

Foundational skills for English Learners

Many EL students have familiarity with the foundational skills of their native language. Although some of these will not map in direct ways to this same foundational knowledge in English, many of these students will work well with the ways that foundational skills in English are presented in the Amplify ELD and Amplify ELA programs, whether they are working at the Emerging, Expanding, or Bridging level. For example, ELs whose first language uses the Latin alphabet can use their understanding of morphology to grasp how words are broken apart in the ELD vocabulary activities or their understanding of print concepts to decode these words. Further, these students will be able to immediately apply their new knowledge to working with words in the connected texts and recording their ideas in the writing prompts, both practices that will build their foundational skills in English.

ELs will also benefit from additional fluency work available through the ELA lessons. An important element of Amplify's Universal Design are the Learning Experiences, Working With Text Out Loud and Working With Text as Theater. Both of these experiences are designed to work for students of all reading abilities—because of the quality of the actor's readings to which the students are listening and interpreting and because of the quality of the theater exercises through which students are expressing their own interpretations of the text. Throughout these exercises are extensive opportunities for the teacher to make sure that any student who needs fluency training utilizes them for that purpose. (See Section 2, Rigorous instruction for all students: Differentiation strategies.) These students may also benefit from the activities available through our free, open-source foundational skills website, www.freereading.net. Amplify's foundational skills website features resources in each strand of phonics and phonemic awareness and other foundational skills.

In addition, many EL students will need regular instruction in foundational skills. Within the first ELD lesson of Units A,B,C, and D for grades 6-8, the teacher will find instructions about observing and diagnosing students in need of additional support with any of the foundational skills: alphabetic principles, print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. The teacher will also find specific information about how to use Amplify's foundational skills website, www.freereading.net, to address each of these five foundational skills.

There are also EL students who have received little to no instruction in foundational skills, either in their native language or in English. Many of these students may be in newcomer programs and, certainly, these skills are addressed in the two newcomer programs that Amplify recommends (Amplify ELD does not include its own distinct newcomer program.) Students who show little progress with foundational skills should receive intensive Tier III intervention under the guidance and supervision of a specialist, ideally using the supplementary intervention program offered by Amplify called Burst:Reading.