

Kinders CAN! READ and WRITE!

~~Updated Edition~~



*A Step-By-Step Guide to Getting Your
Kindergartners **READING** and **WRITING***

Katy Huller

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JKHTeach Educational Books

Waleska, GA

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Published by JKHTeach Educational Books

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This Book is Dedicated to
Kindergarten Students and Teachers Everywhere

*May your finest light shine upon all you touch so that this world
will be a better place just because you were in it.*

Acknowledgments:

My heartfelt thanks to all of the people (kids, teachers, parents, friends, and family members) who have taught me, helped me, encouraged me, and/or supported me over the last 20 years. I couldn't have written this version (or the previous version) without you!

A very special thanks to my husband, Jay, who has been by my side through this entire process, willing to help in any way he could, and always always believing in me every step along the way. Love you, Honey!

*And, of course, a load of thanks to my incredible daughters who inspire me to be more, do more, and love more every single day. Thanks for putting up with my constant need to get this message out to the world, even when it took precious time away from the two of you. This book was my message to the world, but the two of you are my true gift to it.
xoxoxoxo*

Note from the Author

When I first started teaching kindergarten, I taught in a “low-achieving” school where nearly all students were second language learners who qualified for – and were on – free lunch programs. When they came to me, many of them did not know any letters, sounds, colors, shapes, or numbers. Few knew how to write any letters in their names. Some didn’t even recognize their names when they were called. Others didn’t know any English. Most of these kids had few toys and even fewer books. Still, despite the disadvantages they faced, they were all able to learn to read and write when taught with the techniques outlined in this book.

Several years later, I moved to another state and began teaching kindergarten in a school where the majority of students were NOT on free lunch, were NOT second language learners, and were NOT struggling to survive. Although none could already read and write when they came to me, many did come in knowing their colors, shapes, numbers to 10, a variety of letters, and some sounds. Several could also write their first names, even if only with all capitals. They also knew English, and, in many cases, had quite extensive vocabularies. Like the other school I taught at, they were all able to learn how to read and write when taught with the techniques discussed in this book.

When I say my students learned how to read and write, I mean that most of them could read almost any children’s book in our classroom library – predictable or not – and could write readable stories without asking me for one bit of help. Their stories weren’t just readable, many had capitals, spaces, periods, and even apostrophes! In fact, when I showed one girl’s daily journal entry to a third grade teacher in my first school, she asked me if I were going to skip the girl to second grade. I laughed when she asked because I would have had to have skipped at least seven others to second grade as well! The following winter I had to chuckle again when one of my girls wrote me a letter telling me that she had started going to a private school and had been promoted to second grade because first had

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“been too easy.” She had been one of my lowest kids at the beginning of the year!

The point of these stories and the nice thing about this program is that it doesn't matter how your kids come to you. Each one has the opportunity to not only do well but to thrive, assuming they don't have any major learning disabilities that would prevent them from doing so. You see, teaching kindergartners to read and write is SIMPLE! So simple that it is shameful to have second and third graders struggling with words and sentences they should have been able to read and write in kindergarten.

If you are excited about getting your kindergartners reading and writing this year, get to know the basic concepts that are outlined in this book and make sure you use *all 7 core components* on a *daily* basis. You won't believe what your kindergartners can do when they get the training and practice they need to fully understand how letters and sounds work together to make words!

All the best and much success,

Katy Huller

P.S. For more tips, “like” [Kinders Can READ and WRITE](#) on [Facebook](#), and “follow” [Kinders Can!](#) and/or [Katy Huller](#) on [Twitter](#)! Hope to see you there!

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Introduction

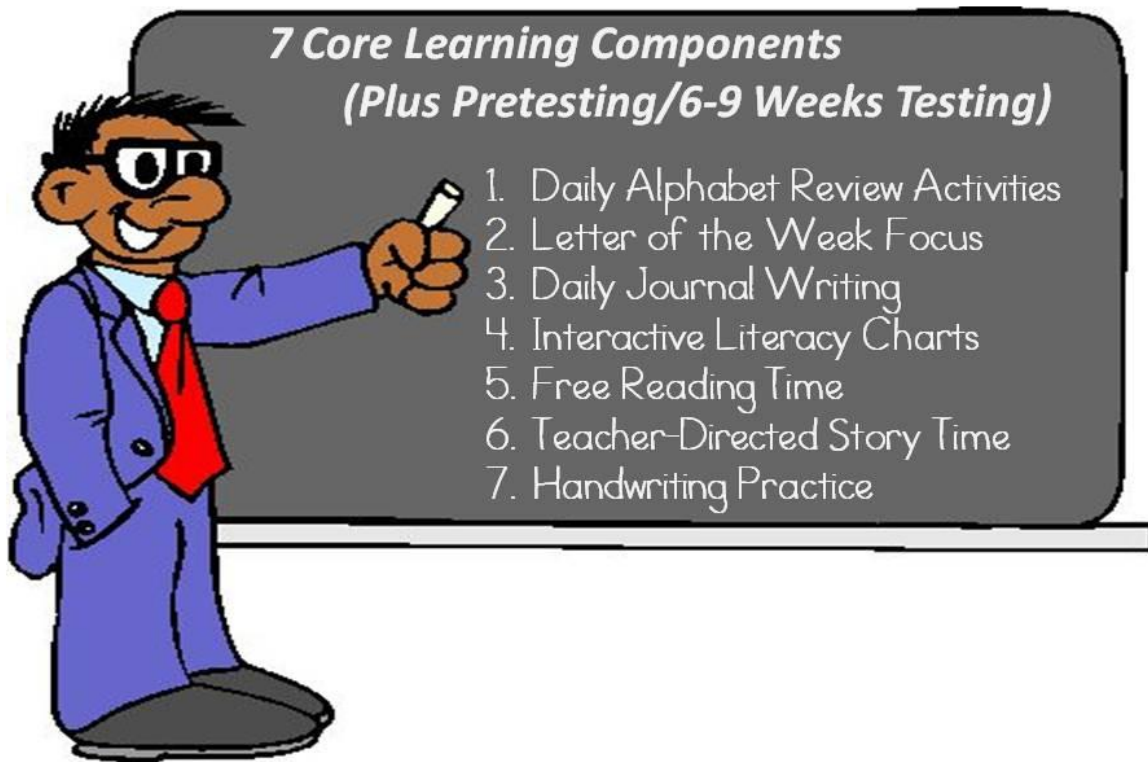
The ***Kinders Can! READ and WRITE!*** program was created to help you get your kindergarten students reading and writing real text as quickly as possible in an engaging, kid-friendly way. It encourages “best practice” teaching techniques, and is easy to prepare for and teach.

If you apply this program correctly, your students should begin to read and write their first words as early as the *third week* of school. By twelve weeks into the school year, they should be reading and writing *over 100 words*. After eighteen weeks of using these basic strategies, your students should, at a minimal level, be reading and writing *simple sentences* and *short stories*. This leaves you another eighteen weeks to help them master more difficult material. Mostly, it gives you another eighteen weeks to let your students practice reading real books and writing real stories using all of the tools you have given them. By the end of the year, your students should be able to read just about any children’s book available. They should also feel comfortable writing full-page stories with appropriate (or at least close to appropriate) punctuation and capitalization.

Remember, your kindergarten students *CAN* learn to read and write, but it’s up to *YOU* to teach them how to do so. Learn the methods taught in this book. Include them in your daily routine. Get comfortable with them. Have fun teaching them. And make sure all of your kids are actively engaged as you introduce and go over them. Furthermore, make sure that you maintain *high expectations* for *everyone* who walks through your door, regardless of how far behind they come to you, how hard they seem to be to reach, and/or how late in the year they join your class. Each child who gets assigned to your classroom will be depending on *YOU* to see through their learning challenges, recognize their true potential, and transform them into kids who not only know how to read and write, but who love learning in general.

Program Overview

Kinders Can! READ and WRITE!



The *Kinders Can! READ and WRITE!* program is made up of 7 **core learning components** (*Daily Alphabet Review Activities, Letter of the Week Focus, Daily Journal Writing, Interactive Literacy Charts, Free Reading Time, Teacher-Directed Story Time, and Handwriting Practice*). These components all work together to get your kids reading and writing fluently, so it's important that you utilize **all 7** on a **daily** basis. If you pick and choose your favorites, you will not get the same results. It is only when *all* of the *Kinders Can! READ and WRITE!* activities are successfully implemented on a *daily* basis that optimal results are achieved. So get comfortable with all 7 learning components and work them into your schedule. You won't be sorry.

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In addition to making sure you utilize all 7 core components on a daily basis, it's also important that you keep track of what your kids know (or don't know) throughout the year. For starters, you'll need to give your kids an initial **pretest**. Do this as soon as possible after you meet them so you can see who is ready to read and write immediately, and who needs more information before they'll be able to begin doing so. Continue testing your kids every 6-9 weeks thereafter as well. This will help you identify who is progressing as expected and who could use a little extra help. It will also help you show your students' parents what their kids have learned and/or still need to learn when conference time rolls around.

Following is a brief overview of the key components that make up this program and why they are important to the program's overall success. Each is discussed in further detail later in the book.

The Pretest/6-9 Weeks Tests



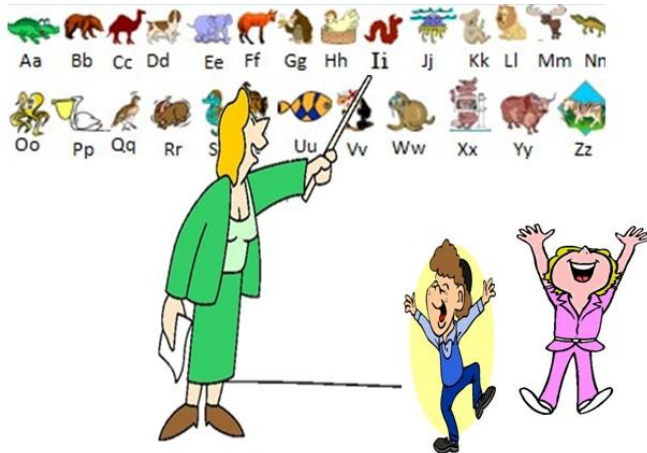
The **Pretest** should be given as soon as possible in the beginning of the year, preferably within the first week of school. This is what will help you get to know where your students are when they first walk through your door. It is also what will help you modify your lessons and current expectations accordingly. After all,

you do not need to spend a great deal of time emphasizing letters and sounds if everyone comes in already knowing them. Nor should you immediately expect your students to begin independently writing words and/or sentences in their journals if they come in *without* much letter/sound knowledge. Pretesting your kids will help you figure out where your kids are and where they need to go next, regardless of how they come to you. This is important information! Use it to your advantage!

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Keep in mind that you'll need to continue to test your kids every 6-9 weeks after the initial pretest in order to stay current on where they are and what they still need to learn. If you are utilizing all 7 components appropriately, you should see steady progress throughout the year. If for some reason you aren't, review each component and make sure you are teaching it appropriately. Remember to tutor any students who are struggling to keep up and/or advance as well. *Everyone* should be consistently moving forward throughout the year, unless you have kids with *significant* learning disabilities that would prevent them from doing so.

Component 1: Daily Alphabet Review Activities (15 minutes a day)



The **Daily Alphabet Review Activities** (*Alphabet Review*, *Vowel Cheer*, and *Wall Vowels*) are quick, fun, active review chants and cheers that will enable your kids to swiftly fill in any letter/sound gaps they might have upon entering your classroom. In fact, I have seen these simple review activities help kids go from knowing

fewer than half of their letters and sounds to knowing *all* of their letters and sounds within just a couple of weeks! These fun cheers and chants are great at helping late arrivals catch up on their letter/sound knowledge as well. They are also a terrific way to help your kids get their “wiggles” out before or after more sedentary activities, such as the *Letter of the Week Focus*.

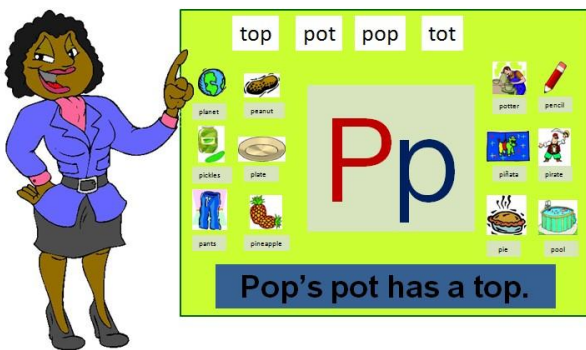
Another review activity you'll want to add later in the year, earlier if your kids come in already knowing letters and sounds, is the **Trick Review**. This quick but crucial review can really do a lot to help your kids remember the many “tricks” they'll need to know to read and write just about anything other than simple, consonant-vowel-consonant words and/or basic blends. It can help *you* become

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more familiar with them as well! (“Tricks” are letter combinations such as *sh, ch, th, er, ou, ar, etc.* that make different sounds when they are together than they normally make when alone or paired with other letters.)

Begin this important review activity as soon as the majority of your kids are comfortable with letters and sounds. The sooner your kids know these, the sooner they’ll be able to read and write all sorts of words and sentences.

Component 2: Letter of the Week Focus (30-60 minutes a day)



The **Letter of the Week Focus** is the component that will help you get your kids reading and writing words as early as the third week of school, regardless of the letter/sound knowledge they bring with them when they enter your room. During this segment of your

day, you will not just focus on a new “letter of the week” and its sound; rather, you will show your kids how to actually *use* this information to begin reading and writing new words and sentences.

Here’s how it works: As soon as you have introduced your third letter/sound (usually the Monday of the third week of school), you will combine it with the other letters/sounds taught to create words – words your kids can begin to sound out and read using the letter/sound knowledge they have gained. As each new letter/sound thereafter is introduced, you will do the same, creating more and more words as the weeks go by. (A list of these words can be found in the appendix, along with practice sheets your kids can take home.) These words will be used to create sentences as well! Slowly and methodically, even your lowest students will be able to see how letters and sounds are used to create and/or decode words. Within weeks, they should be using this knowledge to read and write all sorts of words on their own!

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Along with teaching your kids how to read and write words and sentences during this segment, you will also be reinforcing beginning sound concepts, introducing new vocabulary, and showing your kids how to properly form each letter. In addition, you will be writing (and reading) your first simple interactive literacy charts with your kids during this time. You will also be introducing select “outlaw” and/or “high frequency” words you want your students to know. Some of the most common “tricks” created with the letters taught will also be discussed during this time. All in all, this is an extremely powerful component that will help demystify the reading and writing process so that your kids can begin to read and write whatever they wish on their own. As your kids begin to master letters, sounds, and basic blending/segmenting techniques, however, you’ll need to make sure you spend less time on this component and more time on the components that get your kids actively applying these skills, namely Journal Writing and Interactive Literacy Charts.

Component 3: Daily Journal Writing *(30-60 minutes a day)*



Daily Journal Writing is the component that will give your kids the time they need to practice writing on their own. During this “free writing” time, your kids will get to put their growing letter, sound, “trick,” and “outlaw” knowledge to use. They’ll also get to explore using proper punctuation, capitalization, and advanced composition skills. Although their initial results may be less than impressive, you should see their

work drastically improve as the year continues. In fact, you should see your kids go from merely producing scribble-like drawings labeled with seemingly random letters to sophisticated pictures accompanied by long, interesting stories.

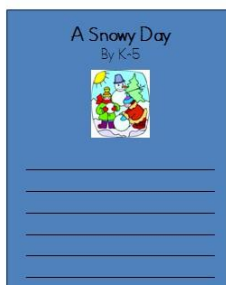
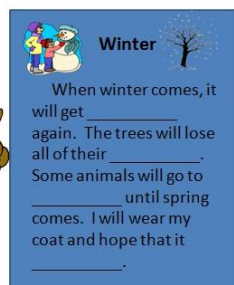
Regardless of how your kids start out, guard this time of your day with your life!

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Although Daily Journal Writing may seem like a “waste of time” while your kids are still in “scribbling mode,” it is an extremely important component that should not be shortened, skipped, or eliminated. It will not only allow all of your kids to work at their own levels, but it will also give you the time you need to circle around and tutor each student, helping to move each child forward from wherever he or she currently is. Take this component out of your daily routine, and your kids will not have the same opportunity to grow into the eager, competent, and excited writers they are sure to become if you include it *and* are teaching your kids what they really need to know about letters, sounds, tricks, and outlaw words throughout the rest of your day.

Component 4: Interactive Literacy Charts (30-90 minutes a day)

**Combine with Social Studies, Math, and Science instruction whenever possible*



Reading and writing **Interactive Literacy Charts** the “slow” and “fast” way with your kids (*where your kids help you sound out and/or write everything on the chart before quickly reading it back without pause*) will help give your kids the guided practice they need to be able to confidently read and write all sorts of real words,

sentences, paragraphs, and short stories on their own. It will not only help your kids learn about letters, sounds, blending, segmenting, “tricks” (letters and/or letter combinations that work together to create new sounds, such as sh, ch, th, er, ou, etc.) and “outlaw” words (words that can’t be sounded out, such as *through, said, and have*), but will show them how to actually *apply* all they have learned about these things to read and write whatever they wish. What’s more, it will help your kids become familiar with the advanced mechanics of print: proper spacing, capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. Various language, thinking, and

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comprehension skills will be addressed during this time as well. Fluency will also be improved. In fact, just about everything you need to teach your kids can be taught and/or reviewed through interactive literacy chart instruction, including important math, social studies, and science skills. Use these charts throughout your day for best results.

Like Daily Journal Writing, Interactive Literacy Charts is an extremely important component that you'll need to make sure you are utilizing on a DAILY basis if you want to get your kids reading and writing *ANYTHING*, not just simple words and sentences. If you are tempted to ditch this component after struggling through a few charts, don't. Your kids will get better and better at helping you write and/or sound out words as they get more and more practice doing so. Although your beginning charts may be a bit slow and "painful" to get through as you train your kids and teach them the most common "tricks" and "outlaw" words, before long, your kids should be shouting out the answers as quickly as you can prompt them. Keep this in mind and work toward this goal. Once your kids have been trained appropriately, these charts shouldn't take long at all to read and/or write. Plus, the process of reading and writing them with your kids the "slow" and "fast" way should prove to be invaluable, helping your kids truly "get" how letters and sounds work together to make all of the words surrounding them.

My kids don't even know letters and sounds! How am I going to read and/or write the "slow" and "fast" way with my kids?

Because of the way all of the components of this program work together, your kids should learn their letters and sounds very quickly. Still, in the very beginning of the year, you may need to do all of the sounding out yourself. After a couple of weeks of doing so (notice I did not say months!), you will need to get your kids to help you. Don't worry – your faster kids should chime right in! Everyone else should be encouraged to participate as well. They might get comfortable simply echoing the ones who "get it" from the start, so make sure you silence your most vocal kids from time to time to ensure the others truly know what they are doing

as well. It's really important to make sure *everyone* is "getting it" and participating.

Another thing to remember is that charts will take a lot longer to complete in the beginning of the year than they will after your kids have been trained properly. Just keep your beginning charts short and sweet! The ones you create yourself (letter of the week charts, daily news charts, etc.) are ideal. By mid-year, however, you and your kids should be reading and writing much longer ones, and it shouldn't take more than five to ten minutes to do so.

When should I read the "slow" and "fast" way with my kids?

It's important that you read the "slow" and "fast" way with your kids *throughout the day, from the beginning of the school year on*. You'll want to do this any time you are going over anything written. For instance, if you are doing a calendar review, read the days of the week and months of the year the "slow" and "fast" way, pointing out any "tricks" you run into as you go. If you have a weather graph and are posting the day's weather, read the weather choices the "slow" and "fast" way before choosing the appropriate one. As usual, point out all the "tricks" as you do so. Do the same with lunch choices, word problems, color and shape reviews, recipes, charts, etc. Anytime you are talking about something written, read it the "slow" and "fast" way with your kids! Your job is to make sure they understand how the letters all around them are working together to make words. The more you explain this, the sooner they are bound to get it!

Similarly, it's important that you write the "slow" way with your kids whenever possible. This is what will help them learn to segment all sorts of words effectively on their own – and represent those sounds with the appropriate letters. Whether you are writing a key word on the board, brainstorming a list of beginning sound words, recording daily news, writing a class story, or doing anything else that requires writing, do your best to turn it into a teachable moment by having your kids help you write whatever is needed. Simply sound out each word for your kids, pausing after each sound to have them tell you what

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to write to represent it! Teach “tricks” and any irregular spellings as they pop up. After, read the words you have written the “slow” and “fast” way, again pointing out any “tricks” and/or irregular spellings. This will help your kids learn to read and write all sorts of words! If that’s not enough, it will help keep your students alert, focused, and *actively involved*! Besides this, it will help make your journal writing time much more successful.

Component 5: Free Reading Time (10-15 minutes a day)



Free Reading Time is an important component to include as well, even though it is not a “teaching time,” per se. The real beauty of Free Reading Time is that it allows your kids a few minutes each day to simply enjoy interacting with

books and other reading material. During this time, your kids can practice using what they are learning in class to read whatever reading material appeals them on that particular day. If they prefer, they can simply enjoy flipping the pages and seeing all of the wonderful pictures and ideas included in the book of their choosing. It’s up to them. It’s their time to simply enjoy books, magazines, or whatever other interesting written material you have left out for them to explore.

Free Reading Time is not necessarily a quiet time, but it should be an enjoyable time. Let your kids get comfy, and make sure you have a variety of kid-friendly, high interest reading material in your room from which your kids can choose. Don’t worry about the “level” of each book – just let your kids enjoy whatever books they naturally gravitate toward. The positive interactions they have with the books they choose should help build their interest in learning to read. Plus, it may be the only opportunity for some of your kids to enjoy interacting with books for pleasure, as not all kids are fortunate enough to have books of their own at home.

Component 6: Teacher-Directed Story Time (10-15 minutes a day)



Teacher-Directed Story Time is another component critical to your students' success. It can help you increase your students' vocabulary, build your students' background knowledge of various topics, improve their language skills, and increase their overall desire to want to learn to read and write.

For some of your kids, Teacher-Directed Story Time may be the only time they are read to or asked to think about new topics and/or concepts. As a result, it's important to expose your kids to as many books as possible throughout the year. No matter how short on time you are, it's absolutely imperative that you read and discuss at least one new book with your kids each day. If needed, you can always double this time with your social studies/science time. To do so, pick a story that goes along with your social studies/science theme and use it to either introduce and/or reinforce whatever you want them to know.

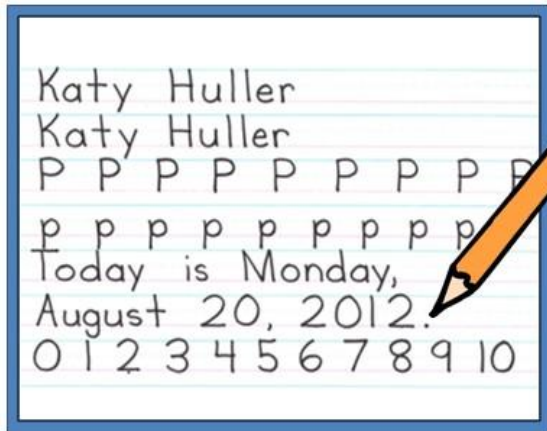
Regardless of what else you decide to teach during this time, make story time enjoyable. When you read, alter your voice, build excitement, and help your kids feel the thrill and wonder of a great story. To this day, I can still remember the joy I got from listening to my third grade teacher read from her rocking chair. I'll never forget how I would rush to the school library afterward to check out the very same books she had read to the class. She made the words come to life, and, by doing so, she inspired me to want to do the same. You can have this same affect on your kids. Just remember to do more than simply "read them a story." Rather, make every story you read a magical experience.

After reading to your kids, be sure to ask higher-order thinking questions, go over new vocabulary, and discuss whatever story elements your kids need to master

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before the end of the year. Doing so will help your kids get much more than the “warm fuzzies” from the stories you read to them, compounding the positive impact of this time. Ideally, it will help your kids learn to think about many ideas and concepts in a whole new way. In addition, it should help them learn to analyze, question, and synthesize new information. Create an Interactive Literacy Chart during this time, and you’ll also be improving their reading and writing skills!

Component 7: Handwriting Practice *(10-15 minutes a day)*



Handwriting Practice may not seem crucial to your kids’ reading and writing success, but it is an important component as well. Double it with your snack time if you need to, but be sure to include it. It will help ensure your kids can write their first and last names, letters of the alphabet, days of the week,

months of the year, and numbers to 10 or 20. It will also help your kids develop their fine motor skills. Plus, it will help make sure your kids understand how to size their letters appropriately. Taking only ten to fifteen minutes of your day, this is an activity that is easy to include and impressive in the dividends it pays off. Just make sure you utilize your kids’ working time appropriately. Walk around as they work, helping as needed. This is a great time to make sure your kids are holding their pencils and forming their letters properly. If you sit at your desk or meet with a small group at this time, you won’t be able to help your kids correct any bad habits they might be forming.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I really have to teach all seven components?

Yes. While they are all stand-alone activities, they all work together to turn your kids into independent readers and writers. In fact, each plays a specific role in giving your kids the tools they need to become literate. Taking any component out will surely lessen your results, and could severely limit them. To achieve the most possible, you need to work all seven components into your daily schedule and make sure each one is taught as effectively as possible.

How can I possibly fit all of this into my schedule and still teach math, social studies, science, etc.?

Thankfully, it is possible to fit the seven core *Kinders Can! READ and WRITE!* components into your day without sacrificing the other important subjects you need to cover. The key is to stop thinking of all of your subjects as isolated events. Instead, combine them, teaching reading and writing while you are teaching important math, social studies, and science concepts. In math, this might mean interactively reading, writing, and solving various word problems that highlight whatever math skill you are currently teaching. In social studies and science, this might mean that you have your kids interactively read and/or write some sort of literacy chart that goes along with the material you are covering. You could have them fill in a graphic organizer, read and conduct a science experiment (recording their observations along the way), create and/or follow a special recipe, read a simple explanatory passage (filling in missing words as they do so), write a class story having to do with the current topic, or get involved in some other creative venture that gets them reading and writing while still learning about whatever else you need to teach them. Even “story time” can be used to teach multiple subject material. Simply read stories that showcase the social studies, science, and/or math concepts you need to help your kids

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understand and follow up with an Interactive Literacy Chart of some sort. Simple!

Regardless of the actual reading/writing charts and activities you choose to “double dip” with, the important thing is that you get your students reading, writing, and thinking throughout the day without sacrificing other core subjects as you do so. Make it your goal to actively and repeatedly show your kids how to read and write throughout your day while also working to improve their background knowledge, vocabulary, and thinking skills.

Following is a sample schedule that you can use to create your own. It shows you how you can set up your day to cover the various Kinders Can! READ and WRITE! components, while also making time for math, social studies, and science.

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Sample Daily Schedule

8:25-8:55 Journals (After taking care of daily duties, circle around the room teaching “mini” writing lessons as students work on their journal entries. Move kids forward from wherever they are.)

8:55-9:10 Calendar Activities (Call on students to put date up, read date sentence, complete weather chart, etc. Go over months of the year and days of the week, reading them the slow/fast way with your kids. Ask students various questions about the calendar, weather chart, etc. Make them read and think.)

9:10-9:20 Math Warm-up (Count to 100 by 1’s, 2’s, 5’s, and 10’s. Count to 20 and back, “blasting off” when you get to 0. Go over shapes, colors, and number words, reading and recognizing each one.)

9:20-10:00 Math Lesson (Teach new concept. Then read word problems the slow/fast way as a class before solving. Call up kids to write appropriate number sentence and show how to solve, underlining and circling important information from the word problem. Note: Word problems can be as simple as, “Ted has 3 hats. Ben has four. How many hats do they have in all?”)

10:00 – 10:10 Reading/L. A. Warm-up: Daily Review Activities (Call on student or students to lead class through the Daily Alphabet Review, Wall Vowels, and Vowel Cheer.) (Add “Trick Review” by mid-year, if desired.)

10:10-11:00 Letter of Week Focus Activities (Introduce new letter, sound, and pictures. Blend old and new letter sounds to read new words and sentences. Create beginning sound chart, writing the slow/fast way with your kids. Teach proper formation of new letter. Complete hands-on activity.)

11:00-11:10 Snack/Handwriting Practice (Have students practice writing their first and last names, the Letter of the Week, the full date sentence, and numbers to 10 on handwriting paper.)

11:10-11:30 Recess

11:30-12:40 Social Studies/Science/Teacher Directed Story Time (Read and write a chart the slow/fast way. Read story relating to theme. Complete a hands-on activity if time allows and/or is desired.)

12:40-1:15 Lunch

1:15-1:25 Free Reading Time

1:25-2:05 Free Centers (Let kids explore Free Centers. *This is a great time to schedule your EIP teacher. It is also a great time to work with kids who are struggling or who have not completed and/or returned their homework.)

2:10-3:10 Specials (Art, Music, P.E., Computers)

3:10-3:15 Prepare for Dismissal (Pass out folders, homework, etc.)

**Remember: Your kids should be reading and writing during every subject throughout your day. All core components should be included, as well as all subjects.*

Is there anything special that I should know when sitting down to create my schedule?

When you sit down to create your schedule, remember to alternate between sedentary and active activities as much as possible to make the most of student energy and concentration. Simply beginning long lessons with an active review of some sort will help prep your students' brains and bodies for learning, enabling them to shed excess energy before being asked to "sit still and listen."

Also, consider beginning your day with journal writing. It's a great, calming activity that will: 1) give your students the time they need to wake up, calm down, and/or get focused on learning, 2) enable all of your kids whether they are early, on time, or late to begin learning as soon as they enter your room, and 3) allow you to listen to announcements, take lunch orders, check attendance, and take care of any other necessary details without wasting a minute of your students' time.

Finally, remember that *all 7* core components should be incorporated into your daily routine if you are to get optimal results.

Getting Started:

Giving the Initial Pretest



Test your kids as soon as they come to you. It's important to know who is ready to read and write on Day 1, and who still needs more information before they will be able to begin doing so. Testing your kids as soon as you can after you meet them (and every 6-9 weeks thereafter) will not only give you the information you need to immediately begin moving them forward from wherever they are, but the baseline required to show the growth they are achieving as you do so.






It's important to test your kids as soon as you can during the first week of school. You can do this during center time, recess, journals, or any other time your kids are happily working (or playing) on their own. Early testing will prevent your kids' initial test scores from being tainted by the quick progress they are sure to make

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once you begin utilizing the various components of the *Kinders Can! READ and WRITE!* program. It will also help you know who is ready to do what from the start. Continued testing will help you see who is progressing as expected and who needs a little more help to do so.

As Soon as Your Kids Come to You, You Need to Figure Out:

- 1. Who already knows how to read and write.**
(Those who can read and write pretty much anything put in front of them – not just memorized words or predictable print.)

- 2. Who is ready to read and write right away.**
(Those who already know most, if not all, letters and sounds.)

- 3. Who needs quite a bit more information before they'll be able to begin reading and writing.**
(Those who know very few, if any, letters and sounds.)


Setting Up

What you'll need:

- appropriate test
- pencil or pen to record student answers
- a manila folder with a square cut out to cover everything but the letter/number/word you are asking about (or some other cover) – *optional, but recommended*

What You Are Looking For

When you first test your kids, you are trying to see who already knows how to read and write (those who can read and/or write pretty much anything), who is ready to begin reading and writing right away (those who can't read and/or write yet, but who know letters and sounds, or at least most of them), and who is going to need a lot more information before being able to do so independently (those who know very few, if any, letters and sounds). You might also want to find out what other general school information your kids already seem to know upon entering your classroom (numbers, shapes, colors, basic math skills, etc.). This information can help you get a better picture of where your kids are on the learning spectrum, as well as what they still need to know to leave your classroom on (or, preferably, above) grade level. Mostly, though, it will help you know what you can expect from your kids RIGHT AWAY, and what you need to begin teaching them so they can begin to progress as soon as possible.

Getting Ready

Step 1: Pick the Appropriate Pretest(s)

Which test you choose to give your kids at the beginning of the year depends on where you think your students are apt to be when they first come to you.

Basic Beginning Test (Test 1)

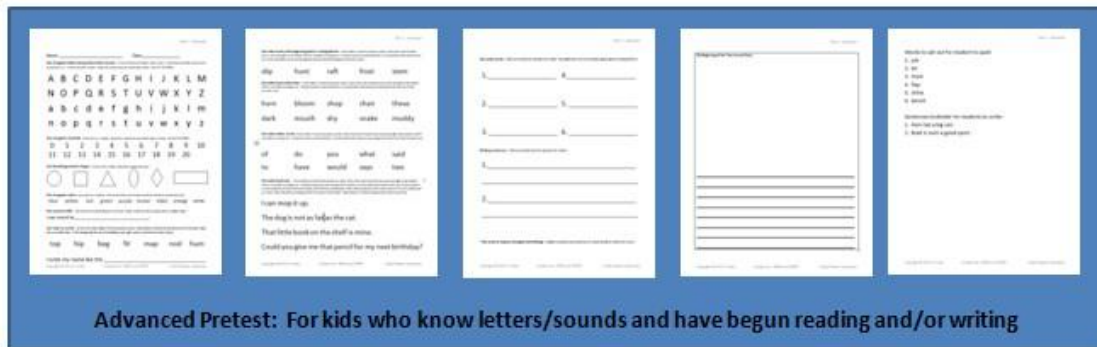


If you have a pretty good idea that your kids are going to come in *without* much letter or sound knowledge, start with the most basic test -- Test 1. This test covers letters, sounds, numbers, shapes, colors, counting, basic blending, and name writing. It also includes gathering a writing sample. Its results will help to give you an overall picture of what sort of “school knowledge” your kids are coming to you with, especially if you are teaching in an area where these

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concepts are often neglected until formal schooling begins. (*Any students who ace this test should be tested further.)

More Advanced Test (Test 1 – Advanced)



On the other hand, if you are teaching in an area where a lot of kids come in already knowing letters, sounds, numbers, shapes, colors, counting, etc., you'll need to administer a more advanced test, one that still includes this basic information but that also includes a variety of more difficult words and sentences, as well as a more advanced writing evaluation. "Test 1—Advanced" would be a better choice for you if this is the case.

Sight Word Test (Optional)



You might want to follow up your initial pretest with the appropriate "Sight Word" test since many pre-k classrooms are now encouraging their kids to learn some of the most common "sight words." Kids who instantly recognize the words on this test but who can't read the words on your main test may just be "sight word" readers (kids who know some words by sight but who don't really understand how to read new or unfamiliar words). This is valuable information