

PART 1: A Closer Look at Basic Skills (Alphabetics) and Vocabulary

The material in this folder should be considered building block material. **It is intended to be used at the beginning of each lesson** to help students develop the foundational skills needed for effective reading. The folder contains:

- Graphics for the Core Vocabulary *
- Vocabulary Lists (Core and Supplemental) *
- Sight Word List *
- Phonemic Awareness Activities
- Phonics Activities

* Activities that appear consistently in every one of the 18 Sections.

Graphics for the Core Vocabulary

These pages are provided to help instructors introduce health literacy terms and concepts to students. They are often thematically linked, so one graphic may be used to represent several vocabulary terms. For example, “physician,” “doctor,” “patient,” “treat you,” “diagnose your problem,” and “prescribe medication” are all taught using the same picture. The pages can be printed out, and, if possible, laminated on card stock. They can also be used to make overhead transparencies.

Each Section provides a **Classroom Picture Set** containing all the graphics for the Core Vocabulary from that Section. Corresponding **Flashcards** (one set with a label and one set without a label) are also provided for student practice. Instructors will notice that in some Sections there are more graphics than just those from the Core Vocabulary list. For example, the graphic for “examine you” appears in Section 1 where it is a Core Vocabulary term, but it also appears in Section 5 – Preventive Care: Regular Checkups. This was simply done as a matter of convenience for instructors who may not be following the material in sequential order.

Vocabulary Lists

In every Section there are two separate lists.

1. **Core Vocabulary** – These are the words/phrases on which the basic Section content is based, and for which graphics are provided.

On our website you will find a link to view and print a complete list of the materials’ **Core Vocabulary**, sorted alphabetically and sorted by Section.

The truth is that for most native English speakers, this vocabulary will not be new or unfamiliar. The majority of ABE students will not need to engage in special activities to learn the Core Vocabulary because the words will be, for the most part, already in their oral (spoken and listening) vocabularies. **Each lesson, do a quick oral check of students’ knowledge first**, so you don’t waste time “teaching” terms they already know well. English Language Learners, on the other hand, will likely need to actively engage in activities and exercises to master much of the Core Vocabulary. For more discussion of this, please see the Instruction Guide **Part 4: A Closer Look at ESL Activities.**)

Check students' Core Vocabulary knowledge by displaying the corresponding graphic and asking questions like:

“What is this a picture of?”

“Where (or when) would I hear someone talk about ‘x’?”

“Who might use/need/want ‘x’?”

“What is your experience with ‘x’?”

“Can you use ‘x’ in a sentence?”

If you are satisfied that students already have a good grasp of the Core Vocabulary for that Section, there is no need to address it any further. If you hit upon a word or phrase that needs more elaboration, you will generally find help defining and explaining it in the Reading Passage for that Section.

PLEASE NOTE: You will notice that definitions for certain medical terms from the Core Vocabulary lists, such as “blood pressure” and “allergy,” are provided. These have simply been added as a support for instructors, should they wish help in explaining the terms more fully to students.

2. **Supplemental Vocabulary** – Potentially new and more challenging vocabulary terms may arise naturally in oral discussions related to the Beginner Story. For example, in Section 1, the words “procrastinate” and “proactive” could easily be incorporated into a discussion about the character in the story, even though the words do not appear in the story itself. Don't shy away from introducing ABE students to such words. Even if those words may be, at this stage, too difficult to read and spell, they can still be embedded in students' oral vocabularies. With Beginning Level ESL students it is recommended to concentrate on the Core Vocabulary.

In several Sections, a great many **medical terms** appear in the Supplemental Activities. Often instructors will be familiar in general with the concepts, for example “coma,” “diabetes,” or “colonoscopy,” but will need some support in defining or explaining these terms to students. Other terms may be new even to instructors. Fairly technical definitions are included in the Supplemental Vocabulary List **as a support for instructors**. It is **NOT necessary to pre-teach all of the terms in the supplemental lists**, or for students to learn them all. Which, if any, of the terms students should study and learn is up to the instructor's discretion. If there is relevance to a student's life and/or there's a need to know the term, then go for it. Lean towards selecting words that are more commonly known or whose roots appear in other words, such as respiratory tract, respirator, respiration.

What to Do with Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Depending on how many hours students attend class and what their reading levels are, choose anywhere from 2-10 new words per week. Briefly introduce, explain, and give quick definitions and examples of new vocabulary **PRIOR** to reading a text, or **DURING** reading if necessary. Of course vocabulary can often be learned incidentally, just by reading the text itself. It is therefore also advisable to let students use context clues to figure out a word's meaning, as long as the text adequately reveals it. Here's a perfect example from one of the Beginner Stories, in which the meaning of “improvise” is revealed by the text itself:

“You just need a towel and some small weights,” she said.

“Tiffany, you know I don't have weights,” said Veronica.

“Sure you do! We can use cans of beans and bags of frozen vegetables. We’ll improvise!”

Research strongly suggests that you learn new vocabulary by experiencing the new concepts and new words many times in different contexts. The key to real vocabulary learning is engagement, NOT rote memorization or copying. The key to engagement is helping students elaborate upon a word, in other words expand it in detail; use it in different contexts; draw upon their own background knowledge and experiences; and make multiple “connections” to the word. **But save these more detailed Word Elaborations for AFTER reading.**

For non-readers or very beginning level students, use the word orally in context as much as possible. The more encounters we have with a word, the better it can become embedded in our knowledge base. Since most adult literacy students are not likely to do extensive reading, giving them opportunities to HEAR and/or SAY a new word in context is especially important. Find ways to creatively weave vocabulary words your students are studying (and have studied) into your oral conversations with them.

If they are ready for it, we suggest having a special place in a designated notebook for students to record **Word Elaborations**. Three-ring binders work best because students can rearrange the pages in alphabetical order as they expand their entries.

Here are the steps in creating **Word Elaborations** with students:

1. Print the word in syllables, and mark its syllables and phonetic attributes (such as vowel teams, silent letters etc.) according to whatever system you have taught with respect to decoding. Make a special note of prefixes, suffixes and base or root words if relevant.
2. Give a paraphrased dictionary definition which captures the core idea or gist of the word’s meaning. Usually the instructor is responsible for generating this.
3. Give examples of the word’s application. Instructors should make every effort to connect examples to their students’ experiences and knowledge. Elicit students’ help in generating these. For example, if the term is “blood pressure,” you and students might generate analogous terms such as “water pressure,” “oil pressure,” “pressure-cooker,” and “working under pressure.”
4. Encourage students to generate their own examples of the word in context by asking a specific question which incorporates the word. For example, if the word is “procrastinate,” you might ask – “What sorts of things might people procrastinate over?” If the word is “respirator,” you might ask - “What are two reasons why someone would need to use a respirator?”
5. Additional Word Elaboration Options: Some words lend themselves to illustrations or sketches. By all means, encourage students to incorporate simple drawings whenever relevant, if they are comfortable with this. Other words lend themselves to acting out or dramatizing. Be prepared to ham it up with students, and encourage them to mimic you. And finally, you can decide if you want to include any RELATED words, such as words with the same root, or words that are synonyms or antonyms of the target word. For example, if the word is “immunization,” the root word would be “immune”, and related words might include “immunity,” “auto-immune” and “immune system.”

Sample elaborations of Supplemental Vocabulary words.

anēmic

anemia + ic = anemic

anemia: not enough red blood cells in the blood (There are many different reasons that someone may be anemic.)

The doctor recommended that Joe eat more meat and take supplements because he was anemic.

How an anemic person feels or looks:

- tired
- weak
- short of breath
- pale

What else can be described as anemic?

- an old car
- a paint color
- a weak attempt to do something

extrāction

extract + tion

extract: to pull out; to remove

Maria had a painful tooth extraction.



Some other examples:

- extract a splinter
- extract information from a book
- extract information from someone
- vanilla extract
- herbal extract

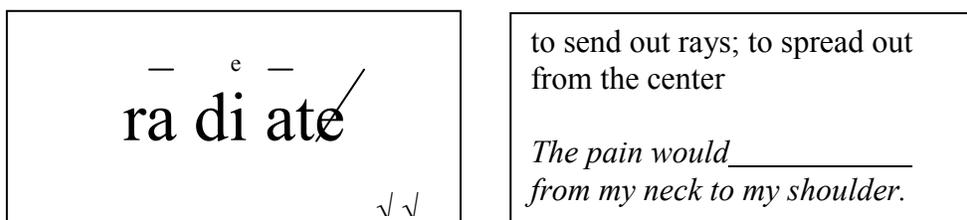
Opposite of: inject, insert, to put in

The Health Literacy Materials provide some activities for practicing Core Vocabulary, such as multiple choice quizzes, a crossword puzzle, and fill-in-the-blanks cloze activities. However, instructors will need to create their own reinforcement activities for words which fall outside of the Core Vocabulary.

Quick Study Cards

Quick study cards are similar to Word Elaborations described above, but far less detailed. These index cards have the target word printed on one side, with relevant phonetic and syllable markings. On the other side there is a brief definition and a “cloze”-type sentence (in other words the target word is left out and a blank line substituted). The sentence should be student-generated, with instructor assistance given as necessary.

Here’s an example:



Instructors and students go quickly through the cards looking randomly at **either** one side or the other. If the student looks at the word, then he supplies the definition. If he is shown the definition and cloze sentence, then he supplies the word. Check marks on the card itself allow you to keep track of how many times the student was able to supply the correct answer.

To watch a Literacy Solutions’ [Tutoring Techniques](#) video clip showing how to use Quick Study Cards to practice new vocabulary, [CLICK HERE](#)

Sight Word List

For practical purposes, the term “sight words” refers here to very common, high frequency words that don’t exactly “play fair” phonetically, such as *said, done, what, move, could*.

It is essential to know these words automatically, or “on sight,” for fluent reading, and ideally for spelling as well. Gaining mastery of these words builds student confidence and allows for increased reading ease and fluency. The sight word lists in were generated from the 18 Beginner Stories. For this reason many of the words overlap from Section to Section.

As part of the Basic Skills portion of a lesson, we suggest students quickly identify which sight words they already know, and which ones they need to learn. That is easy to do in a 1:1 or small group setting. Quiz students by having individuals run down the list, quickly reading each sight word out loud. To consider a word ‘known’ there should be no pause or delay. Circle or underline any words missed. For a greater challenge, check all the words for spelling, too. The list of words to learn will increase if spelling ability is also considered.

For larger classrooms, instructors can train the class to conduct a weekly or bi-weekly quiz. Provide copies of the Sight Word list and make sure each student has a blank index card or sheet of paper. Show them how to cover up the words with the card and slide it down the page to reveal one word at a time. Students read the word silently to themselves, then wait a

second to hear the instructor read it aloud. Tell them to mark any words that they missed. Keep a steady rhythm going so they learn to anticipate when to slide the index card down to reveal the next word. You can do a group dictation to quiz them on the spelling of the words in the list.

Each student will then have his or her own list of sight words to study. We will show you a simple and effective multi-sensory technique to teach students HOW to study these words. As sight words are mastered, those that become known will drop off the list, making room for new ones to learn.

Note: A few sight words share similar patterns, and if a student is studying one you might consider adding all the words in that pattern, for example *should, would, could, put, push, put*; and *know, knew*, etc.

To watch a Literacy Solutions' [Tutoring Techniques](#) video clip demonstrating how an ABE student use a multi-sensory technique to practice reading and spelling sight words, [CLICK HERE](#)

Multi-Sensory Sight Word Study Technique

Make Study Cards

Students will need a stack of blank index cards. Very beginning students should start out with a list of 4-5 words. Many ABE students will be able to handle a study list of 10-12 words. New words can be added every few days, especially as words on the old list become known.

Model for students how to **print** the target word on the card as neatly as possible, using lower case letters.

Discuss the unusual or tricky feature of the word, and, if desired, use color to highlight that feature, for example the silent 'k' in know, or the 'eigh' in weigh.

If helpful or necessary, print the phonetic pronunciation of the word in the lower left corner, e.g. *dun* for done, or *laf* for laugh. Students can cover this corner with their thumb when practicing, and lift the thumb to check themselves.

Practice with the cards:

1. Say the word out loud.
2. Trace each letter with a pen (leave the cap on), saying each letter out loud. Then say the word. Do this 3 times.
3. Flip the card over. "Print" the word on the table using two fingers, saying each letter out loud. Then say the word. Check to make sure you did it right. Do this 2-3 times. (If you get stuck or make a mistake go back to step number 2.)
4. Extend your arm and two fingers. "Spray paint" the word on the wall, saying each letter out loud. Really try to see the letters appear on the wall. Then say the word. Do this 2-3 times.
5. Write the word on paper saying each letter out loud as it is written. Do this 1-2 times.

Students should practice their sight word stack for a few minutes each day at home. Instructors need to make time in class to check in with students individually, and quiz them

on their words. Put a small check mark on the card to keep track of how many times the student has read and spelled it correctly. After approximately 3 checkmarks, replace the card with a new sight word.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to grasp that our speech can be broken into smaller units of sound. Individual sound segments are called phonemes. When we hear the word “tooth” spoken, we can detect three distinct sounds, and the order in which they come: /t/, /oo/, and /th/. Each of those three sounds is a separate phoneme. Similarly, when we hear the word “toothache,” we can distinguish two distinct beats: ‘tooth’ and ‘ache.’ The second beat has two phonemes, /a/ and /k/.

Phonemic awareness is an auditory skill that supports beginning readers as they learn to link spoken sounds to their written form – in other words specific letters or groups of letters. Those letters appear in a sequence which represents the sequence of the oral sounds.

Components or sub-skills of phonemic awareness include:

- being able to tell if two sounds are the same or different
- being able to isolate and identify the initial (or last, or middle) sound in a word
- being able to chunk a word into ‘beats’ (syllables)
- being able to tell if words rhyme (have the same ending sounds)
- being able to manipulate (blend, segment, add, delete) sounds in words

What does the research tell us about beginning level readers and the importance of phonemic awareness?

In contrast to good readers who understand that segmented units of speech can be linked to letters and letter patterns, poor readers have substantial difficulty in developing this “alphabetic principle.” The culprit appears to be a deficit in phoneme awareness – the understanding that words are made up of sound segments called phonemes.

Dr. Reid Lyon, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Report on Learning Disabilities Research, July 1997.

A great many adult beginning readers are in fact disabled readers who struggled as children with the printed word. These students need to be given a set of keys for unlocking the sound-symbol system of the language. Research has shown that the most effective keys are a combination of phonemic awareness and systematic phonics instruction. Systematic phonics means a program that works its way logically and methodically through the sound-letter coding system, syllable patterns, and word structures that underlie the language.

The Health Literacy Materials are clearly not intended to provide the level, intensity, or scope of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction necessary for beginning level students. They do, however, provide some activities designed to support and reinforce the skills learned in such programs, in the context of health literacy content. (94% of all the Sections contain either Phonemic Awareness Activities or Phonics Activities, or both.)

Acronyms

A few of the phonemic awareness activities are linked to acronyms used in the medical world, such as MRI and UTI. Instructors will walk students through the process of isolating the initial sounds they hear in the words that make up these acronyms, and then linking them to the correct letters. (Practice with non-health related acronyms is also given.)

Hearing “Beats” (Syllables)

One of the greatest challenges facing beginning level readers in a health-related context is the abundance of medical terms, which are, more often than not, highly multi-syllabic. Learning to break long words down into their syllable chunks or “beats” is one of the keys to decoding and spelling them. For this reason, the most common phonemic awareness activity is simply encouraging students to orally repeat words from the Section, and chunk them into syllables. The more automatic this becomes on an oral level, the easier it will be to tackle the actual words in print, syllable by syllable.

Instructors can choose to focus on words with 2, 3, 4, or even 5 syllables, ranging from a word like “checkup” (2 beats) to a word like “antibiotics” (5 beats). Even absolute non-readers can be asked to “clap the beats” in a given word. It is suggested that in every lesson instructors use several words to bridge the oral phonemic awareness activity to vocabulary review. This is simply done by asking, “Can you use ‘x’ in a sentence?” Instructors are also urged to link the oral activity to phonics instruction, by printing a few selected words on the board and showing students directly and explicitly how they are decoded and encoded (spelled). We recommend you “scoop” (underline in a sweeping motion from left to right) one syllable at a time, and analyze the sounds and letter patterns “beat by beat.” Ideally, the words chosen for analysis should allow you to **review** the phonics concepts being taught/learned in a systematic phonics program. For example, if a student has only been introduced to short vowel sounds, which appear primarily in closed syllable words, you might choose to analyze the words “clinic” or “dentist” on the board.

Example 1

Students repeat the word “dentist,” then clap it in beats, “den – tist.”

Ask: **“How many beats are there?”** (2)

“What’s the first beat?” (den)

“What vowel sound do you hear in the middle of ‘den’?” (/ɛ/)

“What letter makes that sound?” (‘e’)

“/d/- /e/- /n/ is spelled ‘d’ ‘e’ ‘n’.”

Print the syllable on the board. Use a separate color for vowels, so they stand out:

den

“Say the next beat.” (tist)

“Is the vowel sound the same or different?” (different)

“What vowel is making the /i/ sound?” (‘i’)

“Help me pull apart the sounds in ‘tist’: /t/- /i/- /s/- /t/.” Print the letters.

“Remember, since there must be a vowel in every beat, there are obviously two beats in this word. We scoop them like this.”

Draw the scoops under ‘den’ and ‘tist’ as you read each beat.

dentist

Example 2

Students repeat the word “poison,” and then clap it in beats, “poi – son.”

Print the word on the board using a different color for vowels. Scoop the syllables.

poison


Ask: **“What’s the first beat?”** (poi)

“What letters are making the /oi/ sound?” (‘oi’) Yes, the vowel team ‘oi.’”

“What sound do you hear at the beginning of the second beat?” (/z/)

“Yes, I hear a /z/ sound too. What letter is making the /z/ sound?” (‘s’)

That’s right. Sometimes ‘s’ can sound like /z/.”

“Let’s read the word.” Run your finger along the scooping lines as you read.

(poison)

“How are the sounds /zun/ spelled?” (s-o-n)

“What happens when someone swallows poison?”

Beginner Cloze Activity

Each of the 18 Sections includes a Beginner Cloze Activity, which, although it is not in the Basic Skills folder, is of special note here. It’s a wonderful way for beginning level students to practice with not only fluency and comprehension, but also with **phonemic awareness and phonics**. The Beginner Story is reprinted with blanks left in several words, requiring students to figure out what sound or sounds are missing.

Here are a few examples taken from the Beginner Cloze Activity in Section 9. The doctor is reassuring the patient about his upcoming colonoscopy procedure:

“This is a tes_ we do all the time.”

“What kind of _est is it? You will put me to sl__p, right?”

“No. They will give you some medicine to re____ you. The medicine will make you a little sleep_.”

As you can see, sometimes the blank will represent initial or final consonants. Sometimes just the vowel sound is left blank. Other times the blank represents a missing beat or syllable. Students supply the missing sound(s) by printing the letter or letters in the blank. Depending on their skill levels, students can do this independently, in pairs, or as a whole group. This Cloze activity is a great way to focus students’ attention on the sequence of sounds in words and to review sound-letter correspondences.

Phonics

If you haven't already, please read the preceding section on Phonemic Awareness first.

As we have seen, phonics and phonemic awareness are best taught in tandem. There should be a constant back and forth “dance” between focusing on the **sounds and beats** we hear in spoken words, and learning the **letters and letter patterns** that represent those sounds. Good phonics instruction takes a direct and systematic approach, explicitly teaching letter-sound correspondences, syllable patterns, and word structures in a logical, methodical fashion. But this is best done while continually drawing students' awareness down to the “sound level,” by saying words orally and asking questions like: **“How many beats are there?”** and **“What are the sounds in that beat?”** Instructors can also ask: **“What do you hear at the beginning (or end) of ‘x’?”**, or even, **“What do you feel at the beginning (or end) of ‘x’?”** Some students respond better when helped to notice how the mouth (teeth, tongue and lips) and voice box articulate certain sounds.

The Health Literacy Materials, as previously mentioned, are clearly not intended to provide the level, intensity, or scope of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction required for beginning level ABE or ESL students. It does, however, provide some activities designed to support and reinforce the skills learned in such programs, in the context of health literacy content. Well over half of the sections contain supplemental Phonics Activities, designed to give further practice and review to concepts it is assumed have been previously taught.

Most explicit phonics programs incorporate instruction on the six different syllable types in English. (The syllable types were identified in the 1930's by the now famous neurologist-educator team, Dr. Samuel Orten and Anna Gillingham, on whose groundbreaking work many explicit phonics programs are based.) This framework allows students to predict what the vowels (ever the chameleons!) in a given word will say. Many of the phonics exercises in these materials are based upon recognizing or using the six syllable types.

Literacy Solutions' [Tutoring Techniques](#) video clips demonstrating systematic phonics instruction with beginning level ABE students:
 To watch a [vowel-consonant-e lesson](#) [CLICK HERE](#)
 To watch a [y as a vowel lesson](#) [CLICK HERE](#)
 To watch [multi-syllable practice](#) [CLICK HERE](#)

An illustration of the **[Six Different Kinds of Syllables \(“Beats”\) with Examples](#)** is on the following page:

Six Different Kinds of Syllables (“Beats”) with Examples

CLOSED

- has a single vowel “closed in” by consonant(s)
- generally the vowel sound is short

ask sled grin pled jump

VOWEL-CONSONANT-e

- has a single vowel followed by a consonant, then an ‘e’
- generally the vowel sound is long (i.e. it says its letter name); the ‘e’ is silent

made these time scap cat and ral

DOUBLE VOWELS or VOWEL “TEAMS”

- generally two vowels sitting side by side (‘y’ and ‘w’ can be the 2nd vowel)
- learn the sounds with key words; some teams have more than one sound

play jeep sigh gream few
cleam tread field plow look

OPEN

- has a single vowel at the end of the beat
- generally the vowel is long; if that doesn’t work try it short or /ū/

taken she silent hoted cupid

a -round A -las-ka con-fi-dent

- ‘y’ can also be the single vowel at the end of the beat
- generally it says /i/ in one-beat words, and /e/ in multi-syllable words

cry la-dy

R-CONTROLLED (a.k.a. “BOSSY R”)

- has a vowel followed by ‘r’ (ar, er, ir, or, ur)
- learn the sounds with key words; the vowel is neither short nor long

arm fer swir north surf

CONSONANT-le

- is only found at the end of multi-syllable words
- the ‘e’ is silent; it’s just volunteering to be the mandatory vowel in the beat

can-dle twin-kle Bi-bl mast-fle gur-gle

The following table guides instructors to the Health Literacy Sections that contain phonics activities, and lists the phonics and word analysis content of each of the activities.

Health Literacy Section	Phonics Concept Practiced
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplying the missing beat in multi-syllable words • Adding suffix 'ing' to base words
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming compound words: body parts + ache
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • r-controlled vowels (ar, or, ur)
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding suffixes 'ing' and 'ed' to base words • Decoding body parts words by syllable type
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard 'c' - /k/ vs. soft 'c' - /s/
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplying the missing beat in multi-syllable words • Adding the suffix 'tion' to base words • Decoding 1-syllable words found on medical forms by syllable type
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard 'g' - /g/ vs. soft 'g' - /j/
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplying the missing beat in multi-syllable words
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoding practice with vowel teams: ai, ay, ee, ea, ow, etc.
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplying the missing beat in multi-syllable words • Adding suffixes 'er' and 'est' to base words
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'y' as a vowel in one- and two-syllable words