



Department of  
Education

# Administrator's Reference Guide

A Tool to Understanding  
The Wilson Reading System



Compiled by:  
Office of Special Education Initiatives  
Linda Wernikoff, Executive Director

## Table of Contents

	PAGES
What is the Wilson Reading System (WRS)?	3 - 10
What is involved in the WRS Implementation?	11 - 17
How Do I Supervise the WRS Program Implementation?	18 - 25
Additional Reference Material	26 - 30

[www.wilsonlanguage.com](http://www.wilsonlanguage.com)

[www.wilsonlanguage.com/webcasts](http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/webcasts)

[www.wilsonlanguage.com/nyc](http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/nyc)

[www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org)

The Wilson In - District Trainer(s) from the Office of Special Education Initiatives are always available to answer your questions regarding program implementation. Please contact Sharon Grunfeld at [sgrunfeld@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:sgrunfeld@schools.nyc.gov) for further information.

We are confident that this program will benefit students in your school and look forward to working with you on this important initiative. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Linda Wernikoff  
Executive Director  
Office of Special Education Initiatives

## What is the Wilson Reading System (WRS)?



### WILSON IS...

- Direct, interactive, multisensory instruction
- Based on 6 syllable types of the English language
- 12 Step Reading Program ( 2-3 year implementation )
- Appropriate for students who have not internalized the sound symbol system for reading and spelling
- Provides skills and tools for students to become fluent and independent readers

### WRS IS USED IN NEW YORK CITY FOR

- Reading / Spelling curriculum for students with IEPs and at-risk students
- Grades 3 to 12
- Lowest 30th percentile
- Students who have not mastered basic decoding and encoding

#### Key Components

Phonemic Awareness / Alphabetic Principles  
Phonemic Segmentation / Blending  
Decoding / Encoding / Word Structure  
Irregular Word Instruction  
Fluency  
Vocabulary Development  
Comprehension with Visualization  
Metacognition

### PROFILE OF A WRS STUDENT

- Students with an inability to analyze and apply structure of English to reading and spelling
- Students unable to decode accurately
- Slow, labored readers who lack fluency
- Students who may know many words by sight, but have difficulty reading new words and “nonsense” syllables
- Students who often guess at words
- Students able to speak and understand English, but not read or write it (such as ELL students)
- Poor spellers
- Students unsuccessful with other reading programs or who have gaps in their decoding and / or encoding

**Wilson Combined With Balanced  
Literacy Instruction...**

*Guided Reading*

*Shared Reading*

*Independent Reading*

*Strategy Lessons*

*Conferencing*

*Read Aloud*

*Writing Workshop*



## Why the Wilson Reading System® Works:

### Direct

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



### 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, with sounds 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.

### Proven

For more than 15 years, the Wilson Reading System has been successful with struggling readers in public and private school settings, clinics, adult education, and literacy programs. Publications, studies, reviews, and data analysis by top reading researchers confirm the Wilson Reading System provides the essential components and type of instruction necessary to get results.

To learn more about the Wilson Reading System, professional development options, program materials, and evidence of effectiveness, go to [www.wilsonlanguage.com](http://www.wilsonlanguage.com) or call us at **800-899-8454**.

# Wilson Reading System®

## What is the Wilson Reading System?

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The research-based Wilson Reading System (WRS) is a comprehensive multisensory structured program designed for older students who struggle with decoding and spelling. Published in 1988, the WRS is based on accepted Orton-Gillingham philosophy and provides key components identified in the National Reading Panel Report as necessary for students who struggle with reading and spelling.

These key components, directly addressed in the Wilson Reading System, are:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Alphabetic Principle (Sound/Symbol Relationship)
- Decoding
- Encoding (Spelling)
- Advanced Word Analysis
- Vocabulary Development
- Irregular Word Instruction
- Fluency
- Comprehension with Visualization
- Metacognition

The Wilson Reading System directly teaches the structure of words in the English language with an organized and sequential system in 12 Steps. It provides a complete curriculum for decoding, spelling, and fluency as well as comprehension with progressively more challenging text. Students use text passages provided by Wilson as well as books from classroom libraries.

## What student population is appropriate for Wilson Reading System?

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In New York City, the Wilson Reading System is an alternative reading curriculum for students in grades 2-12 who are in the lowest 30<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading and have not mastered basic decoding skills. Level I and II students who are identified as having decoding deficits, students identified by ECLAS results or teacher referrals can be further assessed to determine eligibility for a Wilson Reading class using the WADE (Wilson Assessment for Decoding and Encoding).

The Wilson Reading System greatly benefits:

- Students with a language based learning disability
- Students unable to decode accurately
- Slow, labored readers who lack fluency
- Students who may know many words by sight, but have difficulty reading new words and “nonsense” syllables
- Students who often guess at words
- Students able to speak and understand English, but not read or write it (such as ELL students)
- Poor spellers
- Students unsuccessful with other reading programs or who have gaps in their decoding and/or spelling

## **How can Wilson Reading System be used in the NYC classroom?**

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In order to complete one full WRS lesson, a minimum of 90 minutes is required. Students must have two or more complete lessons per week. Ideally, a WRS class should be scheduled five days a week for 90 minutes each day. At minimum, a WRS class must be scheduled for 45 minutes, five days a week.

The recommended group size for a Wilson Reading class is 6 students for students with IEPs and between 6 & 12 students for a mixed group of students with and without IEPs

Recommended WRS implementation models include Wilson classes in the following settings:

### GENERAL EDUCATION SETTINGS:

1. Alternative English Language Arts (ELA) Class
2. Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) Classroom
3. WRS Students Clustered for Part of ELA Class

### OTHER SETTINGS:

4. SETSS or AIS Pullout
5. Full-time WRS Teacher
6. Self-Contained Special Education Classes (12:1, 12:1:1, 15:1)

*(See the section WRS IMPLEMENTATION MODELS IN NYC for suggested implementation guidelines.)*

Other implementation in NYC: Wilson Reading System is also included in the instruction in the Summer Success Academy for grades 3, 5, and 7 for students identified as needing this program.

## **What materials are required to teach the Wilson Reading System?**

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The WRS Starter Kit and student materials for each student are required to begin the program. Additional materials must be purchased as students progress in the program.

## **What training is required to teach the Wilson Reading System in New York City?**

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A Wilson class must be conducted by a teacher who has attended, at minimum, the three-day training. A Wilson trainer conducts these workshops.

## **Is there other support available for implementation?**

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Teachers can access support directly from Wilson Language Training via Wilson Academy, an online resource that provides materials as well as an interactive discussion board and chat room. Additionally, three regional Wilson Review Workshops are conducted annually for new Wilson teachers. Individuals with WRS Level I Certification are qualified to provide support such as school visits and study group meetings within a network of schools. Contact Wilson Language Training for more information.

# WRS Implementation Models in NYC

The following is a list and description of Wilson Reading System (WRS) implementation models in NYC general education classes and other settings. WRS implementation models include:

## GENERAL EDUCATION SETTINGS:

1. Alternative English Language Arts (ELA) Class
2. Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) Classroom
3. WRS Students Clustered for Part of ELA Class

## OTHER SETTINGS:

4. SETSS or AIS Pullout
5. Full-time WRS Teacher
6. Self-Contained Special Education Classes (12:1, 12:1:1, 15:1)

## GENERAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

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### **1. WRS AS AN ALTERNATIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) CLASS**

**DESCRIPTION:** Schools can choose to offer Wilson classes as an alternative Language Arts class in general education settings. The alternative ELA class combines Wilson Reading System with the school-based English Language Arts program over the course of two years.

The class is taught by a Wilson-trained English Language Arts teacher. Ideally, the teacher loops with the class for a two-year period. It is recommended that teachers have additional workshops or have additional assistance from a qualified ISS for this implementation.

**LESSON SCHEDULE:** 90-minute daily lessons conducted by ELA teacher (45 minute Wilson lesson and 45 minute ELA or Ramp-Up curriculum).

**GROUP SIZE:** Up to 12 students.

**STUDENT FOCUS:** This can be implemented in any two consecutive grades beginning in grade two. This model has been implemented in Grades 6 and 7; Grades 9 and 10.

## **2. WRS IN A COLLABORATIVE TEAM TEACHING (CTT) CLASSROOM**

**DESCRIPTION:** A Wilson-trained collaborative teacher works with students in a collaborative classroom during English Language Arts class.

**ALTERNATIVE:** Students in need of Wilson instruction are clustered from several classrooms with a Wilson-trained CTT teacher during part of the ELA block.

**LESSON SCHEDULE:** 45-minute daily lessons, at minimum.

WRS instruction takes place during Reading Workshop. It is appropriate for Wilson students to participate in Read Aloud and Accountable Talk, Shared Reading and Writing Workshop.

It is recommended that these WRS students also participate in WRS groups during the 37 ½ minute after-school program or at Saturday Academies for additional WRS Block 3 work and fluency practice with WRS or Great Leaps.

**GROUP SIZE:** Between 6-12 students (for a mixed group of students with and without IEPs up to 12 students may be served in a group).

## **3. WRS STUDENTS CLUSTERED FOR PART OF ELA CLASS**

**DESCRIPTION:** Students in need of Wilson instruction are clustered with a Wilson-trained ELA or AIS teacher during part of the ELA block. This model requires scheduling students (potentially from several classes) for a portion of ELA instruction with an ELA or AIS teacher with Wilson training.

**LESSON SCHEDULE:** 45-minute daily lessons, at minimum.

WRS instruction takes place during Reading Workshop. It is appropriate for Wilson students to participate in Read Aloud and Accountable Talk, Shared Reading and Writing Workshop.

It is recommended that these WRS students also participate in WRS groups during the 37 ½ minute after-school program or at Saturday Academies for fluency practice with WRS or Great Leaps and additional WRS Block 3 work.

**GROUP SIZE:** Between 6-12 students (for a mixed group of students with and without IEPs up to 12 students may be served in a group).

## OTHER SETTINGS

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### 4. WRS IN A SETSS OR AIS PULLOUT SETTING

- DESCRIPTION: Wilson classes can be conducted in pullout settings.
- LESSON SCHEDULE: Students must have, at minimum:
- 45-minute daily lessons (five days / week) *or* three 45-minute lessons *combined with* four 37 ½ minute lessons per week.
- GROUP SIZE: Up to 6 special education students, up to 12 general education students, or up to 12 students for a mixed group of students with and without IEPs.

### 5. FULL-TIME WILSON TEACHER

- DESCRIPTION: Appropriate Wilson students are identified and then placed into Wilson classes provided by a full-time Wilson teacher in a pullout setting, similar to the Wilson Summer Success Academy.
- It is recommended that these students also participate in WRS groups during the 37 ½ minute after-school program or at Saturday Academies for fluency practice with WRS or Great Leaps and additional WRS Block 3 work.
- LESSON SCHEDULE: 45-minute daily lessons (minimum), 60 or 90-minute daily lessons (recommended).
- GROUP SIZE: Up to 6 special education students, up to 12 general education students, or up to 12 students for a mixed group of students with and without IEPs.

### 6. WRS IN SELF-CONTAINED SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES (12:1, 12:1:1, 15:1)

- DESCRIPTION: Students who are at risk of reading failure due to significant decoding deficits can receive Wilson classes in self-contained classes.
- LESSON SCHEDULE: 45-minute daily lessons, or 90-minute lessons three times per week.
- Students can participate in whole-class activity for Read Aloud, and other literacy instruction during the day.
- GROUP SIZE: Teachers should arrange students in groups of up to 6 students per group for their WRS instruction. In schools with more than one 12:1 or 15:1 teacher, students can be clustered for Wilson lessons as appropriate.

## What is involved in the WRS implementation?

### MATERIALS...

- Wade Assessment, Slosson Assessment
- Scope and Sequence
- Student Notebook - Student Reference and Daily Dictation
- Teacher Notebook - Daily Lesson Plans, Student Word Charting, Monitoring Graphs
- Standard Sound Cards / Syllable Frames
- Student Readers
- Magnetic Journal - Letter / Sound / Syllable / Suffix Manipulation

### SCHEDULE...

Three Blocks

- Block 1 - Word Study / Decoding
- Block 2 - Spelling / Encoding
- Block 3 - Fluency / Comprehension

Options:

90 minute Wilson Lesson  
45-60 minute Wilson Lesson

### WRS PROTOCOL...

- Student Identification / Assessment
- Lesson Delivery Procedures
- Monitoring of Student Progress

BLOCK	LESSON PART	LESSON ACTIVITY	TIME	BLOCK EMPHASIS
Word Study	1	Sound Cards Quick Drill 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 2-3 GROUP Ⓞ 2-3	Phonemic Awareness Decoding Vocabulary Single Word Accuracy/ Automaticity Phrasing / Prosody
	2	Teach & Review Concepts for Reading 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 5 GROUP Ⓞ 5	
	3	Word Cards 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 3-5 GROUP Ⓞ 5-10	
	4	Wordlist Reading 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 5 GROUP Ⓞ 5-10	
	5	Sentence Reading 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 5 GROUP Ⓞ 5	
Spelling	6	Quick Drill in Reverse 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 1-2 GROUP Ⓞ 2-3	Spelling Proofreading Vocabulary High Frequency / Sight Words
	7	Teach & Review Concepts for Spelling 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 5 GROUP Ⓞ 5-10	
	8	Written Work Dictation (Sounds, Words, Sentences) 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 15 GROUP Ⓞ 15-20	
Fluency / Comprehension	9	Controlled Text Passage Reading 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 10-15 GROUP Ⓞ 10-15	Guided Reading Fluency Vocabulary Comprehension Visualization Oral Language Skills
	10	Listening Comprehension / Applied Skills 	MINUTES 1:1 Ⓞ 15-30 GROUP Ⓞ 15-30	

## Wilson Instructional Lesson—Blocks 1, 2 and 3 90 Minutes

### Block One - Work Study / Decoding

- Quick Drill - automaticity of letter / sound association
- Teach - new concepts / review concepts
- Word Cards - fat stack, sight and vocabulary
- Word List Reading - formal and informal charting
- Sentence Reading
  - › Practice new skills
  - › Reading for meaning
  - › Phrasing / prosody



### Block Two - Spelling / Encoding

- Quick Drill in Reverse - automatic sound letter association
- Teach - new concepts / review concepts building words
- Dictation - written work, independent spelling and proofreading



### Block Three - Fluency / Comprehension

- Controlled Text Passages
  - Short Stories
    - › Applying decoding and comprehension skills
    - › Use of penciling and visualization
- Listening Comprehension
  - › Enriched text
  - › Non-controlled decodable text—student reads as appropriate



#### Reinforces

- › Fluency
- › Vocabulary
- › Visualization
- › Oral Language
- › Comprehension Strategies
- › Vocabulary

## GROUP LESSON SCHEDULE

### 45 - 60 Minute Lessons

	<b>Block 1</b>	<b>Block 2</b>	<b>Block 3</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Parts 1 - 5</b>		<b>Part 9</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Parts 1, 2</b>	<b>Parts 6, 7, 8</b>	<b>Part 9</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Parts 1 - 5</b>		<b>Part 10</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Parts 1, 2</b>	<b>Parts 6, 7, 8</b>	<b>Part 10</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Parts 1, 2</b> <b>Select: Charting, Fluency Drills, Wilson Games,</b> <b>Block 3 (Part 10 )</b>		

DATE _____	LESSON NUMBER _____	GROUP _____
SUBSTEP _____	LESSON FOCUS <input type="checkbox"/> INTRODUCTION <input type="checkbox"/> ACCURACY <input type="checkbox"/> FLUENCY	CONCEPTS TO WEAVE _____
WORD TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> REAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONSENSE		"TROUBLE SPOTS" _____

BLOCK 1 • Word Study

**1 SOUND CARDS QUICK DRILL** 2-3 MINUTES

<b>DRILL LEADER</b> _____	<b>CONSONANTS</b> _____
<b>VOWELS</b> _____	
<b>WELDED</b> _____	<b>ADD TO NOTEBOOK</b> _____

**2 TEACH & REVIEW CONCEPTS FOR READING** 5 MINUTES

<b>REVIEW CONCEPTS</b> _____	<b>CURRENT CONCEPTS</b> _____
<b>REVIEW WORDS</b> _____	<b>CURRENT WORDS</b> _____
<b>ADD TO NOTEBOOK</b> _____	

**3 WORD CARDS** 5-10 MINUTES

<b>SUBSTEPS</b> _____	<b>HIGH FREQUENCY / SIGHT WORDS</b> _____	<i>ADD NEW TO NOTEBOOK</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ACTIVITY</b> _____	<b>VOCABULARY WORDS</b> _____	<i>ADD NEW TO NOTEBOOK</i> <input type="checkbox"/>

**4 WORDLIST READING** 5-10 MINUTES

<b>READER LEVEL / WORDS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B	<b>PRACTICE</b> PAGE <input type="checkbox"/> TOP <input type="checkbox"/> BOTTOM	<b>CHARTING</b> PAGE <input type="checkbox"/> TOP <input type="checkbox"/> BOTTOM	<b>INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY</b> _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> REAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONSENSE			

**5 SENTENCE READING** 5-10 MINUTES

<b>READER LEVEL / WORDS</b> PAGE <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B	<b>VOCABULARY</b> _____	<b>ACTIVITY</b> _____
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DATE _____	LESSON NUMBER _____	GROUP _____
SUBSTEP _____	LESSON FOCUS <input type="checkbox"/> INTRODUCTION <input type="checkbox"/> ACCURACY <input type="checkbox"/> FLUENCY	CONCEPTS TO WEAVE _____
WORD TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> REAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONSENSE		"TROUBLE SPOTS" _____

WARM UP • Word Study

**1 SOUND CARDS QUICK DRILL** 2-3 MINUTES

DRILL LEADER _____	CONSONANTS _____
VOWELS _____	
WELDED _____	ADD TO NOTEBOOK _____

**2 TEACH & REVIEW CONCEPTS FOR READING** 5 MINUTES

REVIEW WORDS _____	CURRENT CONCEPTS _____
ADD TO NOTEBOOK _____	CURRENT WORDS _____

BLOCK 2 • Spelling

**6 QUICK DRILL IN REVERSE** 2-3 MINUTES

VOWELS _____	CONSONANTS _____	WELDED _____
_____	_____	_____

**7 TEACH & REVIEW CONCEPTS FOR SPELLING** 5-10 MINUTES

REVIEW CONCEPTS _____	CURRENT CONCEPTS _____
REVIEW WORDS _____	CURRENT WORDS _____
ADD TO NOTEBOOK _____	HIGH FREQUENCY / SIGHT WORDS _____

**8 WRITTEN WORK DICTATION (SOUNDS, WORDS, SENTENCES)** 15-20 MINUTES

SOUNDS _____	HIGH FREQUENCY / SIGHT WORDS _____
REAL WORDS _____	NONSENSE WORDS _____
SENTENCES _____	

DATE <input type="text"/>	LESSON NUMBER <input type="text"/>	GROUP <input type="text"/>
SUBSTEP <input type="text"/>	LESSON FOCUS <input type="checkbox"/> INTRODUCTION <input type="checkbox"/> ACCURACY <input type="checkbox"/> FLUENCY	CONCEPTS TO WEAVE <input type="text"/>
WORD TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> REAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONSENSE		"TROUBLE SPOTS" <input type="text"/>

BLOCK 3 • Fluency / Comprehension

**9 CONTROLLED TEXT PASSAGE READING** 10-15 MINUTES

BOOK	READER LEVEL	PAGE(S)	NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT READER	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> STORIES FOR OLDER STUDENTS 1-3		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> STORIES FOR OLDER STUDENTS 4-6		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> STORIES FOR OLDER STUDENTS 7-9		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> TRAVELS WITH TED		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> WILSON FLUENCY™ READER		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**10 LISTENING COMPREHENSION / APPLIED SKILLS** 15-30 MINUTES

ENRICHED TEXT PASSAGE	PAGES
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
DECODABLE TEXT PASSAGE	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
NOTES	
<input type="text"/>	

## How do I Supervise the WRS Program Implementation?

### LOOK FOR...

- Daily lesson plan
- Wilson room environment
- Following of lesson blocks as prescribed
- Active student engagement
- Questioning techniques and error correction
- Circulating the room
- Including vocabulary
- Focus on trouble spots
- Tapping, scooping, penciling, visualization
- Homework can include
  - › Fluency Drills / Practice
  - › Using Words in Context
  - › Student Workbook
  - › Comprehension controlled and non - controlled decodable text

### SUPERVISION POINTS...

- Room setup
- Lesson plans
- Fidelity and Walkthrough checklists
- Monitor student progress
  - › Progress charts
  - › Individual and group post - test
  - › Student daily work - dictation
  - › Universal screening - informal and formal school based assessments

### EFFECTIVE WRS INSTRUCTION LEADS TO...

**Clear Expectation and Academic Rigor**

**For Students to Become  
Fluent and Independent Readers**

# Wilson Reading System® Progress Monitoring Graph

The purpose of this graph is to set a desired benchmark of instruction and monitor progress over time.

## Instructions:

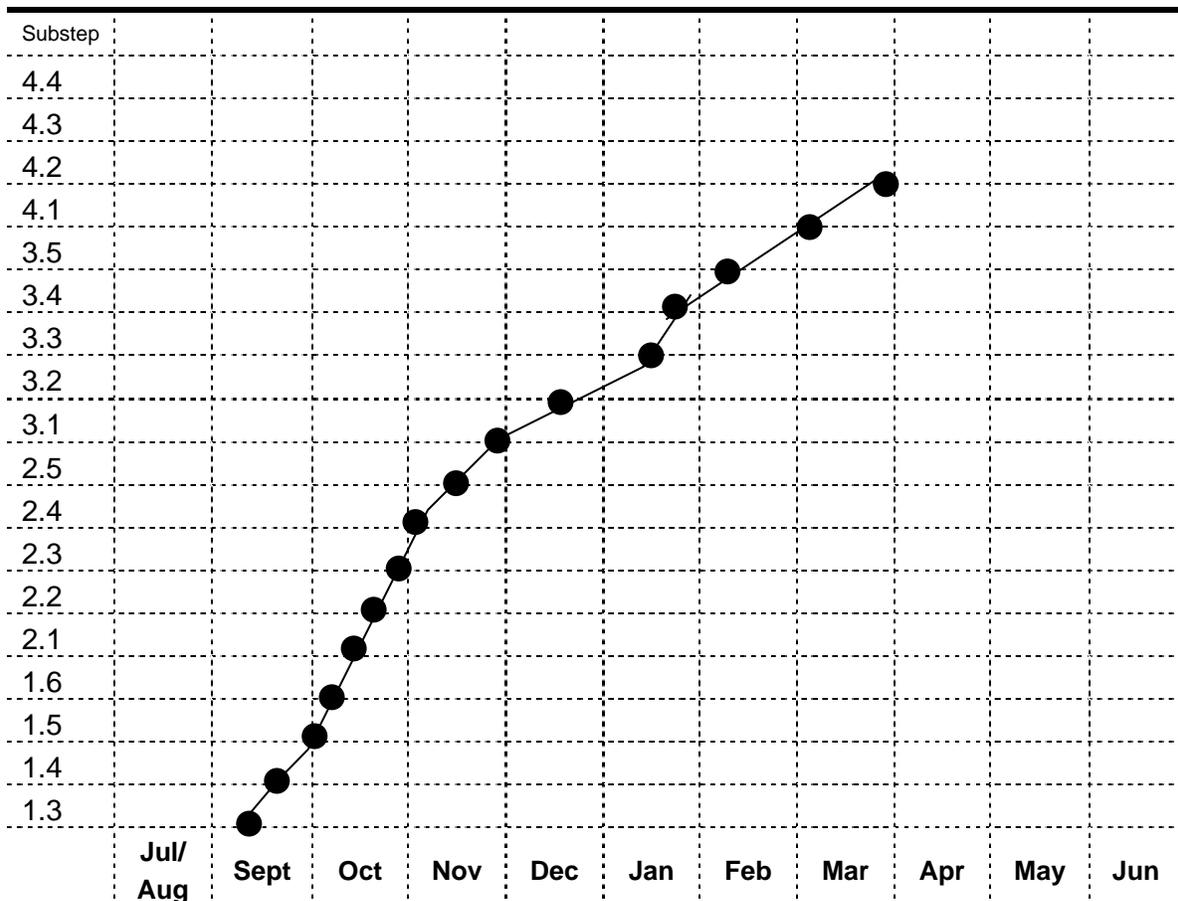
Choose a WRS Substep to reach by the end of instruction. As a general guideline, students should complete a minimum of four steps per year. Consider number of students in group, number of lessons to be taught per week, number of weeks, length of each session (at least 45 minutes), WADE and other pretesting.

Fill in the left-handed column with each Substep that will be taught. Draw a line across the page at the benchmark. A dot will be graphed indicating the month and Substep each time a student demonstrates:

- **Accuracy Mastery:** 100% of real and 90% nonsense words in Substep are read correctly without tapping.

Example:

4.4



# Wilson Reading System® Progress Monitoring Graph

Name of Student or Group \_\_\_\_\_ Benchmark Substep \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_ End Date of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Step of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_ Ending Step of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_

Substep											
	Jul/ Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun

# WILSON READING SYSTEM<sup>®</sup>: Principal Walk-Through

Name of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

## **Look For:**

### Student Identification and Placement

- Students are placed in groups according to nationally-normed word attack or word identification assessment percentiles (0-15%, 16-30%, 31-50%) and WADE nonsense word reading and real word spelling scores
- Instruction begins at WRS Step 1 and follows program sequentially (no substeps are missed)
- Teacher can provide class pretest scores that indicate the students have similar below level word attack scores

### Lesson Materials and Class Set-Up

- Each* student has a WRS Student Reader, Student Notebook, and Magnetic Journal and Tiles
- Student notebooks are kept up-to-date- and used during each lesson
- Teachers maintain word list charts for each student
- Classroom lesson plan wall chart is visible and utilized during lesson (recommended)

### Lesson Planning

- Teacher indicates current substep and produces students' charting to demonstrate mastery of previous substeps.
- A WRS Lesson Plan is prepared and followed for each lesson
- At least two blocks of the 3-block WRS Lesson Plan are taught during each lesson

### General Lesson Procedures

- Multisensory instruction is used throughout each session. Examples include manipulation of word parts, tapping, scooping phrases
- Questioning techniques are used throughout the lesson (check understanding, review and correct errors)
- All students engaged in lesson with continuous teacher-student interaction

## Specific Lesson Components

	Lesson Part	Look for...
<b>BLOCK 1 – Word Study</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 1 Quick Drill</b>	Students accurately provide letter name-keyword-sounds (or just sounds if fluency lesson).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 2 Teach/Review Concepts for Reading</b>	Teacher makes words with sound or syllable cards and discusses word structure. / Students read words and demonstrate knowledge of word structure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 3 Word Cards</b>	Teacher and students discuss word structure and read card packets / Targeted vocabulary is discussed. / High frequency/sight words practiced.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 4 Word List</b>	Students read wordlists from WRS Student Reader.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 4 Charting</b>	Charting should be done each lesson (for 1:1 instruction and weekly (for groups) – see individual student charts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 5 Sentence Reading</b>	Sentences tracked and read by students with proper phrasing (modeled by teacher as needed). / Challenging vocabulary discussed as it is encountered in sentences.
<b>BLOCK 2 – Spelling</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 6 Quick Drill Reverse</b>	Students fluently provide letter(s) to match dictated sound(s).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 7 Teach/Review Concepts for Spelling</b>	Students make words with letter tiles or syllable cards. / Teacher weaves questions and students demonstrate knowledge of word structure and spelling rules. / High frequency/sight words practiced.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 8 Written Dictation</b>	Students write five sounds, five words, nonsense words, sight words, and two-three sentences. Teacher guides questioning and notebook use before student writes. / If student makes an error while writing, teacher guides correction before moving on.
<b>BLOCK 3 – Comprehension/Fluency</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 9 Controlled Text Passage</b>	Students read controlled text passage using penciling technique. / Teacher models prosody as needed. / Teacher guides student comprehension and retell as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part 10 Listening Comprehension</b>	Teacher engages students with high interest, narrative or expository text. / Teacher solicits comprehension through visualization, and develops vocabulary and oral expressive language skills.

# Program Fidelity Checklist

This checklist can be used by reading coaches to identify needs, support instruction and provide oversight so that the Wilson Reading System (WRS) instruction is implemented to prescribed best practices. Certified Wilson trainers must provide guidance and feedback on specific lesson procedures.

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

WRS Step: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Students in Group: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Teaching Staff – Intervention Model</b>	Meets Criteria	Somewhat Meets Criteria	Does Not Meet Criteria	Comments
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- |  |                          |                          |                          |  |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| At minimum, teachers implementing the WRS Intervention model are enrolled in or have completed the WRS Intervention Workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| Teachers implementing the WRS Intervention model are enrolled in or have completed the Wilson Academy Basic                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| WRS Level I Certification (not required, but preferred)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

<b>Student Assessment and Placement</b>	Meets Criteria	Somewhat Meets Criteria	Does Not Meet Criteria	Comments
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- |   |                          |                          |                          |  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Students in Wilson classes score below the 30th percentile in decoding, word identification, and/or word attack skills on standardized measures | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| All students are pre-tested using the Wilson Assessment for Decoding and Encoding   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| Students are grouped in classes by word attack scores: 0-15% and 16-30%   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| All students begin WRS instruction at Step 1 of the program   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

<b>Lesson Scheduling</b>	Meets Criteria	Somewhat Meets Criteria	Does Not Meet Criteria	Comments
--------------------------	-------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------------	----------

- |  |                          |                          |                          |  |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Instruction in reading classes of 7-15 students occurs 5 times per week for 90 min | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| Blocks 1, 2 and 3 of the WRS lesson plan (parts 1-10) are completed every session  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| If different, explain lesson plan schedule:  |                          |                          |                          |  |

<b>Lesson Set-Up</b>	Meets Criteria	Somewhat Meets Criteria	Does Not Meet Criteria	Comments
Each student has a notebook that includes the following sections:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sounds</li> <li>• Syllables</li> <li>• Spelling rules</li> <li>• Sight word dictionary</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Dictation pages that correspond to each lesson</li> </ul>				
The teacher maintains a plan book that includes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope and sequence</li> <li>• Word list charts for each student</li> <li>• Lesson plans</li> <li>• Weekly schedule for group lessons</li> </ul>				

<b>Student Pacing and Progress</b>	Meets Criteria	Somewhat Meets Criteria	Does Not Meet Criteria	Comments
Students in a group setting progress together from one substep to the next	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Each student is charted for progression to the next substep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The teacher maintains a chart for each student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Progression to the next substep depends upon:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students self-correct any reading or spelling error with assistance given by the teacher with questioning.</li> <li>• Fluency of sentence and story reading</li> <li>• Understanding/mastery of concept taught.</li> </ul>				
At the end of every step, students pass a posttest before progressing to the subsequent step.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Charting at least 14/15 real and 13/15 nonsense word lists without tapping				
Spelling (at least 75% accuracy)				

<b>General Lesson Procedures</b>	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
Multisensory instruction is used throughout each session. Examples include: manipulation of word parts, tapping, scooping phrases, marking words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Explicit teaching is followed by student practice (use of sound, syllable, suffix cards to directly teach/review concepts in Part 2 & 6 of the lesson plan)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Questioning techniques are used throughout the lesson (check understanding, review, and correct errors)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lessons focus on trouble spots and review previously taught concepts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lessons include sight word instruction with irregular words for both reading and spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lessons include discussion of vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Each student uses his/her WRS notebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Teacher prepares a written lesson plan for every session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
When working in a group, all students participate in the same lesson plan, in the same substep.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Activities maintain student engagement in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Specific Lesson Procedures**

Guidance and feedback on specific lesson procedures provided by certified Wilson trainers as appropriate.

# Florida Center for Reading Research

## Wilson Reading System

### What is the Wilson Reading System?

The *Wilson Reading System* is a highly structured reading and writing program that serves as an intervention and helps 2<sup>nd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade struggling readers learn the structure of words and language by directly instructing students to decode and encode (spell) fluently. The program was originally developed for students who have dyslexia, but has been expanded to target the needs of students who are below grade level in reading. Level A uses age appropriate reading material for younger or ESL students, while Level B uses age appropriate reading material for older students.

Based on the Orton-Gillingham multisensory philosophy and principles, the *Wilson Reading System* provides a well organized, incremental, and cumulative 12-step system. Steps one through six provide students with the basics for decoding and encoding to create a solid foundation before moving on. Steps 7 through 12 focus more on advanced word analysis, vocabulary development, comprehension, and metacognition. The *Wilson Reading System* provides a plan in which students receive instruction in: learning to hear sounds; manipulating color-coded sound, syllable, and word cards; performing finger-tapping exercises to assist in phonemic awareness; writing dictated words and sentences; reading aloud; and paraphrasing selections they read, and which are read to them. Students receive direct reinforcement and instructional feedback based on their individual performances and do not proceed to the next step until they have met each step's criteria as each step builds upon the one before.

There are two models of implementation for the *Wilson Reading System*. The intervention model incorporates the use of small group instruction taught by either a remedial reading teacher or regular classroom teacher for four or five days each week during the regular school day. The intensive model provides those students who have been diagnosed with a language learning disability with tutoring or small group instruction provided by a Wilson certified instructor. The lessons are fast-paced with continuous interaction between teacher and student. Each lesson can be completed in 55 to 90 minutes.

The scope and sequence emphasizes six common types of syllables in which sounds are taught as they relate to these fundamental syllable types. The first two steps emphasize skills in phonemic segmentation and blending by working with the phonemes of monosyllabic words. By using sound cards, the student learns a "sound-tapping" procedure where he learns to segment sounds within words. For example, in teaching the word "cat", three letter-cards representing the three sounds in the word are placed in front of the student. Because a student is taught to say each sound while tapping a different finger to his or her thumb, a student would begin by tapping his index finger to his thumb as he says /c/, followed by tapping the middle finger to his thumb as he says /a/, and then tapping his ring finger to his thumb as he says /t/. Finally, the student says the word as he drags his thumb across the three fingers.



The *Wilson Reading System* offers sets of teacher and student materials in standard, deluxe, and starter kit models as well as additional support material through an online resource. Student materials include readers, workbooks, class and group sets. Instructor materials include manuals, dictation books, rules notebook, sound cards, word cards, syllable cards, group cards, and videos. The Wilson Assessment of Decoding and Encoding (WADE) is a criterion-referenced assessment that can be used for pre and posttesting purposes, as well as a placement and pacing guide. The WADE measures sound production of graphemes in isolation, fluent decoding and encoding (spelling) of phonetically regular words and high frequency irregular words.

### How is the Wilson Reading System aligned with Current Reading Research?

The *Wilson Reading System* provides extensive instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The unique “sound tapping” system helps students learn to differentiate the phonemes in a word in order to apply the decoding and encoding skills learned. This technique is used for both segmenting and blending sounds.

Phonics instruction in the *Wilson Reading System* is developmentally appropriate, and the presentation of sounds and syllables is controlled beginning with initial phonemes, short vowels, and double consonants. After students succeed at reading and spelling words with three sounds, they then move on to words with four sounds, then five, and so on. Polysyllabic words are introduced in the third step when students are taught to segment words into syllables. From the beginning, students learn sight words from lists that correspond with each lesson and write these sight words in their “rules notebook” for review later. Additionally, students read and spell words in this notebook using the tapping or scooping technique to increase accuracy.

In order to build fluency, students are provided opportunities to read and reread the wordlists, sentences and decodable stories. Additionally, there are timed fluency drills for each step of the *Wilson Reading System* (provided on Wilson Academy online). Students use a penciling technique to develop phrasing and expression. They achieve fluency when they are able to read and spell the words easily and quickly without the use of tapping or guidance from the teacher.

Vocabulary words are introduced in isolation before concentrating on written text. A review of each previous lesson’s vocabulary words is included in all lessons. All text is controlled in order for students to master decoding and encoding.

Comprehension is taught from the beginning through visualization techniques that students use during reading from controlled text. By breaking the story into smaller units, teachers show students how to link words with a picture in their minds using the think aloud procedure. Students then are asked to replay the story in their heads while one student retells the story in detail. To help develop comprehension skills at a higher level than the students’ decoding work, the teacher also reads aloud other material provided by the students or teacher such as newspapers, magazines, and short stories encouraging the same process of visualization and retelling techniques. Wilson Academy online provides a current event news story each week that is written at both an enriched level (to read to students) and a decodable level (for students to read independently). These stories are other sources of text to use while implementing these comprehension techniques.

Wilson Language Training provides several levels of professional development. A two or three-day overview workshop is designed to introduce participants to the program. After completing this workshop, individuals are able to use the program but are not considered “trained” as a Wilson certified tutor. The two-day overview is a prerequisite to the Wilson Academy online community membership which provides resources, animated demonstrations of key concepts and procedures, threaded discussions and live chats with a Wilson trainer. A comprehensive online course worth 6 graduate credits is also available. Follow-up site visits can be arranged for both intervention and intensive models of implementation. Certification in Level I (Wilson steps 1-6) requires the two day overview and one year of additional training that includes a supervised practicum. Level II certification requires the above and also involves a one-year course for steps 7 – 12 and advanced group instruction. Wilson recommends that school districts develop in-district Wilson trainers. These individuals receive ongoing support and training material from Wilson.

### Research Support for the Wilson Reading System



*The Wilson Reading System* was introduced in 1988. Its instructional content and design focus on a series of steps and subskills of which the complex act of reading is composed. Each skill of every step is thoroughly learned before the introduction of the next skill.

There is a beginning level of research support for the *Wilson Reading System*. One study referred to in the Wilson materials involves data collected by Wilson Language Training that was analyzed by Dr. Frank Wood of Wake Forest University. At several sites across the United States, Wilson tutors collected data from pre- and post-tests during training. Data were collected from 374 students across a two-year period from 1999 to 2001. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (1998) was used to collect data on student performance. The mean age of the participants was 10 – 11 years. The results revealed several findings: (1) pre-/post-test differences were statistically significant on the following subtests and cluster scores: word identification, word attack, passage comprehension, basic skills cluster, and total reading cluster; (2) students with low IQ benefited from remediation as well as did higher IQ students; (3) the most severe group saw greater improvement in their Total Reading Cluster than did the least severe group; and (4) students at all grade levels from grade 3 through grade 8 benefited from remediation. The major limitation of these findings, of course, is that the tests were administered by those who taught the children and thus may be inflated by unconscious supports provided by the teachers. The study also did not employ a control or comparison group, thus it is not possible to attribute the gains directly to the Wilson instruction. A strength of the results, however, is that the data were reported as standard scores, which only improve if the student actually makes reading gains that are greater than those expected during the period of instruction. That is, standard scores indicate the level of the child’s reading skill relative to a large norming group. If these scores improve, it means the student is becoming a better reader relative to average readers, or is “closing the gap” in reading skill.

In 1995, O’Connor and Wilson investigated the effectiveness of the Wilson Reading System with learning disabled students in grades 3-12. The study used a pre- and post-test design which involved 220 participants who had not shown progress with any of the other reading programs implemented or individual tutoring. In addition,

approximately 1/3 had been retained at least one grade. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-revised (1998) served as the instrument used to assess each student's reading performance. The *Wilson Reading System* was used to assess progress in spelling ability. The teachers who participated in the study attended a two-day workshop at the beginning of the school year and were observed at least 5 times throughout the year. After completing approximately 62 lessons, the participants were given a posttest from which comparisons were made with the pretest indicating that significant gains were made in word attack, comprehension, and total reading. This study has similar limitations and strengths as the one previously reported.

Our conclusion from reviewing current research on the *Wilson Reading System* is that it is consistent with the idea that the program can be used effectively to help "close the gap" in reading skills for struggling readers. However, the research designs in these studies were very weak, so this support must be regarded as tentative at present. The *Wilson Reading System* is one of four intervention programs for struggling readers that was determined to have sufficient preliminary evidence of effectiveness to be included in a large scale, randomized control trial of reading interventions for older students. The results from this study, organized by the Haan foundation, and referred to as the Power4Kids initiative, will be available at the beginning of 2005. Although present empirical support for the *Wilson Reading System* is limited, the content and instructional design of the program is aligned with current reading research.

### Strengths & Weaknesses

#### Strengths of *Wilson Reading System*:

- The instructional design is explicit and systematic.
- The scope and sequence is detailed and logical.
- Each lesson is planned carefully with a timed guideline to follow.
- The lessons are fast paced with multisensory instruction.
- The strong professional development component aims to ensure fidelity of delivery.

#### Weaknesses of *Wilson Reading System*:

- None were noted.

### Which Florida districts have schools that implement Wilson Reading System?

Alachua	352-955-7880
Broward	754-321-2600
Collier	239-377-0212
Duval	904-390-2115
Martin	772-219-1200
Okeechobee	863-462-5000
St. Lucie	772-429-3925

## For More Information

[www.wilsonlanguage.com](http://www.wilsonlanguage.com)

## References



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Lead Reviewer: Tammy Johnson, M.S.  
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Please send comments about this report to Marcia L. Grek, Ph.D.: [reports@fcrr.org](mailto:reports@fcrr.org)



Joel I. Klein  
*Chancellor*

Marcia V. Lyles  
*Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning*

Linda Wernikoff  
*Executive Director*

Office of Special Education Initiatives  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, New York 10007

Phone: (212) 374-6085  
Fax: (212) 374-5599  
E-mail: [lwernik@school.nyc.gov](mailto:lwernik@school.nyc.gov)