

Grant Assistance Toolkit  
***Reading First***  
Featuring Scholastic's Text Talk  
(With Professional Development from *Scholastic Red™*)

Scholastic Inc. has prepared this Grant Assistance Toolkit to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the development of a *Reading First* grant project. The Toolkit provides key information in these areas:

- Funding program information
- Alignment of ***Text Talk*** to grant requirements
- Grant writing support

**Scholastic's *Text Talk* is the supplemental reading program featured in this Toolkit.**

***Text Talk*** delivers direct vocabulary instruction of sophisticated words, combined with rich talk about text, to provide students with critical language and reading comprehension skills. This scientifically based program has been proven effective in raising students' knowledge of vocabulary, an essential component for literacy development.

***Text Talk*** provides teachers with the tools they need to successfully implement the program in Grades K-3 classrooms.

- Lesson plans that provide explicit instruction and review of targeted vocabulary words and comprehension skills
- Read-aloud books as a meaningful basis for all instruction, consisting of high-quality literature that provides challenging content and rich vocabulary above children's independent reading levels
- ***Text Talk*** Notes that provide on-the-spot support for the pages in each read-aloud book
- Professional development built into each lesson
- Implementation DVD

***Text Talk*** is supported through the *Putting Reading First in Your Classroom, Grades K-2* professional development course from *Scholastic Red*. The lessons in this facilitated, online course cover strategies for teaching the five essential elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

### Using the Toolkit

This Toolkit is designed as a resource to provide information that can be used when completing a local application for grant funds. It only addresses application requirements that are pertinent to Scholastic products and services and does not cover all *Reading First* expectations.

The Toolkit also includes grant writing tips and examples of the types of information needed when applying for a grant. Contact your state department of education for the official application that has all the requirements and guidelines.

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#### Scholastic's Commitment

Scholastic is committed to the sustainability of quality programs in order to improve teaching and learning. For more information about the products included in this Toolkit, please contact your Scholastic Regional Office.

California  
800-342-5331

Northeast  
800-878-8398

Southeast  
800-221-5312


Southwest  
800-221-5312

West/Midwest  
800-225-4625



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 *Because every grant project is unique, it is important to adapt the language provided in this Toolkit rather than copy it. Your proposal is more likely to be successful if you **customize** your application. Be sure to incorporate specific information about your project's needs, vision, programs, and design when you write your Reading First application.*

**Please note** these symbols throughout the Toolkit to help you write your application:

 **Highlights additional support and suggestions for writing your application.**

 **Refers to Scholastic product features.**

## Funding Program Overview: *Reading First*

The information in this section of the Toolkit is based on the federal *Guidance for the Reading First Program* (April 2002) and the *Reading First Criteria for Review of State Applications* that are available at these websites:

- <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/guidance.pdf>
- <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst/ReviewCriteriaFINAL.pdf>

### **Purpose of *Reading First***

Title I, Part B, of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) is known as *Reading First*. The purpose of the *Reading First* program is to ensure that all students learn to read well by the end of third grade by implementing comprehensive reading programs that are based on scientific research.

### **Eligibility**

A State Education Agency awards grants to eligible LEAs on a competitive basis, based upon highest need. An LEA that meets both of the following criteria is eligible to apply to its SEA for *Reading First* funds:

1. Among those LEAs with the highest numbers or percentages of K-3 students reading below grade level, based on current data, **and**
2. One of the following:
  - a) A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone, or an enterprise community; **or**
  - b) A significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A; **or**
  - c) The highest numbers or percentages of children who are counted for allocations under Title I, Part A, in comparison with other LEAs in the state

### **Acceptable Use of Funds**


LEA recipients may use *Reading First* funds for a variety of activities, including professional development, provided they are based on scientifically based reading research and align with the LEA's overall *Reading First* plan. However, an eligible LEA that receives a *Reading First* subgrant must use the funds to carry out these activities:


- Instructional assessments
- Reading program
- Instructional materials
- Professional development
- Evaluation strategies
- Reporting
- Access to reading material

## Coordination of Resources

In addition to *Reading First*, other federal programs require or encourage the implementation of instructional materials and practices that are grounded in scientifically based research. Funds for these programs could be coordinated and aligned in order to focus activities on improving achievement in reading.

- Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs
- Title II, Part A: Improving Teacher Quality
- Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers
- Title V, Part A: Innovative Programs

 **Text Talk** was scientifically proven to be effective in increasing students' vocabulary knowledge. Isabel L. Beck, Ph.D., and Margaret G. KcKeown, Ph.D, conducted a study in a small urban school district with a lower SES population. Kindergarten and first-grade students in the **Text Talk** program outperformed a control group in vocabulary learning as measured by pre- and post-test scores from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

 Scholastic Red provides high-quality professional development that focuses on the application of scientifically based reading research to improve teacher practices and raise student achievement.

## Reading First Criteria

Federal legislation requires that *Reading First* funds awarded to LEAs must be used to provide a comprehensive reading program for students in Grades K-3 that uses materials, methods, strategies, including professional development, that is based on scientific reading research.

 **This Toolkit provides information and examples that relate to these Reading First criteria:**

- **Instructional Assessments**
- **Instructional Programs and Strategies**
- **Instructional Materials**
- **Access to Print Materials**
- **Instructional Leadership**
- **Professional Development**



**Text Talk Alignment to Reading First**


**Text Talk** delivers robust vocabulary instruction of sophisticated words, combined with rich talk about text, to provide students with critical language and reading comprehension skills. The following chart details how the program, with professional development support from *Scholastic Red*, addresses these *Reading First* criteria\*:


- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instructional Assessments</li> <li>▪ Instructional Programs and Strategies</li> <li>▪ Instructional Materials</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to Print Materials</li> <li>▪ Instructional Leadership</li> <li>▪ Professional Development</li> </ul> |
|---|---|


<b>Reading First Criteria</b>	<b>Scholastic Products</b>
<b>Instructional Assessments</b>	<b>Text Talk</b>
<p>Valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments</p>	<p><b>Text Talk's</b> built-in assessments give teachers effective progress-monitoring tools, which are classroom- and curriculum-based.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Observational Assessments</u>— Teachers use specific items provided for each story to help them observe students' comprehension of the text. These are focused on whether students are grasping the lesson's targeted comprehension strategy and whether they are basing comprehension on the text itself.</li> <li>▪ <u>Quick Check</u>—The Professional Guide contains an assessment that teachers administer during the fifth session of each lesson. They ask the children six questions that test the children's understanding of the lesson's six targeted vocabulary words.</li> </ul>
<p>Assessments that are aligned with the instructional program and that measure progress in the five essential elements of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension)</p>	<p><b>Text Talk</b> assessments inform instruction. Teachers can use them to evaluate children's progress in the following essential elements of reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Vocabulary</u>. Each lesson contains an assessment that tests children's knowledge of the targeted vocabulary words. These vocabulary words are similar to those that appear in most basal texts and standardized tests. Teachers read sentences containing the vocabulary words and ask the children to record whether or not each sentence makes sense.</li> <li>▪ <u>Comprehension</u>. Teachers ask questions, which are provided in each lesson plan, to evaluate children's understanding of the text. The answers help teachers determine whether the children are able to grasp and apply the targeted comprehension skill and whether they can build meaning based on the text rather than relying too much on their prior knowledge or the illustrations.</li> </ul>



\*From the *Guidance for the Reading First Program* and the *Reading First Criteria for Review of State Applications*, United States Department of Education


Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
Instructional Programs and Strategies/ Instructional Materials	 Text Talk
<p>Instructional strategies and programs based on scientifically based reading research</p>	<p>Isabel L. Beck, Ph.D., and Margaret G. McKeown, Ph.D., scientifically proved <b>Text Talk's</b> effectiveness in increasing students' vocabulary knowledge. Their study took place in a small urban school district with a lower SES population. Kindergarten and first-grade students using <b>Text Talk</b> significantly increased their learning of vocabulary compared to a control group. Results were measured using pre- and post-test scores from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Beck &amp; McKeown, 2002).</p> <p>Beck and McKeown, of the University of Pittsburgh, designed <b>Text Talk</b> in 2001 to reflect current research findings, including the following:</p> <p>Intentional, explicit instruction of words and word-learning strategies has a positive impact on vocabulary (e.g., Tomeson &amp; Aarnoutse, 1998) and on reading comprehension (e.g., McKeown et al., 1985).</p> <p>Students' vocabulary acquisition is closely tied to their reading comprehension and academic success (e.g., Anderson &amp; Freebody, 1981).</p> <p>Students who are having difficulties developing their vocabularies continue to struggle over time unless they receive intensive, explicit instruction (Biemiller, 1999; White, Graves, &amp; Slater, 1990).</p> <p>Teacher-student interactions, which accompany read-aloud activities and require students to think analytically, promote vocabulary growth (e.g., Dickinson &amp; Smith, 1994).</p> <p>For students to incorporate new words into their vocabulary base, they must continue to use the words after initial instruction (e.g., Beck, Perfetti, &amp; McKeown, 1983).</p> <p>To increase students' vocabulary, teachers should focus on words that are "likely to appear frequently in a wide variety of texts and in the written and oral language of mature language users" (Beck et al., 2002).</p> <p>Explicit instruction of targeted vocabulary words improves word knowledge and reading comprehension of English-language learners and English-only learners to equal degrees (Carlo et al., 2004).</p> <p><i>For more information about the <b>Text Talk</b> research, please contact your Scholastic representative or visit the <b>Text Talk</b> website at: <a href="http://www.scholastic.com/texttalk">www.scholastic.com/texttalk</a></i></p>


Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
<p>Instructional strategies and programs that provide explicit and systematic instruction in the five essential components of reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phonemic awareness</li> <li>▪ Phonics</li> <li>▪ Vocabulary</li> <li>▪ Fluency</li> <li>▪ Comprehension</li> </ul>	<p>Students receive instruction and practice in the following essential elements of reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Vocabulary</u>. <b>Text Talk</b> provides direct instruction of vocabulary words associated with mature language learners. By working with words that are in advance of their typical oral vocabulary, young children develop rich vocabulary and concepts. The targeted words are those that children will encounter in third- and fourth-grade texts, as well as standardized tests. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ During active classroom discussions about the read-aloud story, teachers ask open-ended questions to spur students' oral vocabulary development and analytical thinking.</li> <li>○ <b>Text Talk</b> delivers <i>rich</i> instruction of vocabulary through elaboration and discussion of words, their meanings, and their uses.</li> <li>○ The program provides <i>more rich</i> instruction of vocabulary by extending learning throughout the week and by asking students to apply words in multiple contexts, such as in word activities, graphic organizers, and writing activities.</li> <li>○ Using language that appears on adhesive <b>Text Talk</b> Notes, teachers clarify vocabulary words to deepen students' understanding of the text.</li> <li>○ Teachers use the Word Winner chart to record students' oral usage of targeted vocabulary and to engage them in building their word consciousness.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <u>Fluency</u>. Teachers model fluent reading of read-aloud books.</li> <li>▪ <u>Comprehension</u>. Comprehension strategies are practiced during read-aloud sessions and reinforced during vocabulary instruction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each lesson focuses on and explicitly teaches a key comprehension strategy, such as summarizing, problem/solution, answering questions, generating questions, and recognizing story structure. The National Reading Panel endorsed these strategies as being effective in increasing comprehension.</li> <li>○ As teachers page through the book, they help students elaborate, connect, and reflect on important story ideas to broaden their understanding of the text.</li> <li>○ Teachers scaffold comprehension as they read the book aloud by asking open-ended questions about the story and using language found on the adhesive <b>Text Talk</b> Notes.</li> <li>○ Children connect the literary elements of the story's genre, such as fantasy, folktale, and fairytale, to the important story ideas and comprehension strategy.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>


<b>Reading First Criteria</b>	 <b>Scholastic Products</b>
<p>Materials and programs that provide explicit instructional strategies, have a coordinated instructional sequence, and offer ample practice opportunities</p>	<p><b>Text Talk's</b> instruction, review, and practice activities help students build vocabulary and comprehension skills. The program is available in Levels A-C to flexibly suit the needs of students in Grades K-3. The 20 lessons in each level follow this format:</p> <p><b>Sessions 1 and 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teachers introduce a story and read it aloud.</li><li>Teachers ask open-ended questions that stimulate children to think and talk about the story. These questions are designed to prompt long answers, text-related discussions, and analytical thinking that are proven critical to comprehension and word acquisition.</li></ul> <p><b>Sessions 3 and 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teachers explicitly teach six vocabulary words, four that appear in the story and two that are introduced orally and that are conceptually connected to the story.</li><li>Lessons provide children with multiple exposures to the targeted vocabulary through interactive class discussions, word activities, and writing activities.</li><li>In class discussions, teachers help children develop vocabulary through questioning, graphic organizers, word association, and other strategies.</li></ul> <p><b>Session 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teachers review vocabulary words in the current lesson and those from previous ones.</li><li>Teachers use the vocabulary words to enhance story comprehension and in writing activities.</li><li>Teachers assess students' knowledge of the lesson's targeted vocabulary words.</li><li>The class discusses the story's literary elements.</li><li>Students bring home a <b>Text Talk</b> Lending Library book to share with their families.</li><li>Students may also take home Word Winner charts to map word usage and recognition outside the classroom.</li></ul> <p>Throughout the week and in subsequent weeks, teachers record students' use of the vocabulary words beyond the lessons and stories.</p>

<b>Reading First Criteria</b>	 <b>Scholastic Products</b>
<p>Materials and strategies that are aligned with the instructional program and to state standards</p>	<p><b>Text Talk</b> aligns to a district’s Language Arts program in these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vocabulary</li> <li>▪ Comprehension</li> <li>▪ Listening</li> <li>▪ Speaking</li> <li>▪ Writing</li> </ul> <p>By using <b>Text Talk</b>, students learn, practice, and develop skills they need to meet state standards.</p>
<p>Materials and programs that are integrated with and connect meaningfully to the comprehensive reading program</p>	<p><b>Text Talk</b>, with its focus on vocabulary development integrated with reading comprehension strategies, can effectively supplement a comprehensive reading program. These <b>Text Talk</b> resources provide teachers with the tools they need to successfully increase students’ achievement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Professional Guide</u> for each level provides explicit instruction and review of targeted vocabulary words and comprehension skills. Teachers use prompts and suggested activities from the guide to actively involve students in their learning.</li> <li>▪ <u>Read-aloud books</u> consist of high-quality literature in a variety of topics and genres.</li> <li>▪ <u>Text Talk Notes</u> give on-the-spot support for most of the pages in each read-aloud book. Teachers can use the suggested language on the Notes to engage students in a meaningful dialogue and to clarify instruction. These adhesive notes can be conveniently placed on appropriate pages of the books.</li> <li>▪ <u>Word Winner chart</u> for each lesson helps teachers encourage students to use the targeted vocabulary words beyond the story. The chart lists the lesson’s six targeted vocabulary words. Teachers place tally marks next to the words each time they or the students orally use the words.</li> <li>▪ <u>Lending Library books</u> correspond to the read-aloud books, further student’s exposure to and use of vocabulary words, and involve families in their children’s reading development.</li> <li>▪ <u>Parent letter</u>, available in English and Spanish, explains the program and effective ways for families to help their children develop vocabulary.</li> </ul>

Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
Strategies to meet the needs of all students, including those that are below grade level, limited English proficient, and students with disabilities	<p><b>Text Talk</b> provides research-based strategies for building vocabulary that are key to closing the gap between struggling and successful readers. Teachers can choose from three levels of the program to appropriately challenge students. While teachers read the books aloud, they monitor students' comprehension and scaffold instruction by asking them to elaborate, reflect on, and connect key story ideas.</p> <p>All students benefit from the program's direct instruction and repetition of vocabulary words, as well as rich dialogues about text between students and teachers. To support English language learners in their vocabulary development, <b>Text Talk</b> provides teachers with reliable routines that incorporate effective, specific strategies. <b>Text Talk</b> was proven to significantly increase vocabulary learning in a low-performing school district that was a candidate for state takeover if reading achievement did not increase.</p>
Strategies that accelerate performance and monitor progress of students who are reading below grade level	<p><b>Text Talk</b> accelerates struggling readers' achievement with multiple strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct instruction and review of vocabulary words</li> <li>▪ Rich talk about text in teacher-student interactions that are key to literacy and language development</li> <li>▪ Active engagement of students in their learning of vocabulary words and story comprehension</li> <li>▪ Integration of vocabulary development with reading comprehension</li> <li>▪ Scaffolded instruction</li> <li>▪ Built-in assessments that help teachers evaluate students' vocabulary learning and text comprehension</li> <li>▪ Child-friendly, clear definitions</li> <li>▪ Practice using words in varied contexts, both within the program's lessons and in other situations</li> <li>▪ Engaging, high-quality literature</li> <li>▪ Appropriately challenging program levels</li> </ul>
Access to Print Materials	 Text Talk
Variety of engaging reading materials including expository and narrative stories	The program contains engaging literature in a variety of genres, including realistic fiction, fantasy, folktale, and fairytale. The stories, many of them award-winning, are appropriately challenging in content. Books challenge students to imagine contexts with which they are unfamiliar, provide the opportunity to learn new information, and contain sophisticated vocabulary. Interesting topics and colorful illustrations help maintain students' interest.
Materials to promote reading and library programs	The program's emphasis on sophisticated, useful vocabulary words helps students to understand text within and beyond the program. As they build confidence from successful reading experiences, children are motivated to increase their reading for both information and pleasure. Participation in interactive discussions with the teacher enhances students' reading comprehension.

Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
<p><b>Instructional Leadership</b></p> <p>Training for principals and building leaders in the essential components of reading and the specific instructional programs and materials in use in their buildings, including the scientific base, implementation process and progress monitoring related to those programs and materials</p>	<p><b>Scholastic Red</b></p> <p><i>Scholastic Red</i> helps ensure that Principals, Reading Coaches, and building leaders have all the resources they need to implement a scientifically based reading program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On-site training helps principals understand their role in the professional development taking place in their school. The training also supports them as instructional leaders. For each <i>Red</i> course, they receive a Principal’s Guide, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A review of reading research</li> <li>○ Content overview of the <i>Red</i> course</li> <li>○ Learning snapshots to guide principals as they conduct classroom observations of research-based teaching strategies</li> <li>○ Tools for coaching teachers</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ District Facilitators are trained to use effective techniques for observing, coaching, and mentoring in order to provide effective ongoing support for teachers.</li> <li>▪ Building leaders receive intensive instruction on the essential components of reading instruction through <i>Scholastic Red</i> courses and services.</li> </ul> <p>These training sessions are designed to foster a strong sense of shared leadership.</p>
<p><b>Professional Development</b></p> <p>Use of a variety of delivery methods to carry out intensive and focused professional development in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Essential components of reading instruction</li> </ol>	<p><b>Text Talk and Scholastic Red</b></p> <p><i>Text Talk’s</i> built-in professional development provides teachers with strategies for vocabulary and comprehension instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Professional Guide</u> supplies systematic lesson plans with well-constructed teacher language prompts to help students actively use vocabulary words in meaningful dialogue. It also integrates “research into practice” explanations and research overviews from the authors.</li> <li>▪ <u>Adhesive Text Talk Notes</u> give on-the-spot support for most of the pages in each read-aloud book. Teachers can use the suggested language on the Notes to actively engage students in rich talk, to clarify vocabulary, to help students recognize comprehension strategies, and for instruction of the story’s literary element.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>

Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
<p>Professional Development in Essential Components of Reading Instruction, Continued</p> <p>2. Implementing scientifically based instructional materials, programs, and strategies</p>	<p>The <i>Scholastic Red</i> professional development solution meets the requirements of <i>Reading First</i>. <i>Red</i> offers research-based, interactive online courses that specifically address the essential elements of reading instruction. <i>Putting Reading First in Your Classroom, Grades K-2</i>, provides support for teachers using <b>Text Talk</b> and covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Phonemic Awareness</i>—Oral blending, oral segmentation and phonemic manipulation are modeled on video and audio; users practice via online simulation.</li> <li>▪ <i>Phonics</i>—<i>Red</i> defines alphabet recognition, phonics, and decoding and how to apply them in classroom practice.</li> <li>▪ <i>Vocabulary Development</i>—The role of vocabulary in early reading instruction is covered, with attention paid to building students’ oral vocabularies.</li> <li>▪ <i>Fluency</i>—Teachers learn how to assess fluency, build it, and incorporate independent and small-group activities into classroom routines.</li> <li>▪ <i>Comprehension</i>—Topics covered include teaching children techniques for previewing text, building and activating background knowledge, and matching children to text.</li> </ul> <p>Researchers Isabel L. Beck and Margaret G. McKeown scientifically proved <b>Text Talk</b> to be effective in increasing students’ vocabulary knowledge. Teachers learn how to successfully implement the program from a professional development DVD. This contains author introductions to the stories, practical tips that ensure teachers maximize classroom use of <b>Text Talk</b>, and video segments that show expert teachers modeling best instructional practices.</p> <p>All professional development from <i>Scholastic Red</i> is grounded in research-based, validated practices that result in teachers learning and applying new strategies that directly influence student performance. <i>Scholastic Red</i> courses incorporate the characteristics that research confirms are key for effective professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research-based content and strategies</li> <li>▪ Modeling and presentations by skilled practitioners</li> <li>▪ Practice in a controlled, risk-free environment</li> <li>▪ Coaching, feedback, and reflection</li> <li>▪ Coherence and alignment to academic standards and core reading programs</li> <li>▪ Promotion of strong, shared leadership by principals and district leaders</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>

Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
<p>Implementing scientifically based instructional materials, programs, and strategies, Continued</p> <p>3. Screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments</p>	<p>More than 10,000 teachers in over 150 school districts have participated in <i>Scholastic Red</i> professional development. Teachers, <i>Red</i> course facilitators, and principals report that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Scholastic Red</i> courses helped them learn about research-based methods and strategies.</li> <li>▪ <i>Scholastic Red</i> materials can be implemented immediately into classroom activities.</li> <li>▪ The modeling of effective strategies helped teachers apply the skills in their classrooms.</li> <li>▪ Local Facilitator-led meetings provide valuable opportunities for additional instruction, collaboration, and personalized support.</li> </ul> <p><i>Scholastic Red</i> courses include assessment skills and strategies for working with different student populations, including special education students, ELD/ELL, and advanced learners. Subsequent to modeling and practice of such assessments, teachers receive ideas and resources for targeting instruction based on diagnostic data. In ongoing professional development, <i>Red</i>-trained Facilitators can instruct teachers on how to use data and diagnostic assessments to inform instruction.</p>
<p>Professional development that is ongoing, continuous, and includes the use of coaches and other teachers of reading who provide feedback as instructional strategies are put in place</p>	<p>District Reading Coaches and Staff Developers receive special training to become <i>Scholastic Red</i> Facilitators, who can provide teachers with ongoing, continuous support. Through this training, Facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Become familiar with the online courses, including all research-based content and accompanying materials</li> <li>▪ Receive tools and training for observing and coaching teachers who are implementing newly learned strategies</li> <li>▪ Learn how to demonstrate course strategies in Facilitator-led workshops and in teachers' classrooms</li> <li>▪ Receive a Facilitators Handbook, which contains:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explicit plans, activities, and agendas to conduct workshops</li> <li>○ Management tools, including observation and evaluation forms</li> <li>○ Guidelines for conducting classroom demonstration lessons</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Red</i> Facilitators receive ongoing support through the Facilitator Care Program, which offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An online discussion board guided by <i>Red</i> Reading Consultants</li> <li>▪ Offline guidance from <i>Red</i> Reading Consultants</li> <li>▪ A toll-free hotline for technical support</li> <li>▪ Recommended professional reading and web links</li> </ul>

## Customize Your *Reading First* Application

This section of the Toolkit provides basic information for those preparing to write a *Reading First* grant. It is *not* intended to fully explain every part of the application, but it should help you organize the information that describes your grant project.

### Common Elements of a Grant Application

While state applications do vary, there are common elements that remain fairly consistent. Knowing how to address each of these elements will help you understand how to respond to the different *Reading First* criteria. This Toolkit provides information and examples to help you make sure all components are thoroughly addressed.

 ***Be sure to obtain the application for Reading First from your state’s Department of Education as it contains the official instructions, schedules, and requirements.***


These are the 10 components that are commonly addressed in grant applications. Remember to customize responses to each area so your proposal reflects your unique situation.

1. Summary or Abstract
2. Needs Assessment
3. Educational Goals and Objectives
4. Activities and Timeline
5. Project Management
6. Resource Management
7. Sustainability
8. Assessment and Evaluation
9. Budget
10. Appendix

### 1. Summary or Abstract

The *summary* or *abstract* encapsulates all the components of the proposal and gives an overview of the proposed project; it is basically, the project “in a nutshell.” The summary/abstract includes the following information:

- The audience—Who will the project directly impact?
- The need/problem—What need will the project address?
- The educational goals—What does the project strive to ultimately accomplish?
- The objectives and effectiveness indicators—Who will do what by when?
- The activities—How will the project be carried out?

 ***Because the abstract is essentially a summary of the project, you should write it after the grant proposal is completed. It can be summarized from other parts of the proposal.***

## 2. Needs Assessment

The *needs assessment* is one of the most critical parts of the proposal as it specifies the educational needs that the project addresses and indicates how they were identified. Relevant data, such as standardized test scores or survey results, are used to substantiate the educational needs of the targeted population, which should include students, teachers, and parents. The focal point of the needs assessment should be *acquisition of services* for the targeted population, and *not acquisition of funds*.

### **Step One: Gather the Data**

Before any writing can begin, you will need to gather all of the relevant data for the targeted population. A successful grant project will reflect data-driven decision making, so it is important to gather objective data at the onset of a project and use it to determine goals, objectives, and activities.

Use school and district records as well as customized surveys and evaluation tools for gathering data related to specific areas of need. Examples of the types of data to gather might include, but not be limited to:

#### School and District Records

- Student Achievement Scores
- Student Performance Levels for Specific Reading Skills
- Socioeconomic Data
- Demographic Data

#### Surveys & Evaluation Tools

- Need for Instructional Material
- Identified Gaps in Instructional Program
- Professional Development Needs
- Technology Needs
- Book Needs for Classroom and Library
- Parental Involvement Needs

### **Step Two: Review the Data**


Have several people, such as classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and special education teachers, review the data. Look at the student performance data as a whole set, but then disaggregate the data into subsets by demographic focus groups.


### **Step Three: Determine Needs Based Upon the Data**

Based upon the disaggregated data, determine the specific needs for students, teachers, and parents. The educational goals, objectives, and activities, will be based upon these specific needs.

### **Step Four: Write the Needs Assessment**


Using the data gathered in Step One and the needs established in Step Three, develop a clear and detailed statement that specifies needs for academic achievement, professional development, and parental involvement.

 **Text Talk** can fill the gaps in a Language Arts program by effectively providing direct instruction of robust, sophisticated vocabulary and key comprehension strategies. In addition, children have opportunities to develop listening, speaking, and writing skills.

 **Scholastic Red** is a professional development solution that is grounded in research-based, validated best practices. Through facilitated, online courses, teachers learn new strategies that can be immediately applied in the classroom.

### 3. Educational Goals and Objectives

First and foremost, your *educational goals* must be aligned with the project's assessed educational needs and consistent with the goals of the State's *Reading First* plan. An educational goal states the planned outcome that will solve the problems addressed in the needs assessment. Project goals must be *educational* goals and not merely the acquisition of funds.

 **Be sure to develop goals and activities within each of the following four areas, as these are areas most frequently addressed in grant requirements. (Sample goals for each of these areas can be found on pages 22-24.)**


1. **Instructional Design/Content**
2. **Professional Development**
3. **School-to-Home Connection**
4. **Assessment/Evaluation**

*Objectives* help meet the educational goals. They clearly define the *performance targets* that must be measurable and related to a specific time. A series of objectives, or performance targets, should increase in expectation as they progress on a timeline, culminating in an overall performance or educational goal. The expectation is that at the end of the grant project calendar, the applicant meets the goals.

*Objectives* should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**imely (SMART).

*Effectiveness indicators* detail the type of information used to measure whether or not an objective is reached. These indicators should be objective and quantifiable. Effectiveness indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of teachers and administrators trained
- Number, types, and frequency of staff development sessions
- Student achievement scores in specific skill areas
- Number of Reading Coaches trained
- Number and types of books added to classroom or school libraries

 **The following chart is one example of a way to organize your goals, objectives, and effectiveness indicators.**

Objective (Performance Target)	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
Beginning in September 2005, all K-3 teachers will apply research-based instructional strategies to teach the five essential components of Reading.	Sept. 2005 to June 2006	Teacher lesson plans
By June of 2006, all K-3 teachers in the district will have completed one online professional development course that focuses on the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach the five essential components of Reading.	Sept. 2005 through June 2006	Number of K-3 teachers completing online professional development courses

#### 4. Activities and Timeline


*Activities* are even more specific than goals. They explain *who will do what, when, where, and for how long*. For each goal, list the activities to be conducted. The activities include the methods, steps, actions or strategies taken to achieve the stated goal.

 **Identify specific activities that will be conducted during the project period.**

 **Be sure your activities:**

- **Relate directly to the program goals, as well as to the project description and project requirements as outlined in your local application**
- **Address the identified needs of the targeted population that should include students, teachers, and parents**
- **Are clearly stated and sufficient to carry out the proposed program**
- **Are designed to provide measurable outcomes**


Proposals should include a *timeline* indicating when project activities will occur. The timeline should indicate the anticipated starting and ending dates (i.e., month and year) for each major activity.

 **Rather than creating a separate timeline document, applicants are encouraged to indicate timelines with each activity. Please see examples of activities and timelines on page 25 of this Toolkit.**

#### 5. Project Management


A *project management* plan specifies how grant activities will be managed and monitored on a day-to-day basis to ensure successful implementation.


In a grant proposal, describe the members of the *project management* team, indicating the responsibilities of each member and the credentials that support their selection. Include the background training, experience, and qualifications of the grant project director, who is responsible for the day-to-day activities.

 **You may refer to each member's credentials, but include résumés in the appendix only, and only if the instructions in the application allow for them.**

## 6. Resource Management

Applications require an explanation about how existing resources will be managed so that grant funds are maximized. Provide an explanation of the relationship and coordination of the proposed project with other programs in the district or on a school's campus and with other community, state, and federal resources.


 ***The purpose of a resource management description is to illustrate the cost-effectiveness of the project. Keep the “cost per pupil” aligned to the local or state “per pupil expenditure” for the LEA.***

 *Scholastic’s scientifically research-based **Text Talk** program and Scholastic Red courses can be effectively integrated with school activities that are being funded by other federal, state, or local sources. The federal programs for which these Scholastic products qualify include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- *Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs*
- *Title II, Part A: Improving Teacher Quality*
- *Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers*
- *Title V, Part A: Innovative Programs*

## 7. Sustainability

*Sustainability* refers to how the program will continue when grant funds expire. Describe the commitment to continuing the project in subsequent years with reduced levels of funding and the support from the administration in terms of financial resources, space/facility resources, and personnel dedicated to the project.

 *Scholastic is committed to ensuring the sustainability of quality reading programs beyond the period funded by a Reading First grant. To this end, Scholastic Red trains teachers in the use of effective, research-based instructional methodologies and offers a variety of scientifically research-based instructional materials to ensure the continued development of the skills and strategies students need to succeed in school.*

## 8. Assessment and Evaluation

The *Evaluation Strategies* section in a *Reading First* application must focus on student achievement. This section should detail a comprehensive evaluation plan with specific accountability measures and procedures that identify and assess the effectiveness of *Reading First* activities, including professional development, at raising student achievement in reading.

*Reading First* requires that LEAs report reading achievement data to measure the program's effectiveness at raising reading scores. The assessment measures used must be:

- Valid and reliable
- Disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, LEP, and special education for K-3 students


A comprehensive evaluation plan should include both process and product data. This data is then used to guide future decisions related to *Reading First* programs.

**Process Evaluation** is used to gather information about how successfully the project was implemented as planned and to assess its impact on the targeted population.


- Site visits or administrative observations
- Integration surveys
- External evaluation of long-term impact
- Professional development training

**Product Evaluation** focuses on measuring final outcomes against project goals and performance targets.


- Pre- and post-staff needs assessment surveys
- Evaluation of professional development activities
- Standardized or benchmark tests of student achievement.

 **Repeat the administration of the surveys used for the needs assessment at the beginning of the grant period. Compare the results to determine growth and use the data to evaluate the success of the grant project and determine next steps.**

 **A sample evaluation plan can be found on pages 26-28 of the Toolkit.**




 **Text Talk** contains built-in assessments in every lesson that can help districts evaluate the impact of the program on students' reading achievement:

- **Quick Check**—Each lesson includes an end-of-lesson assessment that tests children's knowledge of the vocabulary words taught during the week. Teachers read aloud sentences containing the vocabulary words and ask the children to record whether each sentence makes sense or does not make sense.
- **Observational Assessment**—Teachers ask questions provided in each lesson plan that evaluate children's understanding of the text. The answers help teachers determine whether the children are able to retell the story in their own words and build meaning based on the text rather than relying too much on their prior knowledge or the illustrations.

 Scholastic Red courses include assessment skills and strategies that can be used with different student populations, including special education students, ELD/ELL, and advanced learners.

## 9. Budget

When preparing a *budget*, keep in mind that *Reading First* funds can only be used to implement comprehensive reading programs, including professional development, that are based on scientific reading research. Comprehensive reading programs also include the effective integration and use of supplemental and intervention materials that are based on scientific research.

-  ***The budget is an estimate of the project costs, but the project budget should be as accurate as possible at the time of submission. It should not include any “padded” amounts for expenditures.***
-  ***The budget and narrative should align directly. It is best to make a list of all budgetary costs, based upon the narrative sections. Make sure that the budget includes a line item for every cost that the narrative describes.***
-  ***It is advisable to consult with your business office prior to submitting the application.***

## 10. Appendix

The *appendix* will vary depending on what the application allows. Some do not allow an appendix while others require that such documents as letters of support, résumés of key personnel, job descriptions, and schematics of technology networks be included.

-  ***The applicant should submit only what the application allows.***

## Grant Writing Tools and Tips

### Helpful Hints

Grant writing is a challenge for both novice and experienced writers. Grants are highly competitive, and rejection is disappointing. To avoid undue stress, realize that your proposal may be funded or *it may not*. A grant proposal is similar to a personal résumé; you have only one chance to make a good impression and grab the reviewers' attention. Here are some helpful hints to ensure that your proposal is effective and competitive.

- FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS! Carefully read the RFA/RFP to ensure that you include all of the required information and forms.
- Disaggregate student achievement data and identify your needs.
- Write concisely and in the active voice.
- Write to communicate, not to impress.
- Write, rewrite, and then ask an objective reader to comment and edit.
- Use a simple document design—Times New Roman or Arial, 10- or 12-point font.
- Note the application deadline. Send or deliver your proposal *prior* to the deadline.
- If your proposal is not funded, be sure to request copies of the reviewers' comments and use them to improve the proposal before the next submission.
- Be persistent. Consider the grants that are not funded as valuable practice and choose to learn from the experience.
- If you do not qualify, do not apply!
- Start early, plan ahead, and allow plenty of time for writing, revising, and editing.
- Remember that a deadline is a deadline.

## Sample Goals, Objectives, and Effectiveness Indicators

Writing clear and precise goals and performance targets (objectives) with related effectiveness indicators is crucial to implementing and evaluating an effective, research-based grant project.

*Goals* state the planned outcome that will solve the problem addressed in the needs statement.

*Performance targets* are a series of clearly defined *objectives* that increase in expectation as they progress on a timeline, culminating at an overall performance or educational goal. *Performance targets* are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**esearch-based, and **T**imely (SMART).

*Effectiveness indicators* detail the type of specific information used to measure whether or not an objective is reached.


The following charts provide examples of how goals, objectives, and effectiveness indicators are related and can be identified for these areas:

- Instructional Design/Content
- Professional Development
- School-to-Home Connection
- Assessment/Evaluation

 ***Be sure to develop your own goals, objectives, and effectiveness indicators that relate specifically to your project's needs.***


### **Instructional Design/Content**

<p><b>Educational Goal:</b> All K-3 teachers will use scientifically research based materials, methods, and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.</p>			
Objective (Performance Target)	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
Beginning in September 2005, all K-3 teachers will apply research-based instructional strategies to teach the five essential components of Reading.	Language Arts Teachers	September 2005 through June 2006	Teacher lesson plans

 *Text Talk provides intensive instruction and practice in two of the essential components of reading—vocabulary and comprehension. The program features detailed lesson plans, on-the-spot instructional support, and high-quality literature that are all designed to increase students’ reading achievement.*

### **Professional Development**


<p><b>Educational Goal:</b> All K-3 teachers will receive training in the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.</p>			
Objective (Performance Target)	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
By June of 2006, all K-3 teachers in the district will have completed one online professional development course that focuses on the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach the five essential components of Reading.	Teachers	September 2005 through June 2006	Number of K-3 teachers completing online professional development courses

 *These facilitated online courses from Scholastic Red provide teachers with research-based training so they can more effectively teach reading skills in the classroom:*

- *Putting Reading First in Your Classroom, Grades K-2*
- *Building Fluency, Grades K-2*
- *Guided Reading: Making it Work in Your Classroom*


**School-to-Home Connection**

<p><b>Educational Goal:</b> Parents will be regularly informed about the effectiveness of the program at raising their child’s achievement in reading.</p>			
Objective (Performance Target)	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
For the 2005-06 academic year, teachers will share results of benchmark reports and classroom activities with parents to communicate students’ progress, strengths, weaknesses, and suggest ways to build content skills at home.	K-3 Teachers	September 2005 through June 2006	Quarterly benchmark reports

 *At the start of the **Text Talk** program, parents receive a letter in English or Spanish that explains the program and ways that family members can help their child develop vocabulary. Every week, students take home a Lending Library copy of a read-aloud book to further their exposure to vocabulary words and for family members to read to them. In addition, teachers encourage students to use the new words and listen for them when family members are speaking.*

**Assessment/Evaluation**

<p><b>Educational Goal:</b> All K-3 teachers will continually collect and use meaningful information to measure students’ academic progress and inform instruction.</p>			
Objective (Performance Target)	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
For the 2005-06 academic year, all K-3 teachers will use quarterly benchmark assessments as diagnostic, progress monitoring, and evaluative tools to assess student progress.	K-3 Teachers	September 2005 through June 2006	Type of assessment and schedule of testing dates

 ***Text Talk** contains built-in assessments that help teachers monitor student achievement. Each lesson contains a “Quick Check” assessment that tests children’s knowledge of vocabulary words taught during the week. Lessons also include specific items that teachers can use while observing whether children understand the text.*


### Sample Activities for Goals and Objectives

Activities explain *who* will do *what*, *when*, *where*, and for *how long*. You need to include detailed activities for each goal and objective. The table below gives specific examples and shows the alignment of the goal, objective, and effectiveness indicators to the activities.

 **These are provided as examples or suggestions. You should develop your own activities specific to your needs.**

<p><b>Goal:</b> All K-3 teachers will receive training in the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.</p>			
<p><b>Objective:</b> (Performance Target) By June of 2006, all K-3 teachers in the district will have completed one online professional development course that focuses on the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach fluency.</p>			
Specific Activities	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
1. Purchase the <i>Scholastic Red</i> program to train teachers in the five essential components of an effective reading program.	LEA Technology Leaders	Fall 2005	Purchase orders
2. Implement teacher and administrator surveys to determine knowledge of, skill levels within, application of, the five essential components of reading instruction	Campus Administrators	Fall 2005 Spring 2006	Tabulated results of surveys for Fall & Spring
3. Develop and conduct a yearlong calendar of training sessions, using the <i>Scholastic Red</i> online and on-site courses.	LEA Curriculum Leaders	Academic Year 2005-2006	Training calendar Schedule of Classes
4. Identify and track teachers and administrators who complete the <i>Scholastic Red</i> training program.	LEA Curriculum Leaders	Spring 2006	Numbers of teachers/administrators certified
5. Conduct a survey to identify the scientifically based methods and strategies being used to teach the five essential components of Reading.	Campus Administrators	Academic Year 2005-2006	Number of teachers who systematically and explicitly teach the five essential components of Reading as measured by class lesson plans and observations by administrators.

## Sample Evaluation Plan

-  ***The evaluation plan is one of the most critical elements of your proposal. Because every grant project is unique, it is important to adapt this sample plan to reflect your specific project names, goals, objectives, and activities, rather than copy it.***

### Evaluation Design

(Project Name) includes a comprehensive evaluation plan developed to determine success in meeting aggressive goals for improving the language and literacy development of all (grade level) students. (District Name) and (Name of external evaluator) will conduct the final evaluation of (Project Name.) The Project Director will collect information, collect the data, and provide the progress reports throughout the project period to (Name of funding agency) as per the grant requirements.

The evaluation design includes both process and product evaluation. The Project Executive Committee will gather information during the implementation process and evaluation activities to recommend modifications for improving the project. Questions to be answered in this evaluation include the following:

- ◆ *To what extent were the activities of the project implemented as planned? If not, what barriers or obstacles prevented parts or all of the activities from being executed?*
- ◆ *How effective were the activities of the project in achieving the goals of the project?*
- ◆ *What is the impact of the activities of the project on the participants?*



### Product Evaluation

Product evaluation will focus on measuring final outcomes against project goals, objectives, and benchmarks. Changes that have occurred will be identified and analyzed to determine whether the program is effective for students and teachers. Like the process evaluation, the product evaluation will be collected both formatively and summatively. The product performance measures will focus on:

- ◆ *Improvement in teacher knowledge and qualifications*
- ◆ *Improvement in outcomes for children's reading, language, cognitive, and literature skills*

The following product evaluative data will be collected:

### **Benchmark Tests to measure student achievement**

-  ***Specify the methods and instruments the proposed project will use to evaluate the achievement of each of the proposed project goals.***
-  ***Include screening reading assessments, progress monitoring assessments, and child outcome data in your evaluation plan.***

## Student Work Samples

- ✎ Specify how and when these samples will be collected.*

## Evaluation of Professional Development

- ✎ In addition to teachers' evaluation of the professional development, applicants are encouraged to use lesson plans or administrative walk-through forms as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development.*

## End-of-Project Survey

- ✎ An end-of-project survey distributed to all parents of targeted students can be used to provide the opportunity for parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the program for their children.*

## Process Evaluation

Process evaluation will gather information about how successfully the strategies of the project were implemented as planned, and assess their impact on the target populations. Process evaluation data is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, and is intended to assess the outcome of the project. This data, collected formatively and summatively, will describe how students and teachers are affected by the project. The process evaluative data will focus on:

- ◆ *Improvement in classroom environment*
- ◆ *Improvement in teacher instruction and planning*

The following process evaluative data will be collected:

## School/District Records

- ✎ The Project Evaluator can track project objectives through quantitative data such as purchase orders, numbers of students/teachers served, and inventory records.*

## Project Meetings

- ✎ Specify how often the Project Executive Committee will meet and on what the meetings will focus.*

## Classroom Observations

- ✎ Administrators can visit classrooms randomly to acquire information on how teachers have adapted the program to student needs. Evaluative information can be drawn from observations of classroom applications, in the form of administrative walk-through forms.*

## **Anecdotal Records**

 **To address the “So what?” question, anecdotal records from students and teachers can be collected. The following questions will be addressed:**

- *How effective have the instructional strategies and measurement methods been in ensuring that the targeted student population learns to read well by the end of third grade?*
- *How has the Reading First Program enhanced the phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills of the targeted student population?*

## Final Evaluative Report

The Project Director and External Evaluator will use the data gathered in the product and process evaluation activities to prepare and present an annual Project Summary Report, to be shared with the local Board of Trustees and (*Funding Agency*). The product and process evaluative data will be analyzed in the final report to answer the following questions:

- ◆ *What improvements has the project made in how we teach our students and prepare them for future reading and school success?*
- ◆ *To what extent, by (Date), are all students ready to transition to the next grade level?*
- ◆ *To what extent, by (Date), do all teachers have increased knowledge, skill, and instructional methodologies in the literacy development of students?*
- ◆ *To what extent, by (Date), do 100% of parents of participating students show increased involvement in their children’s reading success and school activities?*

### **About Scholastic Inc.**

Scholastic is committed to providing teachers with effective materials for every stage of reading instruction to ensure that students develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed in school. Our reputation is built on an 84-year history of helping foster and support effective learning for all students. For years, we have worked with leading researchers to develop scientifically based products that produce significant results in student achievement, as well as meaningful changes in teacher effectiveness.

We look forward to partnering with you to improve reading achievement, and would like the opportunity to talk with you about how we can best support your efforts to implement **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** over the next several years.