



MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

English Learner Reading Foundational Skills Support Guides

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)

Measure/Skills Assessed: LNF-*Fluency in naming uppercase and lowercase letters.*

This measure is not an essential precursor to reading, performance on this measure serves as an indicator of risk: students who perform poorly on this measure may have had few early reading experiences prior to formal schooling and therefore may need additional instruction to catch up to peers who have had rich early reading experiences.

CCSS for ELA Alignment

RF.K.1; RF.1.1
Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
RF.K.1.d
Recognize and name all upper-and-lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Using Foundational Literacy Skills (RF.K.1-4)
Literacy in an Alphabetic Writing System

- Print concepts
- Phonological awareness
- Phonics & word recognition
- Fluency

See chapter 6:

- Native language and literacy should be assessed for potential transference to English and literacy
- Similarities and differences between the native language and English should be highlighted.

General Instructional Recommendations

Use Common Error Patterns listed on back to determine which concepts to emphasize during direct and explicit instruction.

During instruction, highlight letter forms and names not present in the child’s native language.

Instruction in print concepts should be explicit, intensive, and extensive. Letter names do not need to be a primary focus of instruction. Letters that can be easily confused should be taught separately (e.g., b and d).

General English Learner Needs

Students with no or little native language literacy skills likely have minimal experience with print.

Students with some foundational literacy proficiency in a language not using the Latin alphabet (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian) need instruction in the Latin alphabet for English, as compared or contrasted with their native language writing system. Because some languages do not use alphabetic writing systems at all, the concept of a letter may need to be explicitly taught.

Students with some foundational literacy proficiency in a language using the Latin alphabet (e.g., Spanish) need instruction in applying their knowledge to the English writing system, as compared or contrasted with their native language alphabet.

Letter Naming Instruction Background

Letter knowledge	Letter Names and Shapes
Letter knowledge has a foundational role in literacy development. Knowing letter names allows students to label letter shapes. Learning the names of English letters may foster phonological awareness by alerting students to the similarities in sounds among the letter names (Treiman 2005).	Letter Characteristics In kindergarten, it is generally recommended that uppercase letters be taught before lowercase letters (Hall and Moats 1999). This is because uppercase letters are more distinguishable than lowercase letters. An exception to this guideline may be made for identically shaped pairs of upper-and-lowercase letters (e.g., <i>Cc, Pp, Ss</i>). These pairs of upper-and-lowercase letters may be introduced at the same time (Carnine et al. 2006).
Knowing the names of letters may make it easier for students to master the sound/spelling correspondences necessary for effective decoding.	Letter Confusion Students often confuse uppercase letter shapes that are visually similar (e.g., <i>B-D, B-P, M-N</i>); these letters should not be introduced in proximity (Treiman et al. 2006).
When students can instantly and effortlessly recognize letters, they can give all their attention to other emergent literacy tasks.	Letter Shapes That Are Visually Similar A factor that effects the learning of letter names is the extent to which the visual form, or shape, of the target letter looks like those of other letters (Treiman and Kessler 2003). The more similar the appearance of two letters is, the more likely students will confuse them.
Fluency in letter naming leads to word-reading accuracy and fluency, and to reading comprehension.	
According to Adams (1990), “A student who can recognize most letters with confidence will have an easier time learning about letter sounds and word spellings than a student who still has to work at remembering what is what.”	

Visually Similar Letters

Letter Shape	Letters whose form shares 50 percent or more of strokes in target letter’s form:	B-D, B-P, B-R, E-F, F-P, G-O, K-X, M-N, M-W, O-Q, O-U, P-R, U-V, V-Y
	Letters whose overall form is identical or similar to target letter’s form when rotated, flipped, or reversed:	b-d, b-p, b-q, d-g, d-q, e-a, g-p, g-y, i-j, i-l, k-x, m-n, n-c, n-h, p-q, i-v, u-w, u-y, w-m, y-v
Letter Case	A letter pair whose forms are almost identical in upper- and lowercase:	Cc, Kk, Oo, Pp, Ss, Uu, Vv, Ww, Xx, Zz

Spanish Consonants

Letter	Phoneme	Key Spanish Words	Letter	Phoneme	Key Spanish Words
b	/b/	boca, baño	ñ	/ñ/	año, niño
c	/k/ /s/	cama, cosa, cuna cena, cita	p	/p/	papá, pera
ch	/ch/	chato, ocho	q	/k/	queso, quita
d	/d/	deja, dos	r	/r/ /rr/	oro, cara rosa, alrededor, barro
f	/f/	fiesta, fecha	s	/s/	sopa, silla, mesa
g	/g/ /x/	gato, Guerra, guía giro, gente	t	/t/	tú, todo, pata
h	silent	hijo, hermano	v	/b/	vaca, oveja
j	/x/	jabón, rojo, jugo dije, jinete	x	/s/ /x/ /gs/ /ks/	xilófono México excavar taxi
l	/l/	loma, malo	y	/y/	yema, yo
ll	/y/	llama, pollo	z	/s/	zapato, paz
m	/m/	más, ama	k	/k/	kilogramo, kiosco
n	/n/	nido, una	w	/ōō/, or /b/	wat, wáter



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Common Error Patterns	Now What?® Item-Level Advisor Instructional Recommendation	Teaching Considerations/ Activities/Lessons
Dominates Uppercase*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The student may need additional exposure to the lowercase letters.When teaching the letters, it is important to expose students to both the lower and uppercase characters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Alphabet books provide an excellent opportunity for students to hear, say, and see the alphabet.Bus and van IJzendoorn (1988) found that reading alphabet books to students was positively correlated with their ability to name the letters.
Dominates Lowercase*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The student may need additional exposure to the uppercase letters.When teaching the letters, it is important to expose students to both the lower and uppercase characters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sing the alphabet song; students often slur the letters L, M, N, O, P.Matching letter games (one set of uppercase and lower case letters)
Accurate but Slow*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This student probably needs additional alphabet practice to increase his/her letter-naming speed.It is essential for students to learn to read letters accurately and fluently.However, they typically develop accuracy before fluency.	Letter Naming Automaticity <ul style="list-style-type: none">Choose four or five previously introduced uppercase and lowercase letters.Print letters on the board or on chart paper.There should be four rows of letters repeated in random order.
Inconsistent Letter Recognition*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This student probably needs additional alphabet practice to become more confident and consistent.The ability to name letters consistently and fluently is a strong predictor of a student's readiness for learning further reading skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is no consensus on the best sequence for teaching letters. According to Hall and Moats (1999), students appear to acquire letter knowledge in a sequence that begins with letter names, then letter shapes and formation, and finally letter sounds.According to Treiman and Kessler (2003), students “need more time to learn the sounds of some letters than others.”Letter sequencing (alphabetically)Letter Naming Game using flash cards
Difficulty Tracking*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Although it is not uncommon for a student to skip a line periodically, skipping multiple lines may indicate he/she has trouble with left-to-right tracking.If this pattern occurs repeatedly, you may want to consider deeper diagnostic assessment for this student.	Text Directionality <ul style="list-style-type: none">Show students the front cover of a book. Say: <i>We start reading a book from the front.</i> Ask: <i>Who can show me where I should start reading?</i> (Student should point to cover.) Say: <i>Starting at the front of the book, we turn one page at a time.</i> Open the book to the first spread and point to the top left of the page. Say: <i>I am going to start reading the page here. Then, I'll go this way.</i> Sweep to the right with your finger. Read aloud the sentence while tracking, or moving your finger under each word as you read. Concept of Word <ul style="list-style-type: none">Read aloud the sentence while tracking: “At night he howls at the moon.” Then point to the word <i>he</i>. Say: <i>This is a word.</i> Point to the word <i>howls</i>. Say: <i>This is another word.</i> Words are separated by empty spaces. Point to the empty space between <i>he</i> and <i>howls</i>. Ask: <i>Who can point to a word?</i> Ask: <i>Who can point to a space between words.</i> Questions for Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none">(Open a storybook.) Can you show me which way I should go when I read?(Open a storybook.) When I come to the end of this line, where do I go next?Matching chips to letter names (using 5 letters at a time)Singing the alphabet (chunking the alphabet in different groups)