

Planning for Success

Since this is the third version of the *Bookworms* materials, and since we have worked directly with so many teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators, we have a very strong sense of what it takes to succeed. As in any change this large, leadership matters. If the items in this section are not addressed prior to implementation, *Bookworms* is unlikely to be associated with different achievement outcomes. That is why we place this section first, even before we describe the instructional design. Here is a cheat sheet for the *Bookworms* lingo, sorted into that all-important schedule, as you think about planning:

45 minutes	Grade Level: Shared Reading (SR)		
45 minutes	Grade Level: English Language Arts (ELA)		
	Interactive Read Alouds (IRA)	Writing Instruction	Culminating Tasks (CTs)
45 minutes	Assessment-Based Differentiated Instruction (DI) Block for three 15-minute groups		

Establishing Coherence

A novel component of *Bookworms* is its comprehensiveness. To be successful, leaders must think about how it will interact with state and local assessment and intervention policies. *Bookworms* is more similar to a comprehensive school reform than it is to a traditional commercial core or basal reading program. It serves the needs of more students and it uses instructional time in an unusually high-density way. Some things to consider *before* adopting *Bookworms*:

- The daily instructional schedule is really important, and it has implications for special educators, reading specialists and for teachers of multilingual learners. Each of the 3 blocks of time that we planned for in *Bookworms* **must** be 45 minutes long. It will not be possible for teachers to shorten any of them. Leaders who schedule the day without keeping those minutes protected are likely to frustrate teachers working on something very new and scuttle the potential effects of the design on student achievement.
- *Bookworms* DI Block has been successfully used as an RTI/MTSS curriculum in many schools and for many years. Some schools want to use Shared Reading and ELA but continue with an intervention curriculum instead of the DI Block. Having a “different” approach to the skills block could be problematic (and expensive). Students will not have

time during the other two blocks to do their written responses. They have to be done as seat work during the DI Block. For schools making this choice, we suggest that Shared Reading be extended to 60 minutes so students can complete their written work.

- We have seen many schools schedule their instructional day by staggering the DI Block across the day. For example, kindergarten may have it begin at 8:00, first grade at 8:50, and second grade at 9:40. That way, specialists can provide additional interventions with students at each grade level instead of their time for self-selected reading or they can substitute a Tier 3 intervention curriculum for the small group who might need it. That small group of students would have time for a 30-minute intervention and their written responses during that time. Appendix B contains a sample schedule so you can see what we mean.

A second area of coherence to consider is in the area of external assessments. *Bookworms* contains curriculum-embedded assessments, and learning how to interpret them is important for teacher success. Teachers will need a valid external screening measure of oral reading fluency in Grades 1–5. The curriculum already contains a diagnostic decoding measure. Some districts use large-scale computer-adaptive assessments to meet state requirements for RTI/MTSS. These can be very helpful as an external transfer measure, but **not** for placement in our DI Block groups. We recommend that leaders are very specific with teachers that diagnostic information from these additional external assessments will not be used for student groupings in the DI Block.

We know that many teachers spend many days of instruction on test preparation in the spring. We wholeheartedly endorse the use of valid and reliable state outcome tests. These tests help us measure the effects of the curriculum in general and for specific groups of students over time. It makes sense for students to know the format of their outcome tests in advance. What does not make sense is for them to trade instructional opportunities for test practice. We recommend that schools cancel the DI Block for the two weeks prior to testing so that teachers can work with their homeroom students to show them what the test will be like, practice with released items, and build excitement for them to showcase everything they have learned.

A final area of coherence for leaders to attend to is grading and report cards. *Bookworms* will generate weekly word study grades (spelling in K–2, and both spelling and vocabulary in 3–5), biweekly comprehension grades from written responses, and composition and mechanics grades. All will be generated from rubrics. Actually figuring out in advance how the rubrics for these will yield grades consistent with local report card requirements in advance of implementation will smooth the way for teachers to embrace the curriculum.

The DI Block will produce initial assessments of foundational skills and progress monitoring approximately every three weeks. Finally, kindergarten Shared Reading will provide ample opportunities to document student attainment of additional foundational skills. We have designed a reporting sheet for teachers to use during instruction to gather that evidence.

A list of assessment opportunities to use to inform grading policies is presented below. Tools and rubrics are located in the Lesson Plans.

Assessment Plan

Area	Timing	Strategy
Word Study Assessments	Every 5 days during Shared Reading	% Correct
Word Study Progress	Once each month: for students with weak achievement on Word Study Assessments	Spelling Tool to track progress
Text Connections	Every 5 days	Review 4 times per module using the Written Response Rubric to evaluate evidence of text comprehension
External Oral Reading Fluency Screening	Module 1, Lessons 6–14	WC1M: Risk Status
Informal Decoding Inventory	Module 1, Lessons 6–14	Individually administered to determine DI placement if warranted
High-frequency word inventory	Module 1, Lessons 6–14	Individually administered if warranted
DI Progress Monitoring	Every 3–4 Weeks	Individually administered during DI Block; used to regroup
Opinion Writing	Once per module during ELA	Opinion Writing Rubric applied to finished writing
Narrative Writing	Once per module during ELA	Narrative Writing Rubric applied to finished writing
Informational Writing	Once per module during ELA	Informational Writing Rubric applied to finished writing
Editing	Once per module during ELA	Editing Rubric applied to finished writing
Speaking and Listening	Once per month during ELA	Observation with rubric during ELA
Content Knowledge, Literacy Knowledge, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	At the end of each module during ELA	Culminating Task Rubrics

Flexible Schedules

Bookworms is packed with opportunities for teaching and learning. To make the most of them, teachers need a schedule that matches their real-time opportunities for teaching. We have planned lessons for an entire, uninterrupted school year. If teachers are on temporary leave, we recommend that substitutes simply follow the lesson plans as best they can, moving forward in shared reading books, read alouds, and writing tasks rather than suspending them.

For schools with fewer teaching days, or with important planned interruptions to regular instruction, here are our recommendations for how to condense the curriculum to fit the days allowed.

Grade 2

In the first Plan for Grade 2, teachers can shorten the curriculum by either 10 or 20 days. In the second Plan, teachers can shorten by 10 days and still teach the full set of Shared Reading texts and word study lessons.

Grade 2: Plan A

Number of Days	Shared Reading	ELA
170 days	Omit Module 4, Lessons 31–40	Omit Module 4, Lessons 17–22 and either Culminating Task
160 days	Omit Module 4, Lessons 21–40	Omit Module 4, Lessons 17–30 and do either Culminating Task beginning day 17

Grade 2: Plan B

Number of Days	Shared Reading	ELA
170 days	Beginning Lesson 21, teach 2 Shared Reading lessons each day. Each of the final two texts will be read in one week instead of two.	Omit Module 4, Lessons 17–30 and do either Culminating Task beginning Lesson 17. Then use ELA time for an extra Shared Reading lesson.

Grades 3–5

For grades 3–5, it is possible to remove lessons from any module. Here are our recommendations to reduce instructional days without disrupting the connections between reading and writing and without leaving any book unfinished. Simply skip omitted lessons and schedule the next lessons in the Module.

Grade 3

Number of Days	Shared Reading	ELA
170 days	Omit Module 4, Unit 1, Lessons 16–20. Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lessons 21–25.	Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lessons 21–30.
165 days	Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lessons 26–40.	Omit Module 2, Unit 2; Lessons 26–32. Omit Module 2, Unit 3, Lessons 33–34 and Lesson 40. Omit Module 3, Unit 3, Lessons 41–45.
160 days	Omit Module 4, Unit 1, Lessons 16–20. Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lessons 26–40.	Omit Module 2, Unit 2; Lessons 26–32. Omit Module 2, Unit 3, Lessons 33–34 and Lesson 40. Omit either of the Culminating Tasks in Module 4.

Grade 4

Number of Days	Shared Reading	ELA
170 days	Omit any 3 bump days. Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lessons 31–37.	Omit Module 4, Unit 1, Lessons 1–3. Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lesson 13. Omit Module 4, Unit 3, Lessons 14–19.
160 days	Omit 1 bump day. Omit Module 3, Unit 1, Lessons 37–55.	Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lesson 13. Omit Module 4, Unit 3; Lessons 14–27. Omit either Culminating Task.

Grade 5

Number of Days	Shared Reading	ELA
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170 days	Teach 2 Shared Reading lessons on each day where ELA lessons are omitted.	Omit Module 2, Unit 1, Lessons 5–13.
165 days	Omit Module 4, Unit 1, Lessons 31–45.	Omit Module 4, Unit 2, Lessons 23–35. Omit Module 4, Unit 3, Lessons 44–45.

Planning for Support

Teachers will need initial curriculum training and ongoing support, but the only real way to learn to teach *Bookworms* is to begin teaching it. The curriculum itself is educative; the goal of the initial training we have designed is to show teachers how to use the materials. Our experience is that leaders tend to spend more money on face-to-face initial training than they need to and less on ongoing coaching support than they ought to. They also tend to prefer cross-grade training so they can have teachers trained on days already scheduled (and paid for) in preplanning and post-planning. The problem with this approach is that all schools want training at the exact same time and *Bookworms* is very specific at each grade level. To do it well, we need to have six trainings going on concurrently—one for each grade—for four or five days.

The *Bookworms* team at UD has been designing these initial supports for several years. We have taken our original face-to-face materials and created grade-level-specific, interactive virtual training housed and presented in the University of Delaware’s LMS (Learning Management System) platform. The trainings ask teachers to read lesson plans, watch lesson simulations, and engage in discussion and problem solving. Having each grade-level team engage in this training, with the support of a UD coach or with a local team leader or coach, allows teachers to begin this journey with their grade-level colleagues. Virtual training using a LMS is very flexible. A district can bring grade levels together across schools or allow them to work in very small school-level groups. They can also stretch the training across more than 4 days, doing half days in May and June rather than waiting until just before school opens in July or August. Virtual training is cost-effective, scalable, and customizable. These affordances make grade-specific virtual training our actual preference for schools getting started.

We have designed new teacher trainings that require a half day of virtual interaction with our team and a half day of grade-level follow up over the course of a full week, with a day for Shared Reading, a day for Read Alouds, a day for Writing instruction, and two days for DI. We have designed these trainings to prepare teachers for the first month of school. Studying the curriculum a segment at a time and then collaborating and physically preparing with colleagues has been well received.

A second essential professional support teachers need is dedicated, organized, required collaborative time with grade-level colleagues. The only person who can really understand what a teacher is actually experiencing during initial implementation is a person also teaching the

same lessons in the same school. If teachers have time to collaborate, and protocols to use that time to share implementation successes and challenges, they are more likely to experience initial success. Our experience is that meaningful collaborations are nearly impossible during single 45-minute planning periods. 90 minutes every two weeks is much more productive. Some schools do this after school. Others have substitutes scheduled in advance. If there are 5 teachers per grade level, 5 subs could allow 90-minute planning sessions for three grade levels in one day and three the next.

Teacher collaboration time must be used wisely. Our coaching model (Walpole, 2021) engages teacher teams in setting implementation goals, engaging in structured lesson simulation, and then preparing for an upcoming lesson. Coaches can observe those lessons and engage individual teachers in confidential discussions and problem-solving.

Creating a coherent supervision and evaluation system is also essential. A principal and assistant principal can share grade levels, including participation in their collaborative planning sessions. We recommend that administrators have their own set of lesson plans and a shared set of books. That way they can begin the year trying to understand what the curriculum looks like in practice alongside teachers, building collegiality and participating in problem solving. They can give teachers time to practice safely. When teachers build confidence, they can begin formal evaluation and feedback. Time spent watching *Bookworms* instruction *before* evaluations begin will ensure that administrators customize their evaluation processes and forms to the affordances of the curriculum. It does not make sense to ask teachers to use new approaches and then provide formal evaluations that are not sensitive to their emerging success with those approaches.

Adding formal *Bookworms* coaching for teachers is icing on the cake. But few people enjoy cake without icing. Peer coaching (if it is well planned), coaching from a school or district coach, or external coaching from the *Bookworms* team can ensure that teachers get feedback on their practices so that they can reflect and set goals for themselves. Our team's coaching is non-evaluative feedback, and it can be face-to-face or virtual. Many organizations can provide coaching on generic best practices, but we see coaching as most effective when provided by someone with deep knowledge of evidence-based practice *and* advanced understanding of the actual curriculum. Our team has both.

Collaboration, supervision, and coaching will be easier if leaders set an expectation that specific lessons are taught on specific days. We recommend that Shared Reading and ELA begin as soon as possible once school opens. The DI Block can begin later. Kindergarten can wait until the second quarter. Grade 1 can begin in week 5. Grade 2 and above can begin in week 3. At the beginning of the year, that DI Block time can be used to build classroom community and routines and then for initial assessments. A clear plan for each grade level, mapping the Shared Reading and ELA Lessons onto the actual school calendar, will allow administrators and teachers to plan for field trips and other important school events and keep on track as a team. We share a sample calendar, including real holidays in a specific district, in Appendix C so you can see what we mean. You see that the calendar begins Shared Reading and ELA on day 1, but also identifies goals for building relationships and classroom procedures during the 45-minute DI Block to start the year.

In initial implementation, it is important to help teachers pace themselves. Depending on what teachers did previously, *Bookworms* may be asking them to change nearly everything. The journey is definitely worth it, but leaders and teachers should accept mistakes and struggles during the transition. The lesson plans provide the level of support necessary; teachers should be encouraged to use them very directly at first so that the community can implement all blocks. It is most important to perfect Shared Reading first. Then teachers should perfect ELA, first with the Interactive Read Alouds and then with the Writing instruction. Finally, they should increase their skills in the DI lessons. A focus on specific implementation excellence goals, even while all parts of the curriculum are being rolled out, respects and supports teachers who are trying something new.

Communicating Effectively

Initial implementation will be easier if the leadership team plans strategic communications. *Bookworms* is different from any other core curriculum. An elevator talk including why the school chose *Bookworms*, how teachers will be supported, and how parents can help will go a long way. Some issues to anticipate:

- Teachers may be surprised by the level of detail in the lesson plans, especially as they are learning to pace the lessons. We wrote the plans that way so that teachers would have strong implementation support every day. We refer to Shared Reading and ELA as highly structured, and to DI as initially scripted. We have provided extensive modeling talk in the lessons, but we expect teachers to customize it once they get comfortable.
- *Bookworms* does not include small-group instructional level guided reading. There is no evidence that this approach works. Communications must celebrate the potential of challenging, interesting text to build knowledge and for precise lessons to build foundational skills.
- A school-level policy about homework will help teachers to work as a team. The best homework is either family read alouds or student reading. Some schools choose to send home word study words for the week and reading or listening logs, but this is a local decision. Below find a sample reading log.

	Book	Minutes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		

- The first year of implementation can include a very large change in the level of text challenge, especially for students in grades 2 and above. Communications can ease this transition, especially if leaders acknowledge that there will be a change, and that the change will be worthwhile for students. Luckily, we know that even older students can adjust when teachers maintain the lesson design.

We see *Bookworms* as a form of advocacy. Teachers deserve curriculum materials that integrate evidence from empirical research. Teachers deserve leaders who facilitate their work and who evaluate them fairly. Students deserve the chance to master foundational skills on time or to get aggressive, targeted support if they don't. Students deserve to read high-quality books of all kinds and to learn to write about them effectively. And families deserve to be able to trust schools to provide children with expert instruction in a respectful, culturally-sustaining, joyful classroom community.