets that are specifically aligned to KIPP Wheatley modules in terms of theme and focus standards. Newsela delivers content and assessments for students to practice the following Common Core domains:

- Understand what the text says (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.1)
- Determine central Idea (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.2)
- Describe people, events & ideas (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.3)
- Determine word meaning & choice (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.4)
- Analyze text structure (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.5)
- Distinguish between points of view / purposes (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.6)
- Integrate multimedia (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.7)
- Trace and evaluate arguments & claims (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.X.8)

Some of the reasons why Newsela is recommended are:

- Strong instructional design and content in both English and Spanish
- Instruction adapts to student performance by automatically changing the reading level of articles to student independent reading levels.
- Implementation aligned to recommended models
- Solid platform and technical foundations
- Close relationship with KIPP Foundation and many KIPP schools/regions
- Positive feedback from both KIPP users and other networks

PERSONALIZED LEARNING

SCHEDULE, STAFFING, AND PHYSICAL SPACE

Personalized Learning is an instructional design approach that reserves time and space during the school day for instruction aligned to individual student needs rather than grade level expectations or a predetermined scope and sequence.

To understand what this looks like, we have adopted a two part strategy to implement personalization:

Personalization = Differentiation + Individualization

Differentiation is using formative assessments to find specific strengths and weaknesses of each student and delivering targeted lessons to help address those needs in small groups, individually, and online. The types of instruction should include remediation for students who are significantly behind, extension for students who need more challenging instruction, and interventions for students who need timely opportunities to clarify concepts that will help them engage with grade level material.

Individualization is a collection of strategies to help maximize the impact of differentiation with student-centered instructional design. Since differentiation uses data to find appropriate lessons aligned to student strengths and weaknesses, mastery based progression is required so that students continuously receive appropriate instruction aligned to their needs based on their performance. To help make this all happen, schools must create a flexible learning environment with innovations in schedules, staffing, and physical space to create opportunities for the different types of instructional strategies. This is typically done in a Personalized Learning Block (i.e. Intervention Block, Power Hour, etc.) that is separate from core instructional times.

Personalized learning requires schools to consider schedules, staffing, and physical space. The following options are summaries of different changes schools can make, and links to resources with more details and diagrams.

Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalization in Traditional Schedule: Schools may choose to implement stations within a traditional schedule in the homeroom/literacy teacher’s classroom. While this allows time for small group instruction for different groups of learners, it requires teachers to design different lesson plans for each of those groups. • Personalization in Flexible Schedule: There are many ways to introduce flexibility to a schedule so that teachers can plan for fewer groups of learners. This is done by homogenously grouping students during an intervention block across multiple classrooms, so that each classroom has similar student needs. Then, students can rotate while the teacher delivers the same or similar lesson to multiple groups.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalization in Traditional Staffing Model: Each teacher designates times for intervention blocks for small group instruction aligned to student needs. While this allows for time for small group instruction for different groups of learners, it requires teachers to design different lesson plans for each of those groups. • Personalization in Flexible Staffing Models: There are several ways to introduce flexibility in the staffing model that helps to reduce the planning load for teachers and increase opportunities to deliver personalized small group instruction. These models work best within flexible schedule options as well.

Physical Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personalization in Traditional Models: A traditional use of physical space can be used to implement a station rotation or lab rotation (including mobile carts of devices) to convert any space into a technology-enhanced intervention block. While this is the easiest model to implement, it still requires teachers to plan for multiple lessons for different groups of students.• Personalization in Flexible Models: A flexible use of space can help to create opportunities for different types of instruction for different students, aligned to their strengths and weaknesses. Multiple instructional opportunities can happen at the same time, which helps reserve time for other priorities.