

# Selecting Decodable Text

## Decodable Text Basics

In reading instruction, the term *decodable* refers to text that contains words with only the phonetic code the student has already learned. To determine if text is decodable, one needs to evaluate the phonetic structure of the vocabulary in text and align it with the phonics knowledge the child has learned. Decodable text is simple in the beginning when the child has limited knowledge of the phonetic code and expands as the child learns more phonics concepts.

Use of decodable texts is endorsed through the past 20 years of reading research (1, 2, 5, 7, 9). Incorporating decodable text into early reading instruction provides a reliable pathway to moving students to accurately and successfully reading authentic literature.

A systematic, sequential approach to phonics instruction including practice with decodable connected text allows students ample practice with new and previously learned phonics patterns and high frequency words to support accurate decoding and promote orthographic mapping.

## Decodables in Your Core Reading Program

Inclusion of materials to practice reading words to automaticity in word lists, phrases, sentences, and controlled decodable text is a requirement for programs to be approved and listed on CDE's Advisory List of Instructional Programs. For programs on the approved list, a sufficient number of decodables that align with the sequence of skills are included. These texts include only regular patterns and irregular words that have been taught to allow enough practice to move students toward automaticity in word reading skills.

[2020 Advisory List of Instructional Programming | CDE \(state.co.us\)](#)

## Selecting Additional Decodables

Because decodable text is only decodable if children have been taught the particular phonic patterns it contains, it is important to align the text with what children have learned. Quality decodables will include a scope and sequence of skills addressed in the books to help match the book with the reader. When using decodable text, the focus is on the phonetic code and decoding, ensuring that students are applying phonics knowledge rather than guessing strategies. This text should not be highly repetitive to the point where students can guess or predict what comes next in a sentence, nor should pictures be used to allow students to guess rather than decode a new word by matching the picture to the word. Students should be taught to utilize pictures to confirm and support understanding after decoding.

The following document is a list of decodable sources compiled by the Reading League. This is a list of options, not recommendations, for where decodables may be purchased.\* To use any of these resources appropriately, the texts must be evaluated to determine when these can be introduced for student use in alignment with the phonics scope and sequence.

[Decodable Text Sources | The Reading League](#)

\* All instructional materials purchased utilizing READ Act funds must be included on the READ Act Advisory List.

## References

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8. Reading League. (2020). *Decodable text sources*. <https://www.thereadingleague.org/decodable-text-sources/>
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