

The Little Red Fort

by Brenda Maier

Ruby's mind is always full of ideas. One day, she finds some old boards and decides to build something. She invites her brothers to help, but they just laugh and tell her she doesn't know how to build. "Then I'll learn," she says. And she does! When she creates a dazzling fort that they all want to play in, it is Ruby who has the last laugh. With beautifully detailed illustrations, this modern spin on a timeless favorite celebrates young creators everywhere!

Create Successful Reading Habits

Research from What Works Clearinghouse suggests that to become proficient readers, children need to develop an awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they connect to letters to make words.* One way teachers can support developing this awareness is by teaching students how to recognize and manipulate the segments of sound in words. When students learn how to recognize that words are made up of individual sounds that are connected to letters to make words, they are better prepared to read and comprehend text.

* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse. (n.d.). Practice Guides. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>

SCIENCE OF READING – CONNECTING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Reading Skills

The National Reading Panel report in 2000 categorized reading instructional content into five major areas: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The science of reading focuses on a hierarchy of skills that develop when students are learning to read.

- First, it is important for students to develop phonemic awareness, which is the conscious awareness of the individual sounds in language. The students then need to know the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds.
- After developing **phonemic awareness** and basic letter knowledge, students are able to use this knowledge to begin to decode. This is called the **alphabetic principle**, which is the understanding that letters make sounds, and sounds go together to make words.
- Through explicit and systematic **phonics** instruction paired with repeated practice, children's **decoding** skills become more automatic. Students are able to decode words without much thought, which leads to **fluent** reading.
- Ultimately, with sufficient practice, reading becomes automatic.

In addition to this hierarchy of skills, in order to **comprehend** what they read, students need to have:

- a robust **vocabulary** and knowledge about texts.
- knowledge about the world.

This knowledge is:

- developed through life experiences and instruction students receive in school.
- described as **schema**, which is the framework and organization of what someone has learned and how that information is stored in the brain.

A student's schema, along with the aforementioned knowledge and skills, influences how well they learn to read and comprehend written text.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT FLORIDA'S B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

The ELA standards are designed to be user-friendly, so every stakeholder will understand what students are expected to master. Taken together, the benchmarks, clarifications, and appendices represent the expected outcomes for the students of Florida and carry the full weight of the standards.

**Look for standards alignment
in each section of this guide.**

WORD WORK – BLENDING ONSETS AND RIMES

Blending **onsets** and **rimes** helps develop students' phonological awareness and positively impacts their ability to decode words when reading and writing.

ELA.K.F.1.2: Demonstrate phonological awareness.
c. Blend and segment onset and rimes of single-syllable words.

The term **onset** refers to the initial phonological unit (the first sound) of any single-syllable word pattern. Examples of single-syllable word patterns are CVC, CVGe, and CVVC words.

- Example: The /b/ in *bat* is the **onset**.

The term **rime** refers to the vowel and consonants that follow the onset.

- Example: The /at/ in *bat* is the **rime**.

The Little Red Fort contains many single-syllable words that can be used to practice blending **onset** and **rime** with your students.

Here is an example of teaching **onset** and **rime** using the word *red* from the title of the book.

- Say, "Today we are going to practice blending words by their **onset** and **rime**, the first sound in the word and the middle and ending sounds."
- Say, "Practice using the word *red*. What is the first sound you hear in the word /r/ ... /ed/?" (/r/)
- Say, "What middle and ending sounds do you hear in the word /r/ ... /e/d/?" (/ed/)
- Say, "Blend the sounds together, /red/. What's the word?" (*red*)

Practice again using the word *fort* separated into its onset (/f/) and its rime (/ort/).

- Ask students to blend the two sounds together to say the word *fort*.

Continue to explicitly teach students how to blend onset and rime by choosing words from the book *The Little Red Fort*.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Word families are groups of words that have a common phonetic sound and can be used to help students develop their phonemic awareness. Word families can be used to practice segmenting and blending onsets and rimes in words. Some examples are:

- Blend different onsets to the rime /at/ to make words like *bat*, *cat*, *hat*, and *mat*.
- Blend different rimes to one onset. Blend the onset /b/ with different rimes to make words like *bat*, *bell*, *ban*, *big*, and *bug*.
- Students can segment words into their onset and rime.

TALK ABOUT NEW AND INTERESTING WORDS

Clutched (p. 10), **howled** (p. 10), **huddled** (p. 33), and **delighted** (p. 33) are suggested Tier 2 words that can be used for explicit vocabulary instruction. Create and share student-friendly definitions that are appropriate for the levels of your students. Help students make connections to the word by providing contextual information that relates to the text being read and builds upon their background knowledge.

ELA.K.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.

Acting out vocabulary is an engaging multisensory strategy that helps students learn new or difficult words by associating their meaning with movement. *The Little Red Fort* uses action words to describe what is happening in the story. Practice learning these new and interesting vocabulary words by allowing students to act out the words.

- Select vocabulary words from the book *The Little Red Fort* to use in this activity, e.g., *clutched* and *howled* (p. 9).
- Explain the activity and model the expectations.
- Display the word *clutched* and its definition on the board.
 - Say, "This word is *clutched*; it means to hold tightly."
 - Act out clutching something in your hands.
 - Ask students to show you how they would clutch something.
 - Review the word and definition chorally as a class.
- Display the word *howled* and its definition on the board.
 - Say, "This word is *howled*. It means to cry loudly like a dog or a wolf. Can everyone show me how they *howl*?"
 - Act out howling.
 - Review the word and definition chorally as a class.
- For additional practice, you can find more action words in the book *The Little Red Fort*.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Acting out vocabulary is a great kinesthetic activity. Consider using picture vocabulary cards to help students make a visual connection with new and difficult words. For example, when acting out the word *howl*, display a picture of a wolf or dog howling with the word and definition. When students can associate vocabulary in multiple ways, they are better able to comprehend what they read.

READ FOR MEANING – SOMEBODY WANTED BUT SO THEN

Students will practice retelling a story by using the **Somebody - Wanted - But - So - Then** summarizing strategy.

ELA.K.R.1.1: Describe the main character(s), setting, and important events in a story.

- Benchmark Clarification 3: Descriptions can be oral, either in response to a question or through discussion.

ELA.K.R.3.2: Retell a text orally to enhance comprehension:

- a. Use main character(s), setting, and important events for a story.

Before:

- Create a blank **Somebody - Wanted - But - So - Then** graphic organizer on the board or on chart paper to fill out with students as you read. Example:

Somebody Who is the main character in the story?	
Wanted What does the character want?	
But What is the problem?	
So How does the character try to solve the problem?	
Then How does the story end?	

- Say, "Today we are going to read a story called *The Little Red Fort*. As we read, we are going to talk about who the main character is, the problem she is facing, and the steps she takes to solve her problem. I am going to capture your thinking using the **Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then** strategy."
- Review the strategy by reading each heading and its question. Then discuss each section with students.
- Say, "We will use this chart to help you retell the story."

During:

- Ask the following questions as you read and discuss with students. Capture their responses on the graphic organizer.
- Who is the main character in the story? (p. 3: Fill out the **Somebody** section.)
- What does Ruby want to do? (p. 4: Fill out the **Wanted** section.)
 - Ask students if they have ever built anything before? What was it?
- What problem is Ruby facing with her brothers? (p. 7: Fill out the **But** section.)
 - Discuss how Ruby's brothers respond when she asks them if they want to help her build something. (p. 7)
- What is her plan to solve it? (p. 7: Fill out the **So** section.)
 - Ruby takes four steps to build her fort. Discuss each step, and continue to fill out the **So** section for each one. (p. 9 - 25)
- What problem does Ruby encounter multiple times in the story? (p. 7, 10, 15, 19, 23)
 - Discuss how Ruby responds each time she encounters a problem with her brothers. What do Ruby's responses tell you about her and the kind of person she is? (p. 9 - 25)
- Why do Ruby's brothers build gifts for her fort? (p. 33)
- What does it mean when it says that Ruby was delighted by what her brothers built? (p. 33)
- How does the story end? (p. 36: Fill out the **Then** section.)
- If you were Lucy, would you let your brothers play in the fort? Why or Why not?

READ FOR MEANING – SOMEBODY WANTED BUT SO THEN

After:

- In the story, different people help Lucy with tricky tasks. Tell me about a time that someone helped you with a tricky task.
- Ruby is resourceful; she is good at finding ways to deal with her problems. How do you see Ruby being resourceful in the story?
- Ruby is determined; she does not let anything stop her from building a fort. How does Ruby show that she is determined in the story?

Writing a Summary

- Students will use the information gathered in the **Somebody - Wanted - But - So - Then** chart created in class to help them write a structured summary using the "Somebody Wanted" Story Map.

_____ wanted _____ .
Character What did they want?

but _____
What problem is the character facing?







so _____ .
How does the character solve the problem?

Then, _____ .
How does the story end?

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Help students retell a story by using picture cards that students can manipulate and place in the order that events happen in the text. Use a retelling mat to guide students in organizing the picture cards to accurately retell the sequence of events.

Example:

Retelling Mat		
 First,	 Then,	 Then,
 Next,	 After that,	 Finally,