

Project ALIGN: An Opportunity to Improve Fifth-Grade Reading, Writing, and Vocabulary

We invite you to collaborate with The University of Kansas and The University of Texas at Austin on a **U.S. Department of Education-funded project.** The goal of this project is to find out if students with reading comprehension difficulties do better in reading and learn more content when provided the same reading comprehension practices in core English language arts/reading (ELA/R) and small-group reading intervention. We hope to build a **partnership** with you so we can work together to **improve the reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and content knowledge** of **students with reading difficulties** in your school.

What is Project ALIGN?

Sample Student Cue Cards

- · ALIGN is a research project conducted by The University of Kansas and The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at The University of Texas at Austin in partnership with KC Metro and Central Texas school districts.
- A total of 72 elementary schools, up to 432 teachers, and up to 864 fifth graders will participate in ALIGN between 2024 and 2028.
- Project ALIGN will compare students' performance across 3 groups:
 - o Aligned Group: Teachers implement reading comprehension practices in core ELA/R and small-group reading intervention
 - o Nonaligned Group: Teachers implement reading comprehension practices in core ELA/R and business-as-usual instruction in reading intervention
 - o Business-as-usual Group: Teachers provide typical instruction in core ELA/R and intervention.

Why is aligned instruction important?

- National data suggest students with reading difficulties struggle to read and understand grade-level texts.
- Students often receive small-group reading intervention in addition to core instruction. However, intervention typically addresses different content and skills. This limits practice opportunities and generalization of skills.

On the other hand, aligned instruction provides: Consistent use of evidence-based practices in core and intervention settings Pre-teaching practices in intervention **STRIVE Collaborative Learning** before they are introduced in core instruction Expectations Intentional, structured practice **Question Types opportunities** with high-quality feedback Be respec Distributed practice opportunities to Who? **CLP Student Script for Vocabulary** Take turn facilitate generalization What? 5. Word Associations: Partners take turns When? R٤ ☐ Ask gues discussing each Where? I think the wor Why? [vocabulary w How? **CLP Student Script for Get the Gist** ☐ What is t 6. Example: "what" in 1. Partner A: Who or what is this about? I wrote_ Partner B: I think this section is about Tell the n Do you agree? **Context CLUE Strategy** 7. Word Buildin the "who Partners discu I wrote Write the C: Check for unknown words. 2. Partner B: Wha L: Look for clu Examples of Context Clue Types ess. about the "wh word to look Definition Partner A: I thi general clue 1. A tribe is a group of people living together _. Do yoı 2. A group of people living in Word Building
Prefixes (Common Word Beginnings) meaning.

U: Use the wor Synonym

asking a frier General

3. Plateaus, high stretches

meeting, they wrote Tex

rights belonged to all Tex

2. Sam was lethargic and

1. The **Constitution** also co

un- (not, oppo

in-, im-, ir-, il- (r

dis- (not, oppos

mis- (wrongly)

sub- (under)

pre- (before)

non- (not)

re- (again)

Word Building (Common Word Endings)

played

jumping

teache

election

accessib**l**e

readable

development

thoughtless

Examples

Suffixes (Com

Suffixes

-s or -es (plurals)

-ed (past tense)

-er, -or (person)

-ing (present tense)

-tion (act. process)

-ly (characteristic of) -ment (action or process)

-less (without)

-ible, -able (can be done)

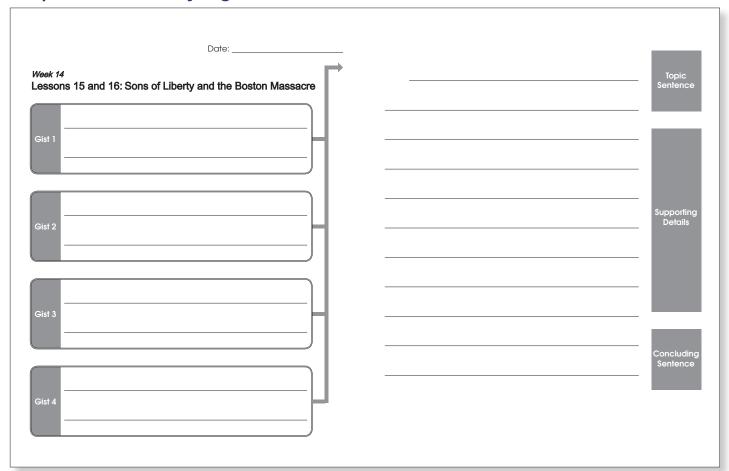
you understa 1. More than 1,200 years a

VOUR resourc the Piney Woods region **E:** Expand you 2. The government held a c

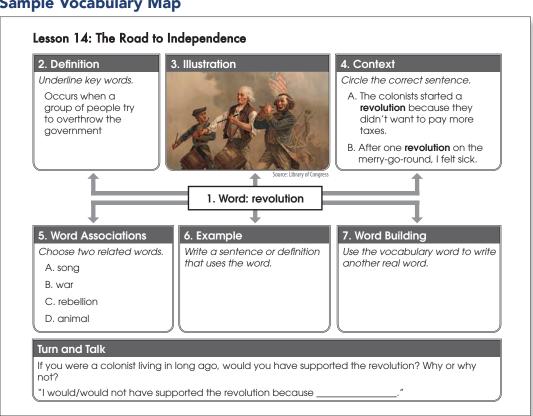
Partners discu:

3. Write the gist.

Sample Gist-to-Summary Organizer



Sample Vocabulary Map





What occurs in each group?

	Aligned Group	Nonaligned Group	Business-as-usual Group	
What occurs in core ELA/R?	36 <u>ALIGN</u> lessons delivered by each school's ELA/R teacher(s) 2x/week	36 <u>ALIGN</u> lessons delivered by each school's ELA/R teacher(s) 2x/week	Typical instruction provided by school	
What occurs in small group reading intervention?	54 <u>ALIGN</u> reading intervention lessons delivered by each school's intervention teacher(s) 3x/week	Typical reading intervention provided by school	Typical reading intervention provided by school	

What are the project activities?

Aligned Group:

- The **fifth-grade core ELA/R and intervention teachers** will receive an initial professional development and two follow-up sessions provided by the research team.
- Teachers and students will receive ALIGN materials at no cost.
- The fifth-grade core ELA/R and intervention teachers will teach ALIGN lessons during the 18-week implementation period (2x/week in core; 3x/week in intervention).
- The research team will provide individualized coaching for each teacher to support implementation.
- Students with reading difficulties will be pretested and posttested.

Nonaligned Group:

- The **fifth-grade core ELA/R teachers** will receive an initial professional development and two follow-up sessions provided by the research team. **Intervention teachers** provide typical instruction.
- Teachers and students will receive ALIGN materials at no cost.
- The fifth-grade core ELA/R teachers will teach ALIGN lessons during the 18-week implementation period (2x/week in core).
- The research team will provide individualized coaching for each teacher to support implementation.
- Students with reading difficulties will be pretested and posttested.

Business-as-usual Group:

- The **fifth-grade core ELA/R and intervention teachers** provide typical instruction.
- Students with reading difficulties will be pretested and posttested.





What does this mean for my school?

· Assist with scheduling PD sessions.

	Project Tasks				
Research Team (KU & UT Austin)	 Provide all PD sessions to core and intervention teachers in the aligned group and core teachers in the nonaligned group. 				
	Provide all teacher and student materials at no cost.				
	Provide ongoing implementation support (via observations with feedback).				
	 Administer individualized assessment at pretest. 				
	Distribute teacher stipends.				
	 Upon request, provide summative report to the school at end of project. 				
	Observe all school rules and policies and respect teachers' time and instruction.				
Teachers	Assist with collecting parent consent forms.				
	 Assist with scheduling PD sessions, pretesting, and posttesting. 				
	· Administer group assessments once for pretesting and once for posttesting.				
	 Audio-record lessons for implementation fidelity and coaching feedback. 				
	 Complete brief teacher surveys and provide students' demographic data andN prior year's state reading test scores (with parent permission). 				
School & District Leaders	Provide access to schools, teachers, and students (with parental consent).				
	 Adhere to the school's assigned condition (Aligned, nonaligned, business-as- usual instruction). 				
	 Allow audio-recording for implementation fidelity and coaching feedback. 				



What are the next steps?

We will answer questions and provide additional information if needed. Please do not hesitate to contact one of our team members from The University of Kansas or The University of Texas at Austin.

With your approval, our project team would like to meet with your fifth grade whole-class ELA/R and intervention teachers to notify them of their invitation to join us.

We look forward to collaborating with you.

Dr. Elizabeth Stevens

Principal Investigator (KU) **Office:** 785-864-6845N

E-mail: lizstevens@ku.edu

Christy Murray

Co-Principal Investigator (UT Austin)

Office: 512-517-9993

E-mail: christymurray@austin.utexas.edu