

The Wilson Reading System®

The Wilson Reading System is a research-based reading and writing program. It directly teaches the structure of words in the English language so that students master the coding system for reading and spelling. The basic purpose of the Wilson Reading System is to teach students fluent decoding and encoding skills to the level of mastery. From the beginning steps of the program, it also includes sight word instruction, fluency, vocabulary, oral expressive language development and comprehension. Throughout the program, a ten-part lesson plan, designed to be very interactive between teacher and student, is followed. The lessons progress from easier to more challenging tasks for decoding and then spelling.



Wilson directly teaches the structure of words in the English language with an organized and sequential system with 12 steps. Steps 1 and 2 emphasize phonemic segmentation skills (the ability to separate the sounds in a word) and blending the sounds together again. Initially utilizing monosyllabic words, a student learns to segment sounds within words. In addition to using sound cards, the Wilson program uses a unique "sound tapping" procedure in these early steps. For example, in teaching the word **"map"** three lettered cards are put on the table to represent the three sounds in the word. The student is taught to say each sound while tapping a different finger to his or her thumb, as follows:

- As he says the /m/ sound, he taps his index finger to his thumb.
- As he says the /a/ sound, he taps his middle finger to his thumb.
- As he says the /p/ sound, he taps his ring finger to his thumb.
- He then says the sounds as he drags his thumb across the three fingers starting with his index finger and ending with his ring finger.

The sound tapping of fingers to the thumb has been a key for students in successfully learning to blend sounds as well as segment them. As the student succeeds at reading and spelling words (both real and nonsense) with three sounds, he then moves on to words with four sounds, then five, and so on. At the end of Step 2, the student is able to fluently blend and segment up to six sounds in a syllable. Beginning in Step 3, polysyllabic words are used and the student is systematically taught to segment syllables in words. Steps 4-6 teach vowel consonant *e* syllables, open syllables, suffix endings, and consonant-*le* syllables. The students have extensive practice with controlled vocabulary for decoding and spelling application. Comprehension is addressed with vocabulary work and through the development of visualization skills with the reading of literature to students. Mastery, including fluent application, is required for progression at each step.

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DIRECT

Students learn through straightforward, interactive learning, addressing head-on the concepts that govern the structure of written English.



STRUCTURED

The 12 Steps of the Wilson Reading System guide the student through the pitfalls of decoding and encoding, teaching them to trust the English language as a reliable system from the start.

CUMULATIVE

Each step builds on the one before it. Students work from sounds to syllables, words to sentences, and paragraphs to stories, learning the structure of English through constant repetition and review.

MULTISENSORY

Lessons are interactive in nature and are designed to fully engage students in the task at hand. Students learn by hearing sounds; manipulating color-coded sound, syllable and word cards; performing finger tapping exercises, writing down spoken words; reading aloud and repeating what they have read in their own words, and hearing others read as well. All skills and knowledge are reinforced through visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile senses.



INTEGRATED

The Wilson Reading System is organized around the six syllable types found in English; sounds are taught only as they relate to the syllable being studied. Lessons cover only those concepts being taught, with prior lessons being reinforced. Similarly, all Wilson materials and texts are phonetically controlled containing word lists, sentences, and paragraphs that incorporate only the elements of word structure taught in or up to the corresponding lesson.

