



Developed for teachers, by teachers, with teachers

## What is UFLI Foundations?

UFLI Foundations is an **explicit** and **systematic** program created by the team at the University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI—pronounced “you fly”). The program introduces students to the foundational reading skills necessary for proficient reading. It follows a carefully developed scope and sequence designed to ensure that students systematically acquire each skill needed and learn to apply each skill with automaticity and confidence. The program is designed to be used for core instruction in the primary grades or for intervention with struggling students in any grade.

## How does it work?

UFLI Foundations provides teachers with detailed but easy to follow lesson plans that follow this eight-step routine:

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Visual Drill
3. Auditory Drill
4. Blending Drill
5. New Concept
6. Word Work
7. Irregular Words
8. Connected Text

Steps 1 through 4 serve as a warm-up and review of previously taught concepts. Step 5 is an explicit introduction to a new concept, including guided practice reading and spelling words. Steps 6 through 8 are opportunities to apply concepts through reading and writing activities at the word and text level.

## What specific skills are targeted in the program?

UFLI Foundations targets the following foundational reading skills:

- Phoneme blending and segmentation practice
- Accuracy and automaticity of grapheme-phoneme correspondences
- Decoding automaticity of words with previously learned concepts
- Explicit introduction of new concepts
- Decoding and encoding practice
- Reading and spelling irregular words
- Reading and spelling connected text

## What is special about UFLI Foundations?

UFLI Foundations strikes the perfect balance between structure and responsiveness to students' needs. The program features ample opportunities for students to practice, along with built-in gradual release. It provides teachers with detailed lesson plans, an instructional slide deck to accompany each lesson, and downloadable materials for homework or center activities.

UFLI Foundations is an example of an educative curriculum. This means that simply using the materials and lesson structure will add to your professional knowledge and skills in key areas:

- The process of reading acquisition
- Key linguistic elements necessary for reading
- Evidence-based instructional methods that promote reading proficiency

Another key component that sets UFLI Foundations apart is the professional development available to prepare teachers to implement the lessons. You may choose to take advantage of webinars, videos of lesson components being taught, and other online resources that will help you make the most of UFLI Foundations.



## Is UFLI Foundations aligned with the science of reading?

If you are familiar with the science of reading, you may have heard of the “simple view of reading,” (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) which states that reading comprehension is the product of decoding and linguistic comprehension. This concept can be visualized as a mathematical formula:

$$\mathbf{D} \times \mathbf{LC} = \mathbf{RC}$$

**Decoding**                      **Linguistic  
Comprehension**                      **Reading  
Comprehension**

If either decoding or linguistic comprehension is weak, the effect is multiplied. That is, you can never have better reading comprehension than the level of development of either your decoding or linguistic comprehension skills.

With this in mind, UFLI Foundations addresses the “D” part of the equation: decoding. In many instances, students fail assessments of reading comprehension not because they cannot synthesize complex ideas presented in text, but because they do not have access to such ideas because they cannot decode the text. Ensuring students can fluently decode text affords them the opportunity to apply and refine their linguistic comprehension skills, construct meaning from text, and more accurately demonstrate their understanding on assessments.

## Is UFLI Foundations research-based? Is UFLI Foundations evidence-based?

UFLI Foundations is research-based. This means it was developed to align with what decades of reading research has shown to be effective. We incorporated findings from research on word reading development and effective instruction to build an explicit and systematic program for teaching children to read and spell words.

UFLI Foundations is also evidence-based. Before releasing the program, we spent two full years developing and piloting each component. We observed lessons, and we got feedback from teachers who were using the program. Most importantly, we assessed student progress, and we found that students who received instruction using UFLI Foundations made significant gains in phonemic awareness, decoding, and oral reading fluency.

## What do you mean by “for teachers, by teachers, with teachers”?

### *For teachers...*

For years, the most urgent and persistent request we heard from the teachers we work with was for a more effective and more easily implemented program for foundational skills instruction. While most language arts standards include learning targets for foundational reading skills for kindergarten through second grade, they are not detailed enough to build a day-by-day sequence of instruction. While most schools have an abundance of resources in the form of book rooms, basal readers, and a variety of intervention program kits, there is typically insufficient guidance for how, when, and with whom to use these materials.

In response to this persistent need, our team developed UFLI Foundations, a program that includes the necessary professional learning, resources, and scaffolding for teachers to deliver high-quality instruction in foundational reading skills.

This is how UFLI Foundations was born.

### *By teachers...*

Every member of the UFLI team began their journey as a classroom teacher. It was their passion for teaching and expertise in reading instruction that led them to become part of Team UFLI, where they provide professional development for educators throughout the country and across the globe. UFLI faculty and staff also conduct research on effective literacy instruction and intervention and use this research to inform their work with teachers. With this collective wealth of experience and knowledge, UFLI is well-positioned to translate research into practice, never forgetting what it was like to be in the classroom searching for the best resources to help their students.

### *With teachers...*

In the two years we have been piloting UFLI Foundations, our team has actively sought feedback from the teachers who were using it in their classrooms. Their response was overwhelmingly positive, but they did give us some valuable insights that helped us hone the program and make it even more effective and efficient to implement.

We listened.

Some features of UFLI Foundations that we have incorporated based on teacher feedback include:

- Concept-based spelling assessments for progress monitoring
- Weekly home support resources
- Pre-planned word chains for the Blending Drill
- Observation forms for instructional coaches

UFLI Foundations would not exist without the involvement and input from the teachers in our pilot schools!

## What are people saying about UFLI Foundations?

"It has been so impactful to see what my students have achieved this year in their decoding and phonemic awareness. My kindergarteners now are more proficient in blending and reading than my first graders were last year."

*Kindergarten teacher, 4 years of experience*

"This curriculum picks out the best of all the other curricula we've had."

*Kindergarten teacher, 28 years of experience*

"I feel very validated. I knew this was best practice. I knew this was what we were missing."

*Second grade teacher, 17 years of experience*

"The rhythm, the pacing - my kids enjoy it. I don't have any issues keeping them motivated."

*Interventionist, 32 years of experience*

"I like the flow of the lessons. It was systematic and easy to follow"

*Second grade teacher, 25 years of experience*

"I know by following the lesson I'm hitting everything I need to teach."

*First grade teacher, 6 years of experience*

"These lessons and word lists have saved me so much planning time."

*First grade teacher, 17 years of experience*

"I have really enjoyed using UFLI this year and am in awe of what my kindergarteners are reading. It has been so helpful having a scope and sequence that makes sense and builds on itself. The slides make implementation very straightforward from the teacher side, and my students appreciate the consistency. I am so thankful to get be using this curriculum with my kindergarteners."

*Kindergarten teacher, 4 years of experience*

"UFLI has been so amazing for my kids!! They have a deep understanding of the material and are able to decode words with taught skills... I am teaching a support facilitation class this year, and the interleaved practice that UFLI provides has been so helpful for my class."

*First grade support facilitation teacher, 5 years of experience*

"It has been very helpful implementing the UFLI program. The program has taught me a lot about teaching phonics."

*First grade teacher, 5 years of experience*

"UFLI Foundations is the best part of my day."

*First grade student*



For more information about UFLI Foundations...

Visit our web site: [ufliteracy.org/foundations/](http://ufliteracy.org/foundations/)