

Dear Family:

A new school year has been launched! This year, I shall be using a program called ***Fundations® Level 2***. (You can learn more about it online at www.wilsonlanguage.com.) Fundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. Research indicates that systematic and explicit phonics instruction is effective for all children. We will combine this phonics instruction with the reading of good literature, which is just as important for your child's development.

Research also proves that when a child has a "Coach" in addition to a classroom teacher, the child makes significant progress. Let's be a "team" - I shall be the teacher, and you the Coach.

In order to take on that role, I will send you the necessary tools. You shall be kept informed of what is happening in the classroom and you shall be given suggestions and a guide as to what can be happening at home.

Please read the Fundations letters that I send home. These letters will contain updates, program information, and activity suggestions. Set aside time to do the home activities with your child. Monitor your child's progress and share successes as well as concerns with me. (This pack includes reference material which you will need for upcoming lessons.)

I look forward to a very successful year as we work together with your child!

Sincerely,





You are likely wondering, “What is Foundations®?”

Research indicates that **systematic** and **explicit phonics instruction** is effective for all children. Foundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. We will combine this instruction with the **reading of good literature**, which is just as important for your child’s development.

Foundations is systematic

because it follows a very definite sequence for teaching and it follows a very definite procedure to teach those concepts.

Foundations is explicit

because this program does not leave room for guessing. It teaches all concepts directly. The children will learn sounds using keywords to help them remember. They will blend the sounds into words.

As the year progresses, Foundations introduces many aspects of word structure and sentence structure. I shall be sending home guides and activities for all of this.

You are also probably wondering, “How can I become a successful ‘Coach’ in this reading program?”

As a “Coach” you can:

- 1.** Read the Foundations letters that I send home. These letters will contain updates, program information, and activity suggestions.
- 2.** Set aside time to do the home activities with your child.
- 3.** Monitor your child’s progress and share successes as well as concerns with me.

I feel certain that you will find working with your child in Foundations very rewarding. Your child will treasure your involvement!



Help Develop Oral Expression And Vocabulary

You can help your child develop **oral language** (the spoken word) with the following ideas. Do these anytime you are with your child:

1. Encourage your child to answer “wonder” statements.

Say such things as “I wonder why a dog barks.” Or say, “I wonder if Grandpa likes spinach.”

2. Help your child expand his / her vocabulary by rephrasing.

When your child says something such as, “He’s scared,” you could say, “Yes, the dog barks because he is frightened, you are correct!”

3. Ask open-ended questions.

Do not ask, “Are you raking leaves?” (The child would simply answer, “yes.”) Instead, ask, “What are you doing with your rake?” The child will answer you and then you can rephrase the answer to further develop vocabulary (see # 2).

4. Limit the amount of TV

However, if your child watches a children’s program, talk about it (see #’s 1, 2, 3).

5. Provide household props that encourage pretend play.

Use spoons/ pans in the bathtub; cups/ teapots /dolls; small rakes/ shovels. While playing, be sure to talk through your actions (see #’s 1, 2, 3).

Verbally interacting with your child simply means taking every opportunity to talk with your child. With our busy lives, interactions between adults and children are often directive (“do this,” “do that,”) or negative (“stop hitting,” “don’t run.”) Try to break this pattern whenever possible. Both you and the child will have pleasant experiences and you will be helping to develop oral expression and vocabulary.

Fundations® Six Types of Syllables in English

This year, I will review closed and v-e syllables and teach the six types of syllables in English.

Closed Syllable

- 1 This syllable can only have **one vowel**.
- 2 The vowel is followed by **one or more consonants** (closed in).
- 3 The vowel sound is **short**, marked with a breve (˘).
- 4 This syllable can be combined with other syllables to make **multisyllabic** words.

Examples

up hat ship last

Mark-up Sample

lāst
c

Vowel-Consonant-e Syllable

- 1 This syllable has a **vowel**, then a **consonant**, then an **e**.
- 2 The first vowel has a **long** sound, marked with a macron (ˉ).
- 3 The **e** is silent.
- 4 This syllable can be combined with other syllables to make **multisyllabic** words.

Examples

bike ape stove

Mark-up Sample

stōve
v-e

Open Syllable

- 1 This syllable has only **one vowel** which is the last letter in the syllable.
- 2 The vowel sound is **long**, marked with a macron (ˉ).
- 3 This syllable can be combined with other syllables to make **multisyllabic** words.

Examples

I be shy hi

Mark-up Sample

hī
o

R-Controlled Syllable

- 1 This syllable contains a single vowel followed by an **r** (ar, er, ir, or, ur).
- 2 The vowel is neither **long** nor **short**; it is controlled by the r.
- 3 This syllable can be combined with other syllables to make **multisyllabic** words.

Examples

start fir hurt art

Mark-up Sample

ar
r

Double Vowel - "D" Syllable

- 1 This syllable contains a **vowel digraph** or a **diphthong**. These are vowel teams.
- 2 This syllable can be combined with other syllables to make **multisyllabic** words.

Examples

beat feel eight new

Mark-up Sample

new
d

Consonant-le Syllable

- 1 This syllable has only three letters: a **consonant**, an **l**, and an **e**.
- 2 The **e** is silent. It is the vowel. Every syllable needs at least one vowel. The consonant and the l are sounded like a blend.
- 3 This syllable must be the last syllable in a **multisyllabic** word.

Examples

cradle little bubble

Mark-up Sample

bub ble
-le

Dear Family:

The first several units in Foundations® Level 2 will review concepts taught in Level 1 and also add new information. This is important as a key component of the program: we review and build upon the skills in place, strengthening previous concepts and giving students a base upon which to add new information. In Units 1-5, there will be a lot of emphasis placed on the **closed syllable** which makes the vowel short (ă in **apple**, ě in **Ed**, ĭ in **itch**, ŏ in **octopus**, ŭ in **up**).

A **closed syllable** is a word or part of a word that has one vowel closed in or followed by one or more consonants. The vowel does not need to have a consonant in front of it, but it needs to have at least one consonant after it. Examples of closed syllables include **at**, **mat**, **math**, **mast** and **clash**. The short sound of the vowel is marked by the breve sign (˘).

In Unit 1, I shall reinforce the following concepts taught in Foundations Level 1 within the closed syllable concept:

The **digraph**, two letters that make one sound as in **ship** (sh).

The 2- and 3-letter **consonant blend**, as in **trip** (tr) and **strip** (str).

The **digraph blend**, as in the word **lunch** (nch).

Blending and segmenting up to 6 sounds in one word, such as **script**.

I will also teach students when to use **k**, **c** or **ck** when spelling words. Students will learn to use **c** most often at the beginning of words unless it is followed by **e**, **i** or **y**. They will learn to use **ck** at the end after a short vowel and **k** after a consonant.

Please work with your child to reinforce the above concepts by using the attached activity suggestions. If you have any questions, please write them down and I shall get back to you. I truly appreciate your partnership. You will find that working with your child is very rewarding and your child will treasure your involvement. **We are off!**

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

Fundations® Unit 2 continues to review closed, one-syllable words. I shall also reinforce the following “glued” or **welded sounds**:

am, an, ang, ing, ong, ung, ank, ink, onk, and unk.

I will also review the concept of **bonus letters**. After a short vowel, the letters **f, l** and **s** get a bonus, or extra letter (**ff, ll**, and **ss**). This happens in one-syllable words like **brass, puff** and **spill**.

Lastly, I will introduce five new sounds. Your child will learn the keywords for these now, but we will still study them for reading and spelling in more detail later in the year. Whenever you see //, the sound of the letters appears within the bars:

ay says /ā/ as in **play**

ai says /ā/ as in **bait**

ee says /ē/ as in **jeep**

ea says /ē/ as in **eat**

ey says /ē/ as in **key**

Also in this Unit, I will teach some important words that students should memorize. We call these **Trick Words** because most of them cannot be sounded out.

Once again thank you for your interest and help at home.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

Fundations® Unit 3 will take approximately one week to reach mastery. This Unit works on **closed syllable exceptions**. The vowel in a closed syllable usually has a short vowel sound like **ŭ** in the word **up**. However, there are five exceptions to this rule. It is helpful to stress the meaning of the word **exception** to your child (something that does not follow the rule). It is important for your child to be able to quickly identify these exceptions:

/ild/ as in **child**

/ind/ as in **kind**

/ōld/ as in **cold**

/ōlt/ as in **colt**

/ōst/ as in **post**

- They are exceptions because the vowel has a **long** sound (it says its name) rather than a short vowel sound. We mark them like this:

cōld



Also in this Unit, I will teach some important words that students should memorize. We call these **Trick Words** because most of them cannot be sounded out.

I will teach 2 new sounds in this Unit. Your child will learn the keywords for these now, but we will still study them for reading and spelling in more detail later in the year.

oi says **/oi/** as in **coin**

oy says **/oi/** as in **boy**

There are activities to help reinforce these concepts. Thank you for your help and be sure to have fun! Please write down any questions you might have for me and I shall get back to you.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

Even though you might want your child to read to you, it is very important that you continue to read to your child. Reading aloud builds your child's vocabulary and understanding, introduces your child to different language patterns, and identifies reading as a pleasurable activity. Reading to your child at bedtime is a good way to get "settled" while building their skills.

Some books that are recommended to read aloud to a second grader are:

George's Marvelous Medicine by Roald Dahl (Puffin, 1981)
The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004)
I Like This Poem: A Collection of Best-Loved Poems Chosen by Children for Other Children by Kaye Webb (Penguin, 1979)
The Littles by John Peterson (Scholastic, 1993)
Matilda by Roald Dahl (Penguin, 2007)
The Mouse and the Motorcycle by Beverly Cleary (HarperCollins, 1990)
Something Big Has Been Here by Jack Prelutsky (HarperCollins, 2010)
Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner (HarperCollins, 1983)

In Unit 4, I am reviewing the suffixes **-s**, **-es**, **-ed** and **-ing**. Your child will learn that **-ed** might sound like /ed/ as in **rented**, /d/ as in **banged**, or /t/ as in **fished**. I will also be introducing the new suffix endings of **-er** and **-est**. We will discuss the comparison endings **long**, **longer** and **longest**. It is important that your child **underline the baseword** and **circle the suffix**.

Lastly, I will introduce additional new sounds. Your child will learn the keywords for these now, but we will still study them for reading and spelling in more detail later in the year.

oa says /ō/ as in **boat**
ow says /ō/ as in **snow**
ou says /ou/ as in **trout**
oo says /ü/ as in **school**
ue says /ü/ as in **blue**
ew says /ü/ as in **chew**

oe says /ō/ as in **toe**
 and /ou/ as in **plow**
 and /ü/ as in **soup**
 and /ü/ as in **book**
 and /ü/ as in **rescue**

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

Now that your child is comfortable with the closed syllable type and suffix endings, I am going to review how to combine syllables to form ***multisyllabic words***. Your child will put two closed syllables together, such as **bathtub**.

Your child will learn that when there are three consonants together, the blend usually goes with the second syllable to divide the word, as in the word **children** (**chil dren**). When reading a multisyllabic word, an important strategy for him/her is to scoop with his/her finger under each syllable.

I will also be introducing the new suffix endings **-ful**, **-ment**, **-ish**, **-ness**, **-less**, **-able**, and **-en**. Remember to have your child underline the baseword and circle the suffix.

Lastly, I will introduce the following sounds:

au says /ô/ as in **August**

aw says /ô/ as in **saw**

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

These past few weeks have been busy in Level 2 of Foundations®! We are now about to review the second syllable type. It is often referred to as the **v-e syllable**, which stands for **vowel-consonant-e** (any vowel or consonant). It is important for your child to recognize the pattern of this syllable, therefore I spend time going from a closed syllable such as **cap** to a v-e syllable such as **cape**. It is the vowel **e** at the end of the word that is silent but makes the first vowel say its name. We mark these words:

c a p e
v-e

Your child will combine closed and v-e syllable words such as **reptile**.

I will also teach your child that when the consonant **s** is between two vowels as in the word **rose**, that **s** may have the /z/ sound. Another example is the word **wise**. However, in the word **base** the **s** has its regular sound of /s/. When you dictate a word that has an **s** between two vowels and your child is not sure if the letter should be an **s** or **z**, a dictionary may be used to check it.

Lastly, I will teach that words in English do not end with the letter **v**. Therefore, some words have an **e** at the end but the vowel is still short (**have**, **give**). The **e** is there for the **v**. The suffix **-ive** will be added to the suffixes that we add to words.

I have enclosed a page with the double vowel teams. Review these with your child and keep them handy for reference when your child is reading. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

The third type of syllable in English is called an **open syllable**. Even though your child has read and spelled many words with open syllables, we will now directly teach this syllable type and how to mark it. The open syllable has only one vowel and it does not have a consonant after it. Some examples include:

go flu we I

These are marked:

gō
o

Open syllables can be combined with closed and v-e syllables to form longer words:

p r ē t ě n d
o c

p r ō v i d e
o v-e

When studying open syllables, it is time to introduce **y as a vowel**. Know that **y** is a consonant when it begins a word, otherwise, it is a vowel. **Y** has 2 vowel sounds in an open syllable. In a one-syllable word, **y** has the long **i** sound as in **cry** and in multisyllabic words it usually has the long **e** sound as in **baby**. In addition to **y** being a consonant and a vowel, it can also be a suffix ending as in the word **lump - lumpy** or part of a suffix ending as in **safely** or **safety**. When **y** is a suffix, it has the sound of long **e**.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

Your child has learned many new things about words with the Foundations program and I am thankful, once again, to have you assisting as the Coach.

In Unit 8 of Foundations®, I shall introduce a new syllable type to your child. So far, we have worked on closed, vowel-consonant-e, and open syllables. The fourth syllable type is called the ***r-controlled syllable***. When a vowel is directly followed by the letter **r**, the **r** changes the sound of the vowel. For example in the word **bark**, the vowel **a** has neither the short nor the long vowel sound.

New keywords will be added to the notebook to help your child remember the new sounds. They are:

ar - bark - /ar/ or - horn - /or/

This type of syllable is marked:

bark
r

The **vowel** and the letter **r** are circled together. Of course, we can combine these syllables with other syllable types already learned:

rēport
o r

garlic
r c

ācorn
o r

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

So far, I have only introduced /ar/ and /or/ in the r-controlled syllable type. The other three vowels **e**, **i**, **u**, are also affected by the letter **r**. All three (**er**, **ir**, and **ur**) have the same sound /ər/. The keywords are:

er - **her** - /ər/

ir - **bird** - /ər/

ur - **burn** - /ər/

These r-controlled combinations are not usually difficult for reading but they can be tricky for spelling. When you dictate a word that has an /ər/ sound, and your child is not sure if the letter should be an **er**, **ir** or **ur**, use a dictionary in order to check for the correct spelling.

Is it time for a trip to the library? You may want to select one of the following books. They might be a bit more difficult, but can be read by a second grader with your help.

DogKu by Andrew Clements (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007)

Donovan's Word Jar by Monalisa DeGross (Harper Trophy, 1994)

Fox and his Friends by Edward Marshall (Puffin, 1982)

Sneakers the Seaside Cat by Margaret Wise Brown (HarperCollins, 2005)

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

I have a lot to share this week. The students are becoming good readers and quite good spellers, and thank you for your help.

Once again, in Unit 10 a new syllable type is introduced. This new syllable type is called the **“D” syllable** because it contains a double vowel combination, two vowels next to one another such as **ai** in the word **bait**. This syllable is marked:

bait
d

There are several of these vowel combinations in the “D” syllable, but in this Unit we will be working on the **ai** and **ay** combination.

ai - bait - /ā/

ay - play - /ā/

These sounds were introduced earlier in the year, but now we will focus on them in more detail for both reading and spelling.

Reading this new syllable type will not be as difficult as the spelling. Spelling will be a challenge for this syllable type just as it was in the r-controlled syllable. The long sound /ā/ is found in three types of syllables: the vowel-consonant-e, the open, and the “D” syllable. Therefore, your child will need to make decisions as to what option to select when spelling a word. Some parents have asked about electronic spell checkers. These can be used as well as a dictionary in order to determine the correct spelling whenever a word has options. With either, you may help your child determine the correct option.

Please let me know if your child is having difficulty with this work.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

Units 10 through 16 all work with the new vowel digraph syllable type, or “D” syllable type. In Unit 11 we will focus on the **long e sound**. The three sounds previously introduced will be our focus:

ee - jeep - /ē/

ea - eat - /ē/

ey - key - /ē/

The **ea** vowel combination also has the sounds /ĕ/ as in **bread**, and /ā/ as in **steak**, but these are less common and will not be studied at this time.

Just as before, the reading is much easier than the spelling. Therefore, the spelling option procedure will need to be practiced. In this Unit I will introduce the various spellings of /e/ such as **ee** in **jeep**, **ea** in **eat**, and **ey** in **key**. Your child already knows that **e** has the long sound in the vowel-consonant-e syllable (as in **Pete**) and in the open syllable (as in **me** and **baby**). In the beginning or middle of a syllable, the most common spelling choices are **ee**, **ea** or **e-e** (e-consonant-e). At the end of a word, the most common spelling options are **y** or **ey**.

Perhaps a trip to the library will encourage your child to read. Some science books that may be of interest are:

A Seed is Sleepy by Dianna Hutts Aston (Chronicle Books, 2007)

An Egg is Quiet by Dianna Hutts Aston (Chronicle Books, 2006)

Electricity by Steve Parker (Dorling Kindersley, 1992)

Pyramid by James Putnam (Dorling Kindersley, 1994)

Also, a game such as **Boggle Junior** will promote spelling and word recognition: It will take several exposures to words before your child is secure with both the reading and spelling. Thank you for your help at home.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

It is very reassuring to know that you are helping your child at home. This week, I will continue working on **double vowel combinations**. So far, your child has been introduced to:

ay says /ā/ as in **play**

ai says /ā/ as in **bait**

ee says /ē/ as in **jeep**

ea says /ē/ as in **eat**

ey says /ē/ as in **key**

In this Unit, your child will practice two more sounds:

oi says /oi/ as in **coin**

oy says /oi/ as in **boy**

This is an easier sound for spelling. The **oi** is used in the middle of the word and the **oy** spelling is used at the end of a word. In Unit 12, we will also take time to review the six types of syllables. Remember to have fun while building your child's foundation for life-long literacy.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

In Unit 13, work continues with the **“D” syllable type**.

Three more combinations are added to the list of vowel combinations:

oa says /ō/ as in **boat**

ow says /ō/ as in **snow***

oe says /ō/ as in **toe**

We will also spend some time reviewing basewords and suffixes. Be sure that your child spells the baseword first and then adds the suffix. Also, emphasize the difference between **vowel suffixes** (start with a vowel) and **consonant suffixes** (start with a consonant).

Sincerely,

*Note: The **ow** also says /ou/ as in **plow** or **cow**. We will work on this sound in Unit 14.



Dear Family:

In the last Unit, your child practiced the long **o** sound of **ow** as in **snow**. This letter combination actually has another sound as in the word **plow**. In Unit 14, we will work with this **/ou/** sound:

ow says **/ou/** as in **plow***

ou says **/ou/** as in **trout****

Once again, the reading of the words in context will be easier than spelling the word in isolation. Practice, practice, practice is key. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

*Note: The **ow** also says **/ō/** as in **snow**. You may remember working on this sound in Unit 13.

Note: The **ou also says **/ü/** as in **soup**. We will work on this sound in Unit 15.



Dear Family:

The end of the year is fast approaching. Your child has been working very hard to master all the language concepts and your help is appreciated. As mentioned in my previous letter, practice is very important. The “D” syllable has several combinations, many of which have more than one sound such as the **ow** in **snow** and in **plow**. In this Unit, we will work with several sounds with reading and spelling options.

oo says /ü/ as in **school** and /ü/ as in **book**

ou says /ü/ as in **soup***

ue says /ü/ as in **blue** and /ü/ as in **rescue**

ew says /ü/ as in **chew**

All combinations have the /ü/ sound and once again your child may not have difficulty when reading the word in context, but spelling could be a problem. Once your child makes a choice for spelling the word, use a dictionary or spell checker to check. If neither is available, you may indicate whether or not the choice is correct.

Sincerely,

*Note: The **ou** also says /ou/ as in **trout**. You may remember working on this sound in Unit 14.



Dear Family:

This Unit is the last one to focus on the “D” syllable type. I shall be working on two new sounds, introduced earlier in the year:

au says /**ō**/ as in **August**

aw says /**ō**/ as in **saw**

Once again, practice is the key and once again I thank you for helping me to work on these combinations.

Sincerely,



Dear Family:

Unit 17 is the last one in Foundations® Level 2. The final syllable type is introduced in this Unit. The syllable is called the **consonant-le syllable**. This syllable is always at the end of a multisyllabic word such as **bubble** or **bicycle**. It always has only three letters: a **consonant**, then the letter **l**, and lastly a silent **e**.

We mark this syllable:

b ū gl e
o -le

The consonant will be different, but there is always an **l** and an **e**. It may be helpful to have your child identify the **consonant-le** in a word, then read the word. In the word **bugle**, isolate **gle** which will help identify the long **u** sound in **bu** because it is an open syllable. In the word **struggle**, isolate **gle** to identify the short **u** sound in **strug** because it is a closed syllable.

Knowing the six syllable types in English words will greatly help your child read and spell many words. Thank you for being your child's Coach throughout this year. Your help is truly appreciated and has made a big difference. Of course I encourage you to read together all summer long. Make an effort to find books from different genres: fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, mystery, etc. Here are a few books to get you started:

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl (Knopf, 1961)

Ramona Quimby, Age 8 by Beverly Cleary (Morrow, 1981)

The Watsons Go to Birmingham: 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis
(Delacorte, 1995)

Sincerely,

