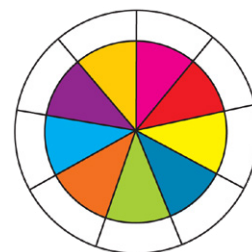




Using structured literacy approaches with the *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* series

This guide explores ways to use the *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* series to teach the three strands in phase one of the refreshed [English learning area \(ELA\)](#): oral language, reading, and writing.



The *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* series can be used to help students develop language comprehension strategies and practise word recognition skills as they transition from decodable (phonically controlled) to less-controlled texts. Many of the books in the *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* series come with audio files and digital versions for flexible use with students. The series also offers big books and poem cards for shared reading.

Texts in the *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* series, have the following characteristics:

- generally familiar contexts and settings
- one text form and usually one main storyline or topic
- dialogue between easily identified characters
- mostly familiar words but some new topic words and descriptive language
- a mixture of explicit and implicit content that provides opportunities to make simple inferences
- illustrations and photographs that support and extend the meaning of the text.

Introduce students to the *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* books as soon as they can accurately decode words with consonant digraphs and adjacent consonants, and have learnt long-vowel patterns from early in your chosen phonics scope and sequence. At this point, it becomes important for students to engage with less-controlled books in addition to decodable texts to help them recognise the patterns of written language. Use a range of carefully selected Colour Wheel books beginning at blue. Carefully selected books are those that contain mostly known phoneme-grapheme correspondences.

Regardless of their decoding proficiency, all students need to access year-level texts to develop literacy skills and knowledge alongside their peers. A way to make texts more accessible is working with small flexible groups to explore the content of the text together. The refreshed [ELA](#) provides further guidance on noticing, recognising, and responding to students' strengths and needs.

Structured literacy approaches

Applying structured literacy approaches to the *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* series is an effective way to build students' essential literacy knowledge and skills. The table below offers ideas for how you could use *Ready to Read Colour Wheel* books to teach elements of structured literacy approaches. These ideas come from the phase one progress outcomes and teaching sequence of the refreshed [ELA](#). Use the refreshed [ELA glossary](#) to find the meaning of any unfamiliar words and phrases.

Important note: Students who are consolidating their word recognition skills require frequent, explicit teaching of phonemic knowledge and systematic synthetic phonics in small flexible groups to target their instructional needs. Use decodable books, including the *Ready to Read* Phonics Plus series, to help these students crack the alphabetic code.

Decoding

Support students to:

- decode common words with long-vowel patterns, diphthongs, and r-controlled vowels, using their phonics knowledge
- blend phonemes together continuously
- decode words with a range of common prefixes and suffixes using their phonics and morpheme knowledge
- adjust decoding attempts by varying pronunciation and confirming with oral vocabulary.

Teaching tip: As necessary, reinforce students' knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences using the phonics cards from the *Ready to Read* Phonics Plus series or other similar resources.

Vocabulary

Support students to:

- understand new words in Colour Wheel books by giving them student-friendly definitions that connect to their experiences
- hear, pronounce, read, and write new words correctly
- ask questions about unfamiliar words and use context clues, knowledge of syntax, and knowledge from other learning areas and topics to determine the meaning of unknown words and phrases.

Teaching tip: Before reading a text with students, select 3-5 useful words. Choose sophisticated, high-utility words and explicitly teach these words before, during, and after reading.

Morphology

Support students to:

- recognise how selected words in the Colour Wheel books can be broken down into meaningful parts by identifying and decoding affixes and base words
- notice how base words become new words with the addition of different affixes and understand the meaning of common affixes, for example: re-, un-, dis-, -er, -est, -ly, -less, and -ful.

Teaching tip: Identify a suffix on a page of the text, tell students to find a word with that suffix on that page. Then work with the students to use other suffixes with the base word to create new words.

Syntax

Support students to:

- understand the building blocks of simple, compound, and complex sentences, and find examples of different sentence types in texts
- identify and explain the purpose of punctuation features such as speech marks, commas, exclamation marks, and question marks.

Teaching tip: Write out simple, compound, and complex sentences from the texts you read. Cut them into individual words, scramble them, and ask students to reassemble the words in the correct order. Students could also turn two simple sentences into a compound sentence by adding a conjunction.

Fluency

Support students to:

- read Colour Wheel texts accurately, with expression, and at appropriate oral-reading fluency rates for their year-level
- respond to punctuation in texts and group words into phrases for expression, stress, and intonation
- practice fluency through choral reading, echo reading, partner reading, and repeated reading.

Teaching tip: As you read big books or picture books to students, model phrasing and expression to show students what fluency sounds like. The audio files for Colour Wheel books can also be used as examples of fluent reading.

Text structure

Support students to:

- notice and discuss the features of texts including setting, character, and main events in stories and the use of sound in poetry, for example, alliteration and rhyme
- notice how text creators draw attention to particular things using print and text features.

Teaching tip: During shared reading with a big book, help students become familiar with print and text features. For example, you could use the big book [Camouflage](#) to examine how the contents page, photo captions, bold text, and word definitions support meaning.

Comprehension

Support students to:

- read complex sentences and hold the meaning across the whole sentence
- follow the subject in consecutive sentences, even when a pronoun, synonym, or noun phrase is used
- monitor their understanding of texts and attempt to repair meaning by rereading, drawing on their prior knowledge and knowledge of words, and asking questions
- identify the key message or idea in a text, and retell the key details of the text
- use what is stated in a text, along with their prior knowledge to predict what might happen next
- discuss how words in a text can make the reader feel a certain way.

Teaching tip: During reading, use think-alouds to model how to:

- use context clues
- summarise text
- make predictions and inferences using clues in the text and prior knowledge.

Oral language

Support students to:

- retell stories from the Colour Wheel texts and incorporate narrative elements, descriptive details, and time connectives
- participate in conversations about texts in pairs or small groups, and explain reasons for their opinions and ideas
- use precise nouns, verbs, and adjectives relating to content-specific topics in texts, for example, kahawai, gigantic, gallop, recipe
- experiment with adjusting tone, volume, and pace as they read texts out loud.

Teaching tip: Use sequencing cards or pictures to help students retell the order of events in a story.

Writing processes

Use the Colour Wheel books as writing models.

Support students to analyse:

- the features of different text types
- how an author has chosen words and phrases that give clear details
- taught language features such as rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and simile
- how to improve word choices and expand sentences
- use of punctuation.

Teaching tip: Work with students to find examples of precise nouns, verbs, or adjectives in the Colour Wheel books. For example, 'march', 'stomp', and 'tiptoe' are precise verbs for 'walk'. Encourage students to use precise words as they draft and revise their own writing.

Selecting books for your students

Ongoing, formative assessment of students' word recognition and language comprehension skills will enable you to notice, recognise, and respond to students' progress. Consider the best texts to support students' developing skills. For example, when students are:

- learning to decode unfamiliar multi-syllable words, select texts with familiar contexts
- learning to retell stories using sequential language, select narrative texts with clear chronological events
- learning about language features such as rhyme, onomatopoeia, and metaphor, select the poem cards.

Fluent readers should predominantly be working with year-level texts. However, when new skills and concepts are being introduced you might use simple texts to reduce cognitive load and use more complex texts to provide enrichment.

Resources coming soon

Ministry of Education resources published in 2025 to support teaching using structured literacy approaches include:

- › revised teacher support materials to help you use structured literacy approaches with the Instructional Series
- › teacher manuals on structured literacy approaches
- › phonics cards for the Māhuri | Sapling phase and more *Ready to Read* Phonics Plus student books
- › CHAPTERS, Junior Journals, and School Journals.

These resources will be distributed to schools and/or made available on [Tāhūrangi](#) in 2025.

Find more information and links to resources at [Structured Approaches to Literacy – New Zealand Curriculum - Tāhūrangi](#).



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