

NATIONAL LITERACY INSTITUTE

Science of Reading Program Evaluation Checklist For School Leaders & Reading Coaches

PURPOSE OF THIS TOOL

This checklist is designed to help school leaders and reading coaches evaluate whether their current reading programs and curricula are aligned with the Science of Reading (SoR). Use this tool to identify strengths, gaps, and red flags in your instructional materials and practices.

School/District:		Date:	
Evaluator Name:		Program/Curriculum:	

✓ YES — Fully Present

~ PARTIAL — Needs Improvement

✗ NO — Red Flag

Criteria	Yes	Partial	No	Notes / Evidence
SECTION 1: Phonological & Phonemic Awareness				
Curriculum includes explicit, systematic phonological awareness instruction	☐	☐	☐	
Phonemic awareness activities are taught in isolation before print is introduced	☐	☐	☐	
Blending and segmenting of phonemes is consistently practiced	☐	☐	☐	
Program progresses from larger units (words, syllables) to smaller units (phonemes)	☐	☐	☐	
Phonemic awareness is connected to phonics instruction (not taught in isolation long-term)	☐	☐	☐	
SECTION 2: Phonics Instruction				
Phonics is taught explicitly and systematically (not incidentally)	☐	☐	☐	
Program follows a clear, logical scope and sequence	☐	☐	☐	

Synthetic phonics is the primary approach (blending letter sounds to read words)	☐	☐	☐	
No three-cueing system (MSV) is embedded in the program	☐	☐	☐	
Decodable texts are used in early grades to practice phonics skills	☐	☐	☐	
No heavy reliance on leveled readers as the primary instructional tool	☐	☐	☐	
Word families and phonics patterns are taught in a structured sequence	☐	☐	☐	
SECTION 3: Fluency				
Fluency instruction is explicit and systematic	☐	☐	☐	
Repeated reading and other evidence-based fluency strategies are used	☐	☐	☐	
Fluency is assessed regularly with valid, reliable measures	☐	☐	☐	
Fluency goals are connected to grade-level benchmarks	☐	☐	☐	
SECTION 4: Vocabulary				
Vocabulary instruction is intentional and explicit	☐	☐	☐	
Tier 2 and Tier 3 words are prioritized in instruction	☐	☐	☐	
Word relationships, morphology, and context are taught	☐	☐	☐	
Vocabulary instruction is connected to background knowledge building	☐	☐	☐	
SECTION 5: Reading Comprehension				
Comprehension instruction builds on strong foundational skills (decoding + fluency)	☐	☐	☐	
Background knowledge and content-rich texts are prioritized	☐	☐	☐	
Text structures and comprehension strategies are explicitly taught	☐	☐	☐	

Program does not rely on 'reading strategies' at the expense of knowledge building	☐	☐	☐	
Writing is connected to reading comprehension instruction	☐	☐	☐	
SECTION 6: Assessment & Progress Monitoring				
Valid, reliable screeners are used to identify at-risk students	☐	☐	☐	
Progress monitoring tools measure foundational reading skills	☐	☐	☐	
Assessment data is used to inform and adjust instruction	☐	☐	☐	
Diagnostic assessments help identify specific skill gaps	☐	☐	☐	
Assessment tools are NOT relying on running records as the primary measure	☐	☐	☐	
SECTION 7: Intervention & Support				
Structured Literacy interventions are available for struggling readers	☐	☐	☐	
Intervention is aligned with core instruction (not a separate approach)	☐	☐	☐	
Intervention is delivered with fidelity and documented	☐	☐	☐	
Students are identified early (K-1) for intervention support	☐	☐	☐	
SECTION 8: Teacher Knowledge & Professional Development				
Teachers have received SoR-aligned professional development	☐	☐	☐	
Reading coaches are trained in Structured Literacy principles	☐	☐	☐	
School leaders understand and can articulate SoR principles	☐	☐	☐	
Ongoing coaching and support is provided to classroom teachers	☐	☐	☐	
New teachers are onboarded with SoR-aligned training	☐	☐	☐	

▶ IMMEDIATE RED FLAGS — ACTION REQUIRED

If any of the following are present in your program, urgent action is needed:

- Three-cueing system (MSV) is taught as a reading strategy
- Balanced Literacy is the primary framework with no Structured Literacy components
- Students are told to 'look at the picture' or 'guess from context' instead of decoding
- Leveled readers are the only or primary reading material in early grades
- No explicit, systematic phonics scope and sequence exists in the curriculum
- Running records are the sole or primary form of reading assessment
- Teachers have received little to no Science of Reading professional development

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Total YES responses: _____ / 38

Total PARTIAL responses: _____

Total NO responses: _____

Score Interpretation:

32-38 YES — Strong SoR alignment. Continue monitoring and coaching.

20-31 YES — Moderate alignment. Targeted professional development needed.

Below 20 — Significant gaps. Curriculum review and overhaul recommended.

Top Priority Areas for Improvement:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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