

Differentiated Literacy Centers

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What's Different About Differentiated Literacy Centers?

- ☑ Groups of students work on tasks that target their data-based literacy goals.
- ☑ Center tasks directly support the skills and strategies being taught in small-group lessons.
- ☑ Tasks are differentiated in complexity. For example, groups of students may work on the same strategy, but at different levels of challenge.
- ☑ Materials are also differentiated. At the comprehension center students practice their reading goal (teaching point in small-group lesson) with text at their independent reading level. At the word study center each group works with materials at the appropriate level of complexity of letter-sound relationships or word patterns based upon assessment.
- ☑ Differentiation is made both sustainable and doable by using ongoing formats throughout the year. Teachers will not need to continuously create new center activities! (see Six-Step Guide)









Six-Step Guide to Implementation

1. VARY THE LEVEL OF CHALLENGE AND LABEL THE TASKS:

- Provide a balance of leveled and multilevel tasks. Provide one easier and one more challenging task together with one or more multilevel tasks that all students can complete based on a whole class lesson (read-aloud, shared reading or vocabulary lesson) at each center.
- Color-code tasks by level of challenge using green (beginner), yellow (intermediate) and red (advanced) stickers or use geometric shapes to indicate the level of challenge (circle, triangle, rectangle). Use a blue sticker or a shape to indicate the multilevel tasks.
- You can copy the Tic Tac Toe menus for students to keep in plastic sleeves in 3-ring notebooks or paste in their spiral notebooks.

I Wonder






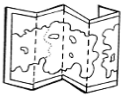


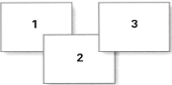
I wonder who . . . 
I wonder what . . . 
I wonder where . . . 
I wonder why . . . 
I wonder when . . . 
I wonder how . . . 

Tic-Tac-Tell for Stories

Title: _____

Author: _____

Choose three retelling starters across, down, or diagonally.





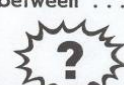




<p>Tell how the character is like or not like someone you know.</p> 	<p>Describe the feelings the character showed in the story.</p> 	<p>Retell the important things the character said.</p> 
<p>Pretend you are a detective. What are the clues that tell us where the story happened?</p> 	<p>List the places where important events happened.</p> 	<p>Draw a map of the places where the story happened.</p> 
<p>Draw a comic strip of three things that happened.</p> 	<p>Pretend you are the author. Tell the most exciting events.</p> 	<p>Write three events on sticky notes and put them in the right order.</p> 

Tic-Tac-Question #3

Title: _____

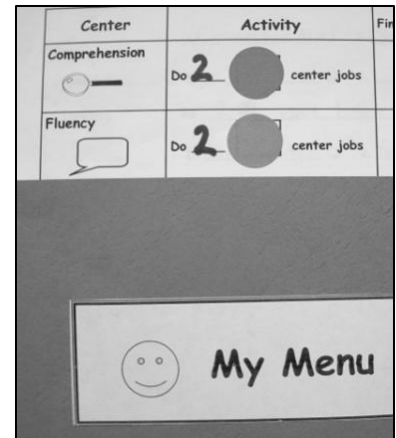
Author: _____

Choose three question starters across, down, or diagonally. Think of a question that begins with these words.

<p>Why do you think . . . ?</p> 	<p>What might happen if . . . ?</p> 	<p>How would you . . . ?</p> 
<p>Were they right to . . . ?</p> 	<p>What is the difference between . . . ?</p> 	<p>Should . . . ?</p> 
<p>Why does . . . ?</p> 	<p>How could . . . ?</p> 	<p>How do . . . ?</p> 

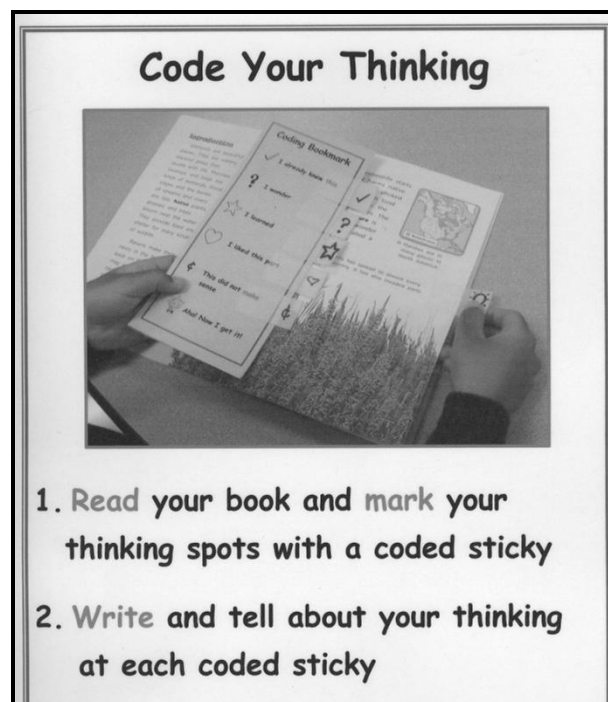
2. PROGRAM STUDENT MENUS AND PROVIDE NOTEBOOKS:

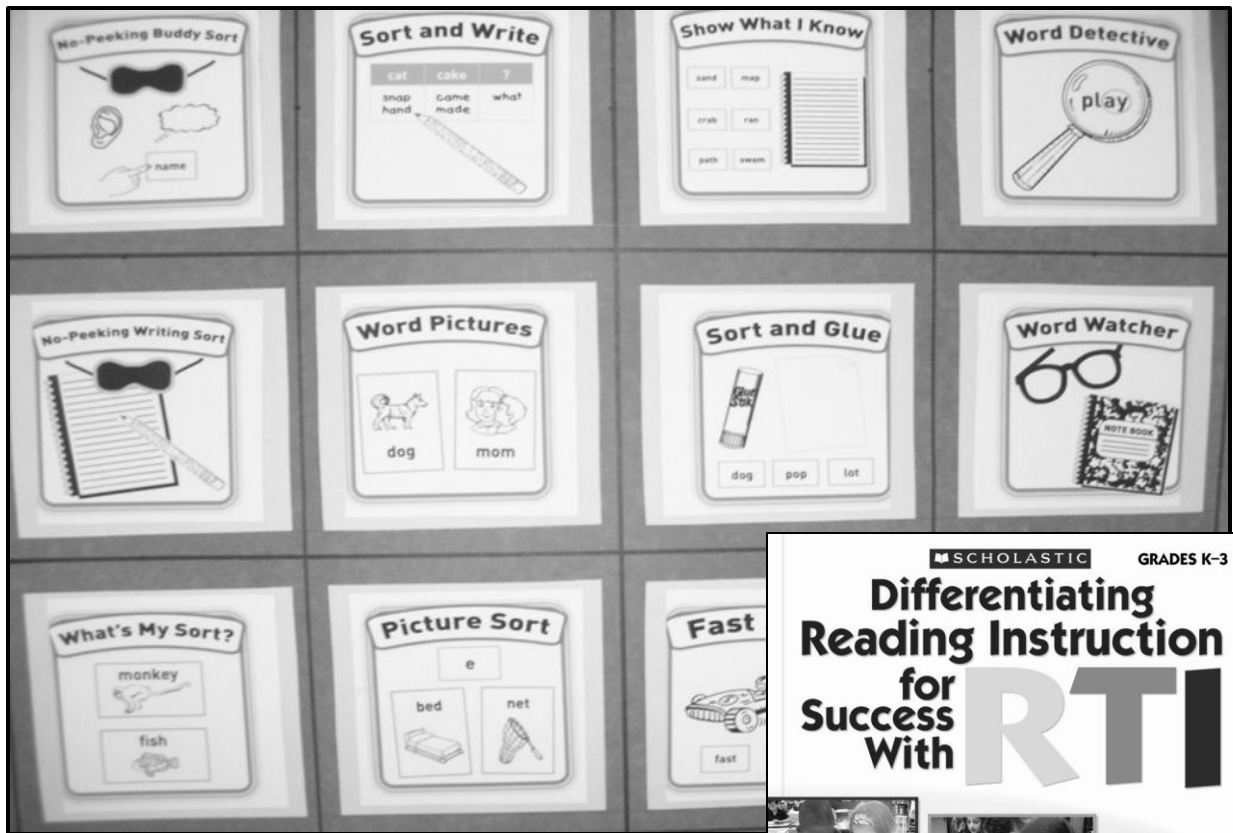
- Provide each student with a menu that lists the number of tasks and the level of challenge they will work on at each center. This menu may be in place for a number of weeks, depending on the rate of student progress in each skill/strategy area (comprehension, fluency, word study and writing). Students store menus in pocket folders along with any incomplete work.
- You may also record students' reading levels on the menu to guide them in selecting independent level text at the Comprehension Center.
- To record their work at the comprehension center, each student uses the same reading response notebook they use in class lessons, so they have completed examples of recording formats to refer to at the center.
- At the word study center students also use the same notebook for lessons and center work so that examples of recording formats are at their fingertips.



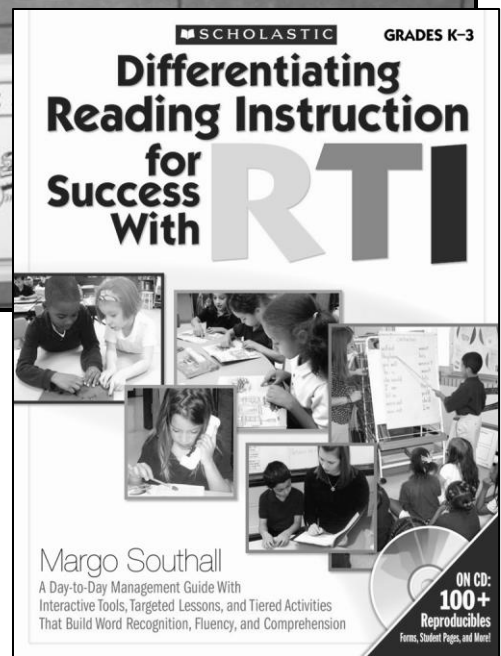
3. USE PHOTOS AND PICTURE CUES TO MAKE STEP-BY-STEP POSTERS:

- Provide photos and picture cues that clearly depict the expectations at each center. You can make your own posters or task cards by taking photos of students as they model the task for the class. List the steps students need to complete the task or use photos to depict each step.
- Display at the centers or in the portable bins labeled for each center.





(Coding Bookmark in Differentiated Small-Group Reading Lessons, Southall, 2009; 16 Picture-Cued Word Study Rotation Icons in Differentiating Reading Instruction for Success with Rtl, Southall, 2011, Scholastic)



4. KEEP IT SIMPLE WITH A SET OF WEEKLY CORE TASKS:

Select a set of core practice tasks for comprehension, word study, fluency and writing to streamline your planning and reduce preparation time.




- At the comprehension center, provide a strategy-based read-and-respond task such as the Tic Tac Toe menus in #1. The strategy varies, and so do the texts students read, but the reading and responding formats are consistent, so students know how to record the response in their notebook.
- At the word study center, there is always a set of core word sort tasks and high frequency word tasks that all students complete using the words their group is currently studying (see Task Cards and Tic Tac Look-and-Say menu examples).
- A core task at the fluency center includes the Tic Tac Poems menu.
- An ongoing format at the writing center writing is the Story Builder, which includes story elements from class read-alouds for students to mix and match and construct their own stories (see example). This is added to continuously throughout the year. The story elements can be picture-cued in a rebus format so they are accessible to all students (see Silly Sentences example).

Tic-Tac Look-and-Say #2

Title: _____



Author: _____


Choose three jobs across, down, or diagonally to make a Tic-Tac-Look-and-Say.

<p>Sight-Word Hunt</p> 	<p>Sight-Word Sort</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>w_</td> <td>wh_</td> </tr> <tr> <td>were</td> <td>where</td> </tr> <tr> <td>went</td> <td>when</td> </tr> </table>	w_	wh_	were	where	went	when	<p>Mix and Fix</p> <p>s e</p> <p>d o</p>
w_	wh_							
were	where							
went	when							
<p>Word Pyramids</p> <p>p pe peo peop peopl people</p>	<p>You choose!</p> 	<p>Card Game</p> 						

Sort and Write

cat	cake	?
snap	came	what

1. Sort the word cards.  

2. Write the key words. 

3. List the words in columns under each key word.

cat	cake	?
snap	make	what


4. Write what is the same about the words.
e.g. "All of the words under key word cat have a short a..."

cat	snap	hand
-----	------	------

Tic-Tac-R



X		
	O	

No-Peeking Buddy Sort





Buddy 1

1. Put key words in front of Buddy 2.


 


2. Read the word cards to Buddy 2.
Do not show them the words.

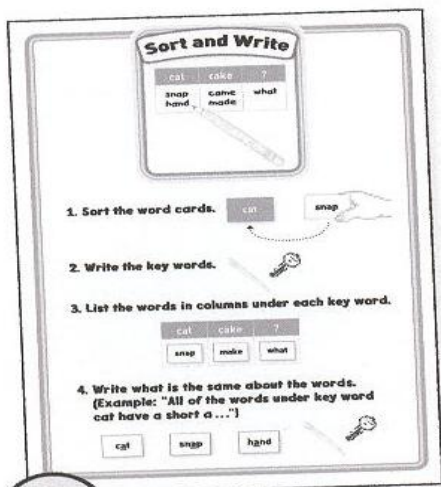
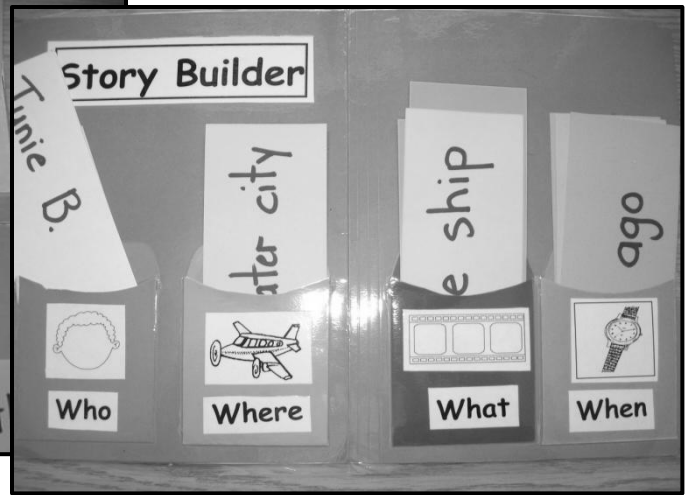
Buddy 2

1. Point to the key word where it belongs.

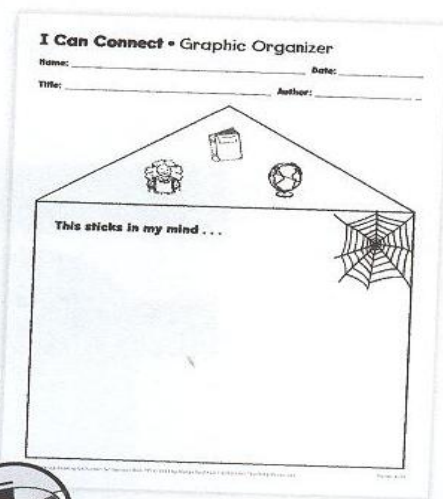


2. Tell why you put it there. 

(Tic-Tac-Look-and-Say formats are included in Differentiated Literacy Centers, 2007, Scholastic; 16 Step-by-Step, Picture-Cued Word Study Task Cards are provided in Differentiating Reading Instruction for Success with Rtl by Southall, 2011, Scholastic)



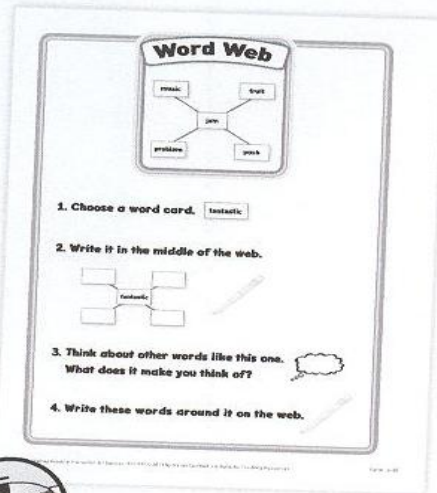
Sort and Write Task Card
Form 4.33 on the CD



I Can Connect Graphic Organizer
Form 6.19 on the CD



Storyboard
Form 6.62 on the CD



Word Web Task Card
Form 4.45 on the CD

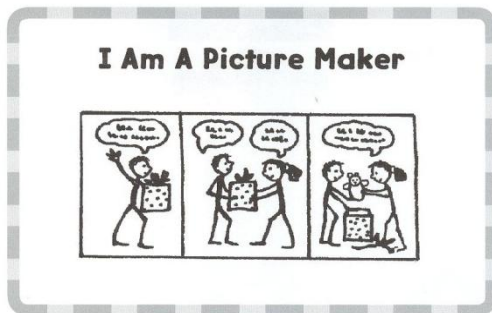
A weekly menu of core tasks may include one task from each reading component.

AVOID THE DREADED 'I'M DONE' WITH A CHOICE BOARD:

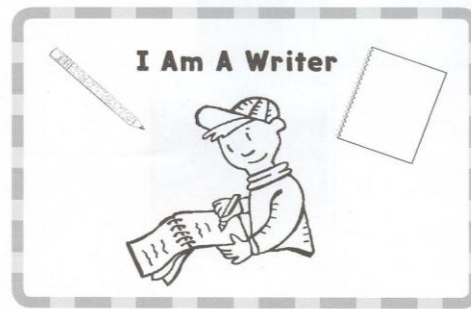
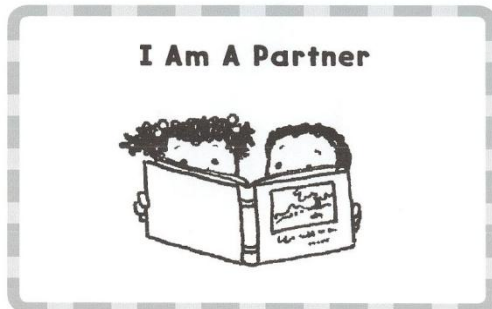
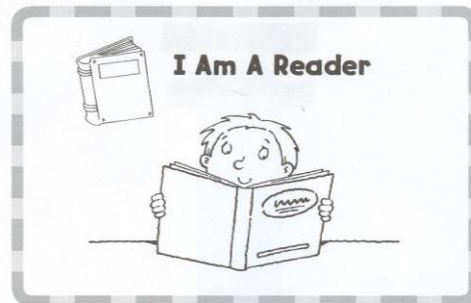
- Create an engaging choice board menu for fast finishers.
- Display a choice board of sustainable, low-prep tasks every student can do when they have completed all the tasks at the center. For example, ongoing projects and class author studies.

(6 Choice Board Icons with accompanying tasks are provided in Differentiating Reading Instruction for Success with Rtl, Southall, 2011, Scholastic)

Choice Board Icons



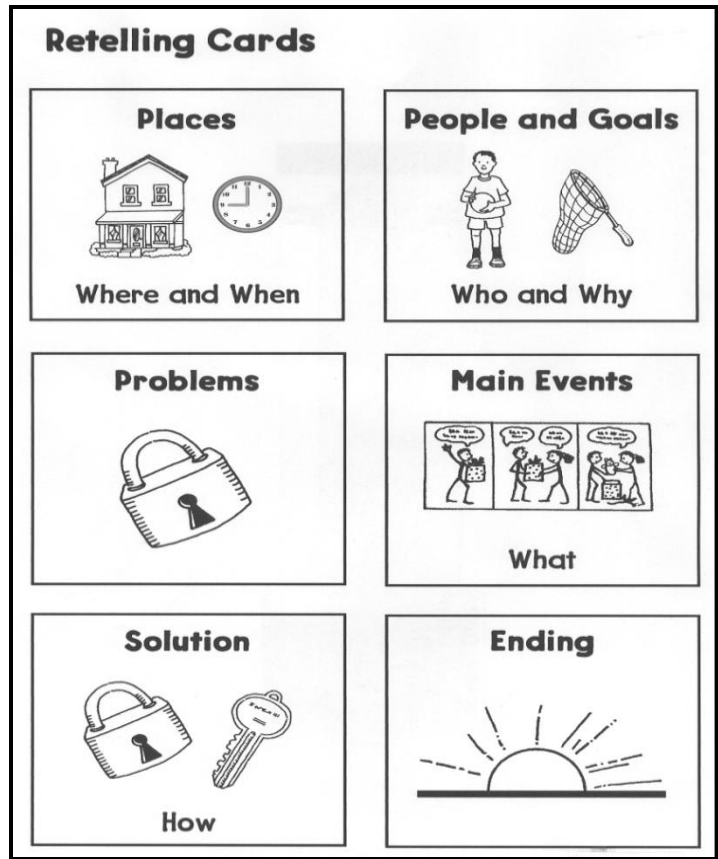
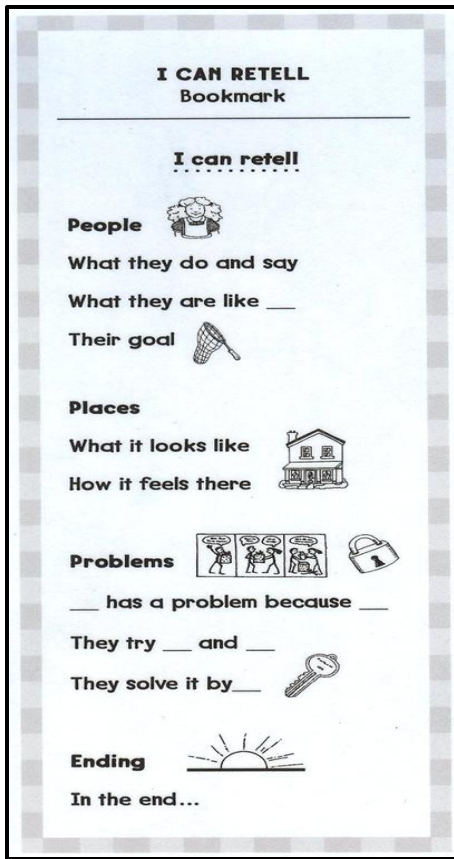
Choice Board Icons



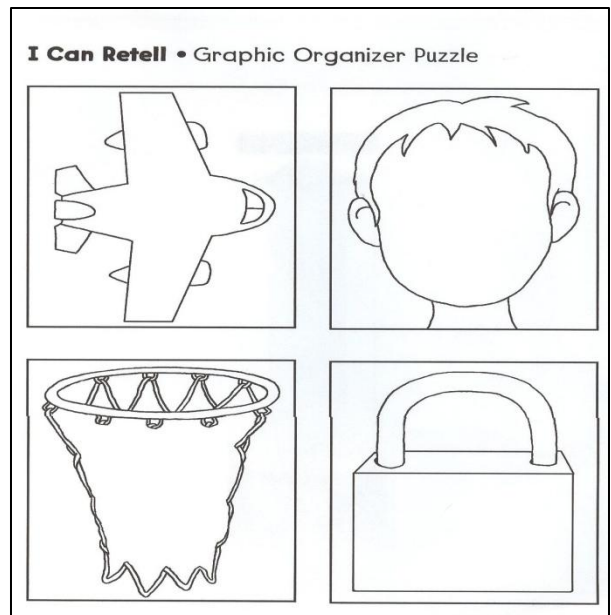
6. CONNECT THE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE TASKS TO SMALL-GROUP LESSONS:

- For students to value center work and maintain motivation, it is essential that they see the purpose – how the practice tasks will help them grow as a reader and writer.
- During the last section of your lesson in which you review the teaching point, show students the link between what they are learning together in the small-group lesson and the practice tasks they will perform at the center.
- Verbally reaffirm the importance of having time to practice their comprehension, fluency or word-solving strategy goal on their own. This supports the transfer of skills and strategies from lessons to independent application.

- Review student work (e.g. reading response notebooks, word study notebooks) and provide feedback during small-group lessons and one-to-one conferences. This also establishes accountability and relevance for center work.



Students use the strategy bookmark and retelling cards in small group lessons (see Differentiated Small-Group Reading Lessons, Southall, 2009).



Students use the retelling cube (Differentiated Literacy Centers, 2007) and a variety of graphic organizers at the center (Differentiating Reading Instruction for Success with Rtl, 2011).