

Why *SoundPrints*®?

What is the role of *SoundPrints*® in a balanced literacy framework?

SoundPrints is a complementary resource developed to help teachers with inclusive (diverse) groups to (a) contextualize and enrich, and (b) individualize, the word-study component of their language arts curriculum.

As true of all Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) resources, *SoundPrints* resources are not mandated (required) by the MELS. Rather, they are complementary, non-profit resources developed/released by the author as a service to Quebec’s English School Boards—i.e., to support the varied needs of learners in diverse groups.

What is *SoundPrints*®?

SoundPrints is a collection of complementary reading/writing resources for inclusive schools. Resources are developmental (non-graded), in order to meet the instructional needs of diverse classes. Learners build reading/writing fluency through systematic word study, applying their learning through reading and writing in the sciences. Reading challenging, concept-rich text promotes enthusiasm for learning, and helps learners to better know and understand their world.

SoundPrints is designed to support—not to replace—a language-rich curriculum. As a resource developed to provide both strong and struggling learners with greater access to, and enjoyment of, the world of print, its success *depends* on a rich reading/writing environment.

SoundPrints word-study resources are a small but essential element of a balanced language arts framework. They promote reading/writing fluency, one of many tools that free us to focus on the meaning of text. This is achieved *not* by using phonics/spelling workbooks, but by exploring, with the words young readers and writers use most, the patterns (and many quirks!) of the English sound-print code (hence the name *SoundPrints*).

SoundPrints anchor texts are selected to (a) reflect students’ interests and *oral* comprehension level, and (b) mesh with classroom themes and essential questions (e.g., reading of/response to the picture books *Starfish* and *Why are the Ice Caps Melting?* in the context of ocean studies, or the picture book *How Mountains are Made* in an ecology or physical science course).

What is the *SoundPrints*® approach to word study?

Learners' need for (a) experience with concept-rich, authentic text, and (b) systematic study of the English sound-print code (including ample, in-context practice), is balanced through the use of the following, 'three-pronged' approach to word study:

- early mastery of *Power Words* (e.g., *of, again, because*), irregularly-spelled words that appear so frequently in natural text that mastery greatly increases students' reading and writing power,
- developmentally-sequenced study of both the *phonic* (sound) and *graphic* (print) characteristics of regularly-spelled words — again, with emphasis on the high-frequency words and word-patterns of greatest use to students (e.g., igh → high, light, frightened...),
- study, via SP *WordSmith* resources, of the vocabulary and language structures most useful to young readers and writers, and
- contextualization of word-level study through shared reading/writing in the sciences (which ensures a focus on meaning, heightens motivation for reading and writing, and builds intellectual curiosity and world knowledge/understanding).

The author (Lynn Senecal, Ph.D.) grants permission for *SoundPrints* to be used, at cost, by trained teachers in the Quebec public school system. *SoundPrints* is released as a service to schools, and is not to be used for profit.