

# Spanish Reading Instructional Progression

A Scope & Sequence for Teaching Reading in Spanish

Thank you for downloading this guide!

One of the questions I hear most often from dual language teachers is:

*When I'm teaching students to read in Spanish, what do I teach first and what comes next?*

I understand that question because I had it too. Like many bilingual teachers, I learned a lot about how to teach reading in English during my teacher preparation classes, but much of what I learned about teaching students to read in Spanish came once I was already in the classroom. During my first years teaching first grade, I often found myself piecing together resources, figuring out the sequence as I went, and wondering whether I was introducing skills in the right order.

Over time, one thing became very clear: Spanish reading instruction needs to reflect the structure of Spanish.

Spanish has a highly consistent relationship between letters and sounds, and syllables play an especially important role in early decoding. Because of that, instruction can intentionally build from sounds → letters → syllables → increasingly complex words → connected text, while students apply those skills to real words, language, and meaningful reading along the way.

That's why I created this Spanish Reading Instructional Progression.

It gives you a big-picture view of the foundational skills that support learning to read in Spanish and a general sequence for introducing them. The progression moves from phonological and phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondence into syllable patterns, increasingly complex word analysis, accentuation and morphology, and finally greater fluency with connected text.

But this is not a checklist of isolated skills. Reading development is cumulative and overlapping. Students do not need to completely master one phase before experiencing the next. Word reading, vocabulary, comprehension, oral language, and meaning-making should be woven throughout instruction.

# How to Use This Guide

- Start with what your students can already do—not simply their grade level or the time of year. Use the progression to identify what they understand and what skill would logically come next.
- Use the sequence as a roadmap, not a rigid pacing guide. Skills build on one another, but you may revisit, reinforce, and overlap them as students develop.
- Connect skills to real reading from the beginning. As students learn letters and syllable patterns, give them opportunities to apply them to words, sentences, and appropriate connected text.
- Keep language and meaning at the center. Continue developing oral language, vocabulary, comprehension, and knowledge alongside foundational reading skills.

My hope is that this guide gives you something I wish I had during my first years teaching Spanish reading: a clear picture of where you're going, what comes next, and how the pieces fit together.

The full progression follows on the next pages in Spanish & English.

Sounds → Letters → Syllables → Words → Connected Text

# Spanish Reading Instructional Progression

*Una progresión para enseñar a leer en español*

This progression shows the foundational skills that support learning to read in Spanish and a general sequence for introducing them. Skills are cumulative and overlapping, not isolated steps that must be completely mastered before moving forward.

|                          | Skill                                   | Instructional Focus                                                                    | Examples                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FOUNDATION               | 1. Phonological & Phonemic Awareness    | Develop awareness of sounds and syllables in spoken words                              | initial sounds, syllable identification, blending, segmenting, deletion, phoneme manipulation |
|                          | 2. Letter-Sound Correspondence          | Connect Spanish graphemes to their sounds                                              | vowels → consonants → digraphs                                                                |
| CORE DECODING            | 3. Open Syllables                       | Read and build CV syllables and apply them to words                                    | ma, me, mi, mo, mu → mapa, mesa, mimo                                                         |
|                          | 4. Closed/Inverse Syllables             | Read syllables ending in consonants and apply them to words                            | al, el, il, ol, ul → alto, alma                                                               |
|                          | 5. Complex Syllable Patterns            | Read syllables containing consonant clusters and other increasingly complex structures | bla, ble...; bra, bre... → blusa, brazo                                                       |
|                          | 6. Vowel Combinations                   | Recognize and read vowel combinations across syllables and words                       | diptongos, hiatos                                                                             |
| ADVANCED WORD ANALYSIS   | 7. Multisyllabic & Complex Word Reading | Apply known syllable patterns flexibly to decode increasingly long and complex words   | mixed syllable patterns, longer word decoding, compound words                                 |
|                          | 8. Stress & Written Accents             | Use stress patterns and written accent marks to read and pronounce words accurately    | sílaba tónica, agudas, graves/llanas, esdrújulas, tilde                                       |
|                          | 9. Morphology                           | Use meaningful word parts to support word reading and meaning                          | prefijos, sufijos, raíces, palabras compuestas                                                |
| FLUENCY & CONNECTED TEXT | 10. Fluency & Connected Text            | Read increasingly complex text accurately, automatically, and with understanding       | accuracy, automaticity, phrasing, expression, comprehension                                   |

Sounds → Letters → Syllables → Words → Connected Text

*Word reading, vocabulary, comprehension, and meaning-making run throughout all phases.*

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# Progresión de la enseñanza de la lectura en español

Esta progresión muestra las destrezas fundamentales que apoyan el aprendizaje de la lectura en español y una secuencia general para presentarlas. Las destrezas son acumulativas y se superponen; no son pasos aislados que deban dominarse por completo antes de seguir adelante.

|                               | Destreza                                          | Enfoque de la enseñanza                                                                                      | Ejemplos                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FUNDAMENTOS                   | 1. Conciencia fonológica y fonémica               | Desarrollar la conciencia de los sonidos y las sílabas en las palabras habladas                              | sonidos iniciales, identificación de sílabas, unir, segmentar, omitir, manipular fonemas |
|                               | 2. Correspondencia letra-sonido                   | Conectar los grafemas del español con sus sonidos                                                            | vocales → consonantes → dígrafos                                                         |
| DECODIFICACIÓN BÁSICA         | 3. Sílabas abiertas                               | Leer y formar sílabas CV y aplicarlas a las palabras                                                         | ma, me, mi, mo, mu → mapa, mesa, mimo                                                    |
|                               | 4. Sílabas cerradas/inversas                      | Leer sílabas que terminan en consonante y aplicarlas a las palabras                                          | al, el, il, ol, ul → alto, alma                                                          |
|                               | 5. Sílabas complejas (grupos consonánticos)       | Leer sílabas con grupos consonánticos y otras estructuras cada vez más complejas                             | bla, ble...; bra, bre... → blusa, brazo                                                  |
|                               | 6. Combinaciones de vocales                       | Reconocer y leer combinaciones de vocales en sílabas y palabras                                              | diptongos, hiatos                                                                        |
| ANÁLISIS AVANZADO DE PALABRAS | 7. Lectura de palabras multisilábicas y complejas | Aplicar con flexibilidad los patrones silábicos conocidos para leer palabras cada vez más largas y complejas | patrones silábicos variados, decodificación de palabras más largas, palabras compuestas  |
|                               | 8. Acentuación y sílaba tónica                    | Usar los patrones de acentuación y las tildes para leer y pronunciar las palabras con precisión              | sílaba tónica, agudas, graves/llanas, esdrújulas, tilde                                  |
|                               | 9. Morfología                                     | Usar partes significativas de las palabras para apoyar la lectura y el significado                           | prefijos, sufijos, raíces, palabras compuestas                                           |
| FLUIDEZ Y TEXTO CONECTADO     | 10. Fluidez y texto conectado                     | Leer textos cada vez más complejos con precisión, automaticidad y comprensión                                | precisión, automaticidad, fraseo, expresión, comprensión                                 |

**Sonidos → Letras → Sílabas → Palabras → Texto conectado**

*La lectura de palabras, el vocabulario, la comprensión y la construcción de significado se integran en todas las fases.*

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# Where Do I Start?

Use the progression to pinpoint where students need support.

When a student gets stuck while reading, take a closer look at what the text requires them to do. Breaking the words into its sounds, syllables, and patterns can help you identify where additional instruction or practice may be needed. Use the progression to look back, pinpoint that skill, and provide targeted support.

## When a Student Gets Stuck

*Notice → Break It Down → Look Back → Teach & Apply*

**1**

### Notice the difficulty

What is the student having trouble reading?



**2**

### Break it down

What sounds, letters, syllables, or word patterns does the student need to read it?



**3**

### Look back

Which earlier skill in the progression might need more instruction or practice?



**4**

### Teach & apply

Teach that skill explicitly, then apply it right away to words and text.

## What Might That Look Like?

Student struggles to read *blusa*.

Break it down: blu • sa

Can the student read *sa*? Can the student blend *blu*?

Can the student read other syllables with *bl*- (*bla*, *ble*, *bli*, *blo*, *blu*)?

→ The student may need more instruction with complex syllable patterns.

Student struggles to read *alto*.

Break it down: al • to

Can the student read *to*? Can the student read the inverse syllable *al*?

Can the student blend the syllables together?

→ Look back at closed / inverse syllables.

Student struggles to read *transporte*.

Break it down: trans • por • te

Can the student recognize each syllable? Can they read the different syllable structures within the word?

Can they combine those syllables smoothly?

→ The student may know the individual patterns but need more practice with multisyllabic and complex word reading.

## Don't automatically move backward an entire phase.

A student may need support with one specific pattern while successfully reading many others. Use the progression to pinpoint the skill, provide targeted instruction, and continue giving the student opportunities to apply their learning to meaningful words, sentences, and texts.

# From Progression to Practice

What instruction can look like across the phases

## FOUNDATION

### Phonological & Phonemic Awareness

- Oral sound and syllable activities
- Syllable blending and segmenting
- Initial sound practice
- Sound manipulation

### Letter–Sound Correspondence

- Explicit letter–sound instruction
- Letter and picture sorts
- Sound identification
- Applying known sounds to syllables and words

## CORE DECODING

### Open, Inverse & Complex Syllables

- Explicit syllable instruction
- Syllable blending
- Word building
- Word sorts
- Games and repeated practice
- Decodable words and texts

### Vowel Combinations

- Word analysis
- Diphthong / hiatus sorts
- Syllable division
- Reading words in context

## ADVANCED WORD ANALYSIS

### Complex & Multisyllabic Words

- Breaking longer words into syllables
- Comparing syllable structures
- Mixed-pattern word reading
- Word-building and word-analysis activities

### Stress & Written Accents

- Identifying the stressed syllable
- Comparing words with and without written accents
- Word sorts
- Applying accentuation patterns while reading

### Morphology

- Exploring roots, prefixes, and suffixes
- Building word families
- Analyzing compound words
- Connecting word parts to meaning

## FLUENCY & CONNECTED TEXT

- Repeated reading
- Decodable and increasingly complex texts
- Phrase reading
- Oral reading practice
- Vocabulary and comprehension
- Discussion and meaning-making

## Looking for Resources to Support the Progression?

You'll find a growing collection of Spanish literacy resources inside Biliteracy Builders, including phonological awareness activities, letter-sound practice, syllable activities, decodable texts, fluency resources, and more.

The library is continuing to grow alongside this progression, with new Spanish reading resources added regularly.

[EXPLORE BILITERACY BUILDERS](#)

# **You Know What Comes Next. Now Let's Make It Easier to Teach.**

I created Biliteracy Builders because I remember what it felt like to know what my students needed but still spend hours searching for Spanish materials—or creating them myself.

Biliteracy Builders is a growing resource library created specifically for dual language classrooms. You'll find Spanish literacy resources, decodable texts, writing, math, monthly activities, Biliteracy Book Club units, and more—all designed to help make your planning a little easier.

As the library continues to grow, so will the resources that support each part of this Spanish Reading Instructional Progression.

**You don't have to build it all yourself.**

**EXPLORE BILITERACY BUILDERS**

**Already a member?**

Use the progression to identify your instructional focus, then search the library by skill to find resources that support what you're teaching.