

Units of Study in Phonics, Grades K—2
By Lucy Calkins and TCRWP Colleagues

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Question: *What are some of the tools and resources used to support instruction in the phonics units?*

Liz Dunford:

So there are a number of fun tools and resources that we use to teach kids about phonics, mainly picture cards for sorting, helping kids hear sounds inside of words, as well as printed word cards, both for phonics features as well as the classroom word wall, as well as student tools, individual charts, the vowel shield from kindergarten to help kids hear vowel sounds, as well as one day charts to help kids play games in partnerships as well. Some units will also have anchor charts to help anchor the strategies kids are being taught to problem solve particular phonics features or patterns.

One big thing that we reference across the units are our mascots, Rasheed from first grade, and Mabel from kindergarten. These characters play a big role in the story lines across all of the units of study. You see Mabel here in her lab coat and Rasheed in his construction outfits as they play word scientist and word builder.

Also, along with Rasheed's word building, you might pull out math cubes from your classroom and with a marker write word parts that kids are using to build longer, multi-syllabic words with a focus on vowel teams, so that kids can think about parts of words and actually physically build them, making the work of spelling with those parts more tactile.

We know engagement plays a big role in the classroom. Bringing the work of studying letter sounds and word parts to life in really fun, playful ways is going to make this work stick. Ultimately, transfer is our goal. We hope to use these tools to help kids actually use these principles as readers and writers.