

Words Their Way Classroom © 2019

Palabras a Su Paso Salón de Clases © 2019

Frequently Asked Questions

New Customers

Question: What is the program philosophy for Foundational Literacy Skills and Shared Reading?

Answer: *Words Their Way Classroom* is a foundational program that helps students develop the skills targeted in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Specifically, *Words Their Way Classroom* supports the CCSS's Reading Foundational Skills and Language Standards in Grades K–5. The depth and breadth of word knowledge developed through the *Words Their Way Classroom* approach to word study also supports the CCSS's emphasis on students' reading more-complex literary and informational texts.

Question: How does [Words Their Way Classroom](#) provide differentiation to meet the needs of all learners?

Answer: Recognizing that students in the classroom are at different developmental stages of word study, as well as at different levels within a particular stage, will help differentiate instruction for them. In addition to having them work with sorts at their developmental levels, teachers can meet individual differences by adjusting the pace of instruction or making sorts easier or harder. *Words Their Way Classroom* uses these strategies to differentiate instruction with students learning English, in tiered instruction in the classroom and in interventions, and with advanced instruction.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES		
Spelling Stage/ Corresponding Grades	Characteristics of Word Knowledge	Word Study Focus
Emergent-Early Letter Name (Prekindergarten through mid-Grade 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect to use any sound-symbol correspondence • Represent strongest sounds with a single letter • Have an incomplete knowledge of the alphabet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Sorts • Rhyming Pairs • Beginning Consonants • Blends and Digraphs • Short-Vowel Word Families
Letter Name (Kindergarten through early Grade 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the alphabet literally using the letter names to spell sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning Consonants • Blends and Digraphs • Same Vowel Word Families

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell phonetically; represent most strong sounds and beginning consonants • Omit most silent letters and pre-consonant nasals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed Vowel Word Families • Affricates • Short Vowels • Pre-consonant Nasal
Within Word Pattern (Grade 1 through mid-Grade 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctly spell most single-syllable, short-vowel words, beginning consonant digraphs, and two-letter consonant blends • Attempt to use silent long-vowel markers • Use but confuse long-vowel patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Vowels (CVCe) • Other Common Long-Vowel Patterns • r-Influenced Vowel Patterns • Diphthongs and Vowel Digraphs • Complex Consonant Clusters • Homophones
Syllables and Affixes (Grades 3+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect word knowledge with vocabulary growth • Correctly spell most single syllable, short- and long-vowel words, and high-frequency words • Make errors at syllable juncture points and in unaccented syllables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compound Words • Inflected Endings • Open and Closed Accented Syllables • Unaccented Syllables • Prefixes and Suffixes
Derivational Relations (Grades 5+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect word knowledge with vocabulary growth • Spell most words correctly • Make errors on low-frequency multisyllabic words derived from Latin and Greek forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes and Suffixes • Greek and Latin Roots • Assimilated Prefixes

The **five developmental stages** for ***Palabras A Su Paso Salón de Clases*** are:

- Etapas emergente y alfabética temprana (Emergent-Early Letter Name)
- Etapas alfabética (Letter Name)
- Patrones (Within Word Pattern)
- Acentos y afijos (Accents and Affixes)
- Derivaciones (Derivational Relations)

The **pacing is designed for average growth**. However, because all students do not work at the same speed, pacing can be adjusted in these ways:

- If students catch on quickly, move at a faster pace. Spend fewer days on a series of sorts, or skip some sorts altogether.
- If students cannot keep up, slow the pace. Do this by spending more time on the sorts. You can also create additional sorts using the pictures and words in the program.

Here are suggestions for those students who require additional word study support:

- When beginning a new word feature, have students sort with fewer categories. As students become adept at sorting, increase the number of categories in a sort.
- If an example word is unfamiliar to students, use one that is easier and more familiar for them.
- Provide additional example words for a category.
- If there are unfamiliar words in the sort, put them at the end so that they sort known words first.
- At the first three developmental levels, do not include the Additional Words activities. Although these words have the same patterns as the basic words, they are often more challenging.
- Review sorts when necessary.

Here are suggestions for those students who would benefit from a more-challenging word study routine:

- Add more difficult words to the sort. For example, adding words with blends and digraphs (*black, chest, trunk*) to a short-vowel sort is more challenging than simple words such as *tap* and *set*.
- Have students suggest additional words that fit the targeted spelling feature.
- Do fewer follow-up activities.
- Skip sorts that review.

There are instructional support notes in each lesson of *Words Their Way Classroom* called Supporting Multilingual Learners to highlight both the challenges that may present themselves for English learners in a given lesson and also share ideas for building on the knowledge and skills of students who operate with more than one language system in their repertoire. *Palabras* includes a feature to support Spanish language learners.

Here are some overarching ways teachers can support English learners throughout word study:

- Check for understanding in each word study lesson to see which words students know. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction for unknown words.
- Pronounce picture names and words before, during, and after sorting. Explain word meanings, and use words in sentences that give strong context for the meaning. Having a visual to go along with the sentence is especially powerful.
- Have students illustrate words with simple drawings to remind them of meanings. Structure partner sharing so that students can talk about their illustrations and practice English. This could also include a class book.
- When working with word sorts, continue to check for understanding of word meanings, and provide visuals to teach unknown words.
- Understanding the meaning of words should always be integrated into skills lessons; regularly check for students' understanding of the sorting words as you meet with them.
- Encourage students' frequent oral use of the sort words. Have students use the words orally in sentences or phrases, depending on their proficiency. If students attend English language development class, have them use their sort words there, too. Concept sorts

in which students categorize the words or pictures into columns is an interactive practice to teach vocabulary.

- Incorporate multimodal strategies, such as chanting, tapping, moving, and acting out a word or sentence's meaning.
- Pair students with different levels of English proficiency as partners in buddy activities.
- Set a tone that will encourage English learners to ask questions about words whose meanings or pronunciations they do not know. Remember, language learning happens with practice, and practice includes making mistakes. For students to risk making mistakes, there must be a safe and low-stress environment.

Question: How does *Words Their Way Classroom* promote student engagement?

Answer: The heart of *Words Their Way Classroom* is the word sort, or the process of grouping sounds, words, and pictures that represent words into the following specific categories:

- Compare and contrast words by sounds
- Compare and contrast words by spelling patterns
- Categorize words and word parts by meaning, use, and parts of speech

When sorting, students use their word knowledge to separate examples that go together from those that don't, which allows them to make generalizations about words and transfer this knowledge to new words. Word sorting includes both teacher-directed instruction and independent learning.

- Teachers begin by demonstrating how to sort picture or word cards by sound or pattern.
- As students begin sorting, they make discoveries about the conventions of English orthography, compare and contrast word features, and uncover similarities and differences within word categories.

Words Their Way Classroom integrates phonology (sound), orthography (visual representation of language), and writing activities. Students say, read, write, and talk about words. They clap, sing, and read throughout the lessons. Interactive games provide additional practice for the word features taught in each sort.

Question: How have the words that appear at each stage been selected?

Answer: The *Words Their Way Classroom* authors have selected, organized, and sequenced words according to the following criteria:

- Developmental appropriateness
- Frequency in reading and in students' writing
- Common spelling patterns reflecting sound and/or meaning
- At the Syllables & Affixes and Derivational levels, common morphological elements (affixes and word roots)

Question: How does *Words Their Way Classroom* support the Fountas & Pinnell text characteristics?

Answer: *Words Their Way Classroom* uses text for Word Hunts, which help students make the connection between the words they study for spelling and the words they see in their reading materials. In Word Hunts, students hunt through books they have already read for words that offer other examples of sound, pattern, or meaning they are currently studying.

- It is recommended that teachers model the activity before students complete the Word Hunt.
- You can conduct Word Hunts individually, as partner work, in small groups, or individually for homework.
- Each sort in Emergent-Early Letter Name, Letter Name, and Within Word Patterns aligns to a corresponding little book from the *Words Their Way Classroom* Library for the purpose of Word Hunt. Stories are age-appropriate and encourage students to reread in an effort to maintain their knowledge of sight words.

Question: How can teachers use the program within an existing core curriculum?

Answer: You can use *Words Their Way Classroom* as a supplement to any core reading program or as a Tier 2 intervention for struggling students. From pre-Kindergarten to middle school, students receive instruction in *Words Their Way Classroom* according to their developmental spelling level, and the program provides teachers with specialized guidance on how to help students generalize and apply their existing word knowledge to other contexts to achieve reading success.

Question: What is the intended use of each type of *Words Their Way Classroom* assessment?

Answer: To place students in a *Word Study Notebook* level, develop word study groups, and administer the **Qualitative Spelling Inventory (QSI)**. Spelling inventories are made up of words specially chosen to represent a variety of spelling features or patterns at increasing levels of difficulty. The results of a spelling inventory lead to establishing the small groups for instruction. The following are used to

1. identify students' developmental stages;
2. determine the features of the program that require instruction; and
3. create and/or restructure groups.

You can administer **Spelling Inventories** up to three times during the year to assess progress and determine whether changes need to be made in student groupings or instructional focus.

You can use periodic **Spell Checks** to fine-tune student placement. Students who score between 50 percent and 75 percent on a Spell Check should be ready to study that feature. Spell Checks can also be used

- as a spelling pretest;
- to assess students' prior knowledge before new instruction begins; or
- as a posttest immediately following instruction or administered several weeks after instruction to determine what students have retained over time.

Question: Are there QSIs included in *Palabras*?

Answer: *Palabras* includes one version of the Qualitative Spelling Inventory—a **Spanish Spelling Inventory** is included in the program.

Question: Is the Scope & Sequence the same in both *Words Their Way Classroom* and *Palabras*?

Answer: No. Since *Palabras* parallels *Words Their Way Classroom* but is based on Spanish orthographic principles, you will see a difference in the Scope & Sequence.

Question: Where can teachers locate resources to introduce the word sorts?

Answer: The *Words Their Way Classroom* digital course includes word and picture lists that teachers can project via the Realize Reader. Alternately, teachers who wish to create a set of sort cards for their classes can do so by purchasing an extra Student Edition.

Question: Why don't headers appear on every word sort in the *Student Word Study Notebook*?

Answer: While headers are provided for every word sort, they have been intentionally left off of most word list pages so that children must determine how to sort the words on their own without being given the pattern.

Question: Does the program offer any home-school connections?

Answer: A Home School activity is provided for each word sort.

Question: Why is the *Palabras Teacher Resource Guide* written primarily in English?

Answer: Since many people who will evaluate and use these materials are English-dominant, Savvas decided to use English as the main language for information directed at the teacher; content that is to be delivered *to students by the teacher* is written in Spanish.

Digital Implementation

Question: Which assets are assignable within the digital course?

Answer: The following assets can be assigned to students, as well as displayed on a whiteboard:

- Interactive Sort
- Blind Sort
- Timed Sort
- Writing Sort
- *Big Book of Rhymes*
- Classroom Library titles
- Spelling Inventories and Spell Checks

Question: Since the teacher can only score the QSI as correct or incorrect if delivering it digitally, is it true that there is no automated way to analyze the data?

Answer: While the Realize platform does not allow for automated student grouping, Excel-based scoring sheets are accessible within the digital course to aid teachers in recording and tallying the qualitative spelling inventories.

Question: Why have certain Spell Check assessment items on Realize been modified from Fill-in-the Blank (auto-score) to Open Response (teacher-scored)?

Answer: This change was made to ensure that students receive credit for identifying the correct spelling pattern, but not be penalized for misspelled words.

Question: How are the Interactive Sorts scored online?

Answer: The **Check Answers/Try Again** button will identify correct/incorrect answers, and give students the opportunity to try a second time. The **Start Over** button will move all of the tiles back to their starting position. To receive a percentage score, students must first check their answers before turning in the assignment.

Question: Why isn't accuracy feedback immediate with a sound and checkmark or X, and only appears to be given at the end of a sort when the Check Answers button is clicked?

Answer: The type of feedback is based upon the "gadget" used; some sorts require students to check answers, while others provide immediate feedback. This was done intentionally so students can see their sorting patterns in an effort to error-correct.

Question: Why don't the Interactive Writing Sorts match the hands-on activities that appear in the *Student Word Study Notebooks*?

Answer: It is intentional that the hands-on sorts located in the *Student Word Study Notebooks* differ from that of what appears online, so that students have two mediums by which to practice their sorting techniques. The first two stages (EELN and LN) use a Drag-and-Drop functionality because most children at these stages have not yet honed their keyboarding skills. Drag-and-Drop functionality also allows for scoring on the Realize platform.

Question: Why can't Writing Sorts be auto-scored within the Realize platform?

Answer: In order for students' work to save within the Realize platform, a MAX score must be assigned to each writing sort, and since any combination of written responses could apply, a default MAX score of 0 has been assigned. While assigning a default MAX score of 0 allows students to save their work, it also requires teachers to manually score all written responses.

Question: Should students be able to see and browse the Table of Contents within the digital course?

Answer: The only assets that students will see within the Table of Contents are ones that have been assigned to them by the teacher. There aren't any assets that appear by default within the student view.

Question: What is the easiest way for students to access the word sort activities and Classroom Library titles on the Savvas Realize platform?

Answer: Once students have logged in to Realize and selected their course, the Table of Contents will list all of the items assigned to them. From there, they are required to make two clicks:

1. Click on the assignment.
2. Click on the asset.

Question: Is there a way for students to take notes online?

Answer: Students can take notes, create bulleted or numbered lists, annotate and highlight text in the *Big Book of Rhymes* and Classroom Library titles.

Question: What is the easiest way to access Teacher materials online?

Answer: The Interactive Teacher Resource Guide is just like the print version, but with point-of-use access to digital versions of sort resources and activities. The top of the page lists the focus of the sort. Under Sort Overview, you'll find information about the Generalization that the sort addresses along with the student objective. Click each item listed under the Materials section to open the digital version.

Question: Where can teachers locate resources online to introduce the word sorts?

Answer: The *Words Their Way Classroom* digital course includes word and picture lists that can be projected via the Realize Reader. Alternately, teachers who wish to create a set of sort cards for their class can do so by purchasing an extra student edition.

Question: Is there a way to turn off the auto-spell correct feature when students are taking assessments online?

Answer: While there is no way for the Savvas Realize platform to suppress this, the devices used for administering online assessments can disable the auto-spell correct feature (for example, in Chrome™: Edit>Spelling and Grammar>Check Spelling While Typing).

Question: How can teachers create/assign discussion prompts to students within the Savvas Realize platform?

Answer: Click [HERE](#) for steps on how to use this feature.

Question: Has the Scope & Sequence been updated from the previous copyright edition?

Answer: The [Scope & Sequence](#) has been updated to match the authors' most up-to-date research findings, as have various word sorts across the five stages.

Question: I'm having trouble identifying the rhyme used with a particular sort as the labels do not match.

Answer: The Emergent-Early Letter Name Big Book of Rhymes for *Words Their Way Classroom* lists the correct sorts on the poems, as the book was rewritten to ensure grade-level appropriateness. Since the Big Books of Rhymes for Letter Name and Within Word Patterns were **not** updated from the earlier copyright edition, as per the authorship team, we recommend that teachers use the Teacher Resource Guide in order to identify the rhyme used with a particular sort.

Customers Who Have Used a Previous Edition

Question: Has the Scope & Sequence been updated from the previous edition?

Answer: The [Scope & Sequence](#) has been updated to match the authors' most up-to-date research findings, as have various word sorts across the five stages.

Question: What do you do if you have trouble identifying the rhyme used with a particular sort, since the labels do not match?

Answer: The Emergent-Early Letter Name Big Book of Rhymes for *Words Their Way Classroom* lists the correct sorts on the poems, as the book was rewritten to ensure grade-level appropriateness. Since the Big Books of Rhymes for Letter Name and Within Word Patterns were **not** updated from the earlier copyright edition, as per the authorship team, Savvas recommends that teachers use the Teacher Resource Guide in order to identify the rhyme used with a particular sort.

Question: Can you print the poems that appear in *Words Their Way Classroom* like they were in the previous copyright edition?

Answer: The poems were provided as blackline masters in the back of the Teacher Resource Guide for the previous copyright edition of *Palabras*, but not for *Words Their Way*. They are *not* provided as blackline masters for *Words Their Way Classroom* or *Palabras*.