

EARLY BIRD READERS

Teaching Guide



STANDARDS

Common Core Reading

Literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5

Informational Text

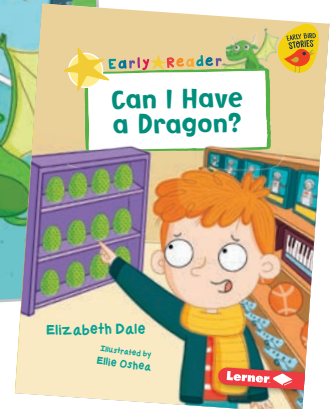
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.7

Foundational Skills

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.2.C

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.3.B

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.2.3.D



ABOUT EARLY BIRD READERS



Early Bird Readers is the product of a careful collaboration between talented authors, editors, and literacy experts. We worked with top education consultants such as Catherine Baker, a literacy and reading expert, to develop this comprehensive reading system. The resulting decodable readers help students learn phonics while nurturing a love of stories and reading.

Each book in the Early Bird Readers series is assigned a level represented by a color band. Each book is leveled according to Lexile and GRL to ensure accessibility for K–2 readers. The libraries include books that range from less challenging to more challenging.

Each color band features carefully developed features and formats that help readers acquire and build reading skills. Decodable text helps readers develop their knowledge of phonics. Our authors and editors have taken great care to make sure language feels natural and never jarring or forced. This means Early Bird Readers can be enjoyed as entertaining stories while young readers learn the skills they need to be lifelong readers!

For a list of Lexile levels for each title, and a digital version of this guide, see qrs.lernerbooks.com/EarlyBirdReaders.



Early Bird Readers

Collection	Lexile Range	GRL Range	Features	Color Bands
Kindergarten	0–220	B–D	<p>This collection includes decodable text and up to five non-decodable words per story that are represented in art. Additional features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or 2 stories per book • Letter-tracing activity • Speech bubbles • Comprehension quiz 	<p>pink</p> <p>red</p> <p>yellow</p>
1st Grade	220–470	D–H	<p>This collection features primarily decodable text, with up to five non-decodable words allowed. Plots are slightly more complex and offer more variety. Additional features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 story per book • Comprehension quiz 	<p>red</p> <p>yellow</p> <p>blue</p> <p>green</p> <p>orange</p>
2nd Grade	390–590	I–L	<p>This collection features primarily decodable text, with up to five non-decodable words allowed. Texts include words with more complex phonics. Plots may feature identifiable themes and require more stamina to read. Additional features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 story per book • Comprehension quiz 	<p>yellow</p> <p>orange</p> <p>purple</p> <p>gold</p>



STORY DETECTIVES

Put students on the case to identify the main parts of a story!

What You Need

- Early Bird Readers book
- Dry-erase board and markers
- A copy of the response sheet titled “Story Detectives” on page 6 for each student
- Drawing supplies for students

Learning Goals

- Identify the characters, settings, and events in a fiction story

Tip for Teachers

Warm students up for this activity by asking them to brainstorm different stories they know from movies, books, or shows, and the characters and settings of those stories.

Key Questions

- How do I know who the characters are in a story?
- How do I identify the setting of a story?
- What clues tell me the major events of a story?

Talk about It

Begin by introducing the parts of a story. Say:

Stories can be about almost anything in the world. Some are long, some are short. Some are made-up, and some are based on real events. But all stories have a few parts in common. Every story has a character, setting, and events, or things that happen in it.

Explain that today, your students will be story detectives. Their job is to identify the different parts of a story. They can do this by asking a few simple questions as they read. Write the questions below on the board:

- Who is the story about?
- Where does it take place?
- What happens?

Try It

1. Read a story from the Early Bird Readers collection aloud to your class. Before reading, remind students to pay attention to the Who, Where, and What of the story. Remind them to look at the pictures as they listen to the text for clues.
2. Review the questions you wrote on the board one by one, inviting students to share their ideas for the character, setting, and events. After each response, prompt them to provide clues supporting their answer.
3. Pass out a Story Detectives response sheet to each student. Ask them to think about a story they know. It could be a common story they are familiar with, such as “The Three Little Pigs,” or a favorite story they read often at home.
4. Encourage students to be Story Detectives, drawing pictures that represent the different parts of the story they chose.
5. Invite students to share their work with the rest of the class.

Think about It

Continue the activity by considering how the events in a story can be further broken down. Explain that most stories have a beginning, middle, and an end. Ask:

- *How do you know what events make up the beginning of a story?*
- *How do you know what events make up the middle of a story?*
- *How do you know what events make up the end of a story?*





Story Detectives

Student name: _____

Title of story: _____

Characters

(Who is the story about?)

Setting

(Where does the story take place?)

Events

(What happens in the story?)

COVER CLUES

Help students learn about how text and images work together to tell a story by exploring different book cover images.

What You Need

- Early Bird Readers book
- Opaque sheet of paper or sticky notes (to cover book title)
- Dry-erase board and markers
- Copies of the activities titled “Cover Match” and “Create a Cover” on pages 9 and 10 for each student
- Drawing supplies for students

Learning Goals

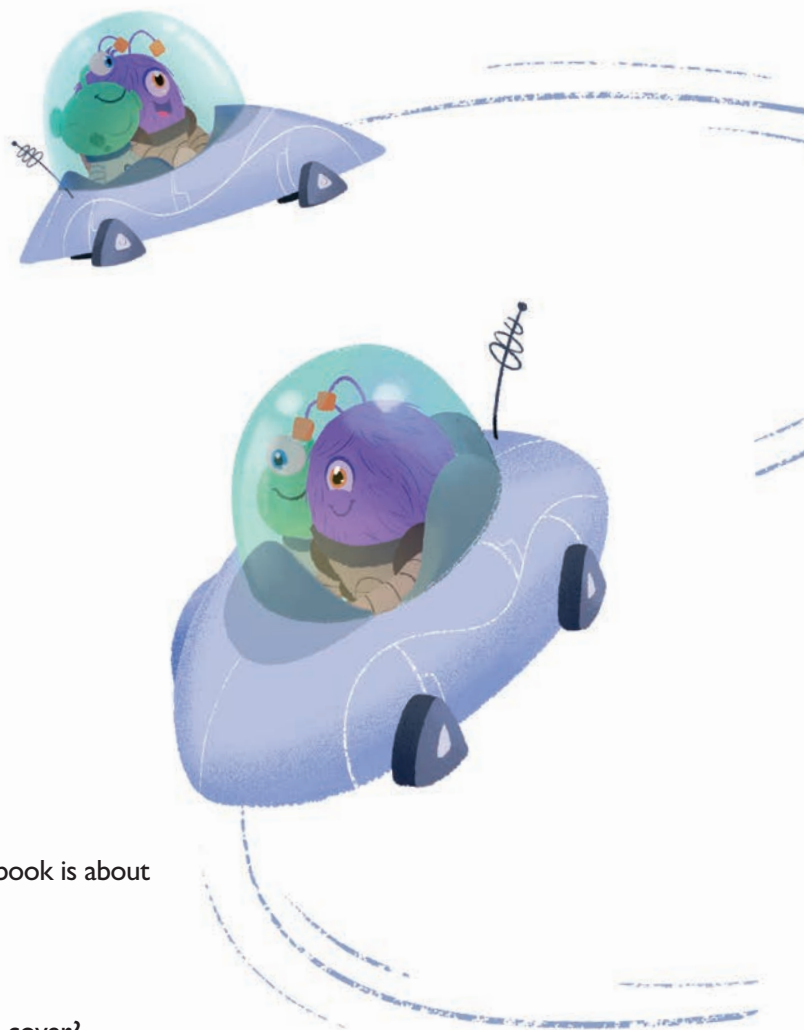
- Describe the relationship between illustrations and text
- Explore ways a book cover can represent what a book is about

Key Questions

- What elements of a story are often shown on the cover?
- How does a book’s cover images give clues as to what a story is about?

Talk about It

Explain that today, you will be talking about the ways words and pictures can work together to tell a story.



Tip for Teachers

Connect this activity to students’ interests by holding a show-and-tell where students can present the cover of their favorite book.



Try It

1. Show students the cover of an Early Bird Readers book. Use a sheet of paper or several sticky notes to conceal the title. Ask: *What do you think this book is about?* Invite students to offer their ideas and write them on the dry-erase board. If needed, remind them of the main elements of a story: characters, setting, and plot. Ask: *What can you tell about this book's characters, setting, and what happens by looking at the cover?*
2. Now read aloud the title of the book. Ask: *Now what do you think the book is about?* Invite students to share their ideas and write them on them on the dry-erase board.
3. Read the book aloud to the students, encouraging them to look at the pictures as well as to listen to the words. Look back at the original ideas you wrote. How close were students' predictions? Discuss as a class.
4. Give each student a copy of the Cover Match and Create a Cover activities. Encourage students to match the book titles to the correct covers in the Cover Match activity. Then, encourage students to complete the Create a Cover activity, drawing a cover for a book they would like to write.
5. Display the drawn covers where the rest of the class can see them.

Think about It

Invite students to share the covers they created. Discuss how the images they chose can give clues as to what the story is about.



Cover Match

Match the book titles to their cover images!

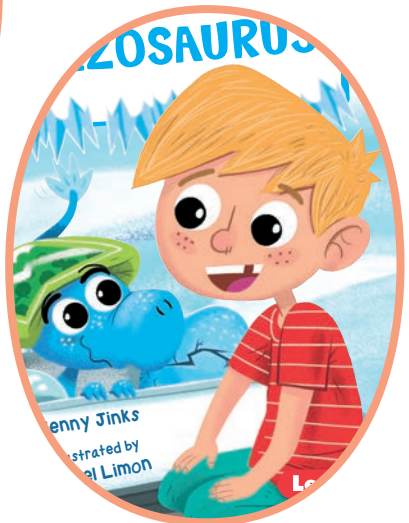
Student name: _____

Fast Fox and Slow Snail

A Gold Star for George

Surfer Chimp

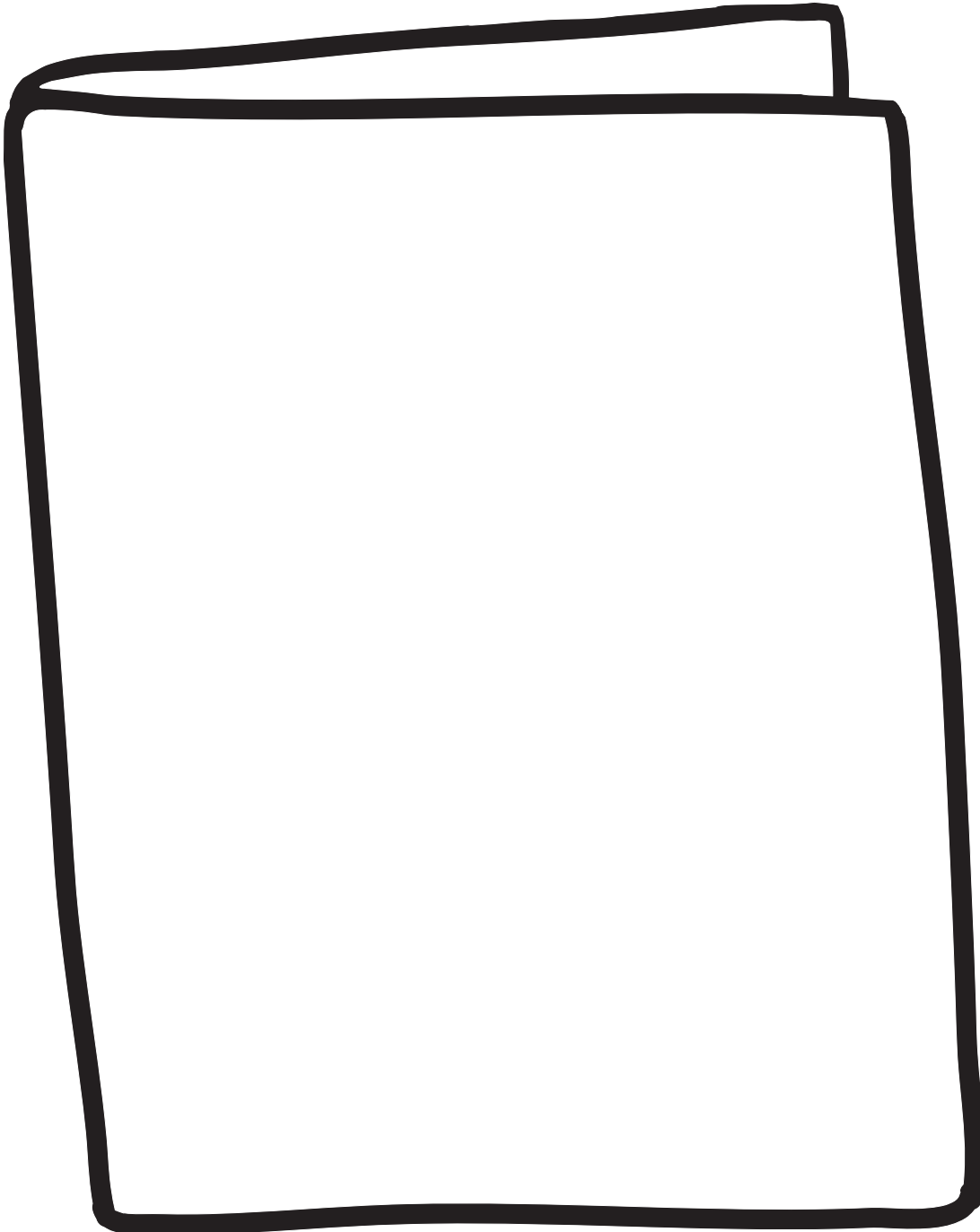
The Freezosaurus





Create a Cover

Think about a book you would like to write. Use the space below to design your own book cover for that book. Make sure to write the book's title and your name on the cover!



WORD DECODERS

Help students practice their word-decoding skills by exploring different phonemes.

What You Need

- Early Bird Readers book
- Dry-erase board and markers
- A copy of the word ladder response sheets on pages 13 and 14 for each group of three to four students
- Writing supplies for students

Tip for Teachers

Phonemes are single units of sound. In English, some phonemes are combinations of letters, such as *sh* in *push*. Examples of one-syllable, three-phoneme words are *can*, *like*, and *tag*.

Learning Goals

- Practice identifying phonemes in a one-syllable, three-phoneme word
- Learn how to blend phonemes to decode unfamiliar words

Key Questions

- How can breaking up a word into sounds help decode unfamiliar words?
- What phonemes do rhyming words have in common?

Talk about It

Explain that today, you are going to practice decoding short, one-syllable words. Remind students that syllables are the different parts of a word, and that every word is just a combination of different sounds (phonemes).



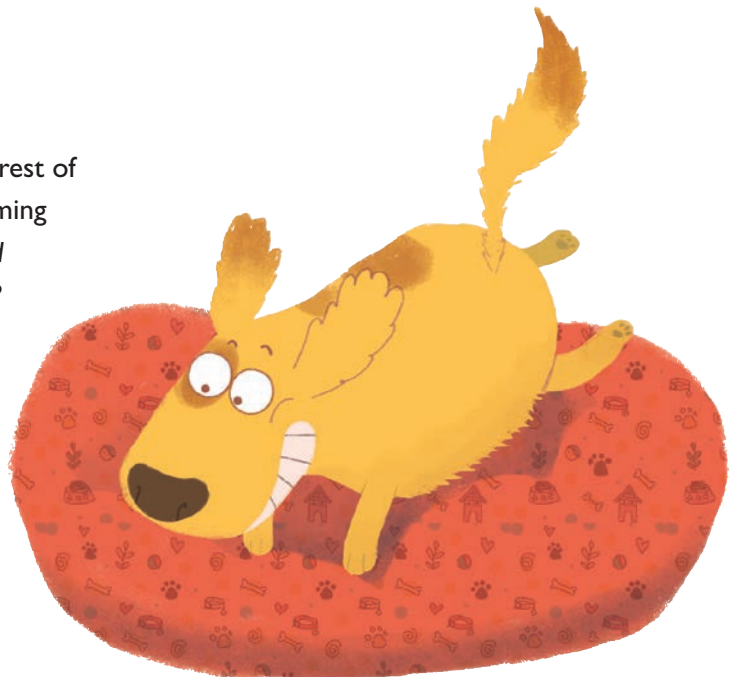


Try It

1. Read aloud an Early Bird Readers book.
2. After reading, ask students to pick out a familiar one-syllable word they recognize from the book, such as *run* or *tag*. Write the word on the dry-erase board. Read the word aloud and ask students to repeat it back to you.
3. Invite students to identify the different phonemes in the word. Ask: *What is the first sound in this word?* Repeat with the other phonemes in the word, underlining each sound as you discuss it. Say each phoneme: /t/ /a/ /g/, then blend them together: tag.
4. Now write a word that rhymes with the word students chose. For example, if you wrote *tag*, you could choose *bag*. Say the word out loud and ask students to repeat it back to you.
5. Invite students to identify the different phonemes in the new word. Draw lines between each phoneme for a visual cue: /b/ /a/ /g/. Say each phoneme individually, and then blend them together: bag. Ask: *Which sounds are the same as in the first word? Which are different?*
6. Split students into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the Word Ladder response sheet. Invite them to work together to fill in the front side. Then, encourage them to use the back side to create their own word ladders!

Think about It

Invite groups to share their word ladders with the rest of the class. Encourage students to consider how rhyming relates to phonemes. Ask: *Do any words in your word ladders rhyme? What do these words have in common?*

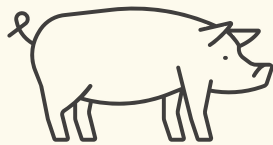
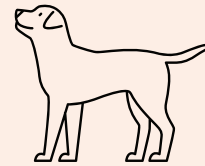


Word Ladders

Student name(s): _____

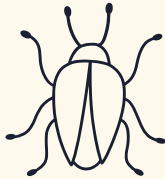
Fill in the blanks below to turn *dog* into *sun*!

dog



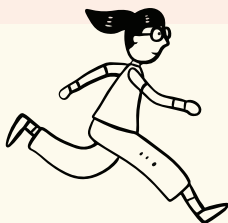
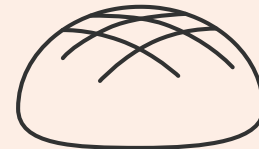
h _ g

h _ _



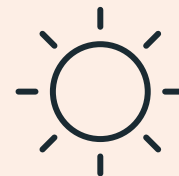
_ u _

b _ n



r _ _

sun





Make Your Own Word Ladder

Now create your own word ladder below! Write a one-syllable word in the top blank box. Change one letter in that word to create a word for the second box. Continue this pattern to fill in all the boxes!

A word ladder diagram consisting of a central ladder with five rungs. To the left of the ladder are three empty rectangular boxes, and to the right are two empty rectangular boxes. Dotted lines connect each box to a rung of the ladder: the top box to the top rung, the middle-left box to the second rung, the bottom-left box to the third rung, the middle-right box to the fourth rung, and the bottom-right box to the fifth rung.

BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END

Help students explore the parts of a story by telling a story to a classmate.

What You Need

- Early Bird Readers book for each student plus one for teacher to use as an example
- A copy of the response sheet titled “Story Map” on page 17 for each student
- Drawing supplies for students

Learning Goals

- Identify the beginning, middle, and end of a story
- Retell a story orally with visual support

Key Questions

- What are the main elements of a story?
- What happens at the beginning, middle, and end of a story?

Tip for Teachers

If students need more assistance reading independently, put them in groups of three or four rather than giving each student their own book.

Talk about It

Begin by explaining that all stories have three parts: a beginning, a middle, and an end. Say:

The beginning of the story is like the story’s introduction. It teaches us about the story’s characters and setting, and gives us clues about what the story might be like. For example, it might be happy, sad, scary, or silly. The middle of the story is where most of the action happens. During this part of the story, characters often must solve a problem. The end of the story is when the story comes to a close. We find out if characters did or didn’t solve their problem, and what happened to them.



Try It

1. Read an Early Bird Readers book aloud to the class. After reading, invite students to retell what happened in the story. Encourage them to identify the different elements of the story, such as character and setting. Ask: *Who can tell me what happened at the beginning of this story?* Prompt students to identify the middle and end as well.
2. Give each student a copy of the Story Map response sheet and an Early Bird Readers book. Encourage students to read their books independently and use details from the books to fill out the Story Map response sheet. As they work, visit each student to offer help with difficult words or concepts. Remind students that they should use both the illustrations and text to give them clues about the story elements.
3. When their activities are complete, divide students into pairs. Invite each student to retell the story they read to their partner, using the details from their story map.

Think about It

Encourage students to think about how the elements of a story contribute to their enjoyment of it. Ask: *What makes a story good or interesting? What about the beginning of a story makes you want to read more? What about the middle of the story holds your attention? What about the end of a story makes you keep thinking about it?* Remind students that different people like different types of stories!





Story Map

Student name: _____

Book title: _____

Draw pictures of each story element in the boxes below to complete your story map.

Characters

Setting

Beginning

Middle

End



PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

Explore different examples of prefixes and suffixes and how they change a word's meaning.

What You Need

- Dry-erase board and markers
- A copy of the response sheet titled “Word Builder” on page 20 for each student
- Early Bird Readers book featuring words with prefixes and suffixes, such as from the purple and gold bands

Learning Goals

- Identify prefixes and suffixes in common words
- Explore ways prefixes and suffixes can change the meaning of words

Key Questions

- What is a prefix?
- What is a suffix?
- How do prefixes and suffixes change the meanings of words?

Talk about It

Explain that today, you will be learning about prefixes and suffixes. Begin by explaining that a prefix is a group of letters that can be added to the beginning of a word. These letters change the meaning of the word. Write the word *nonfiction* on the dry-erase board. Read the word aloud, pointing to the parts of the word as you read it. Ask students if they can spot the prefix in the word *nonfiction*. Cover up *non* with your hand and read the word *fiction*. Invite students to share how they think the prefix *non* changes the meaning of the word *fiction*.

Write a few more examples of words with prefixes on the board, such as: *replay*, *untie*, and *unhappy*. With each word, invite students to call out the prefix for each word. Ask: *How does the prefix change the word's meaning?*

Now that students know what a prefix is, invite them to guess what a suffix might be. Ask: *If a prefix is a group of letters that goes on the beginning of a root word, what do you think a suffix is?*

Write the word *strongest* on the dry-erase board. Read the word aloud, pointing to the parts of the word as you read it. Explain that a suffix is a letter or group of letters that is added to the end of the word. Like a prefix, a suffix changes the word's meaning. Ask: *Can you spot the suffix in the word strongest? How does this suffix change the meaning of the word strong?*

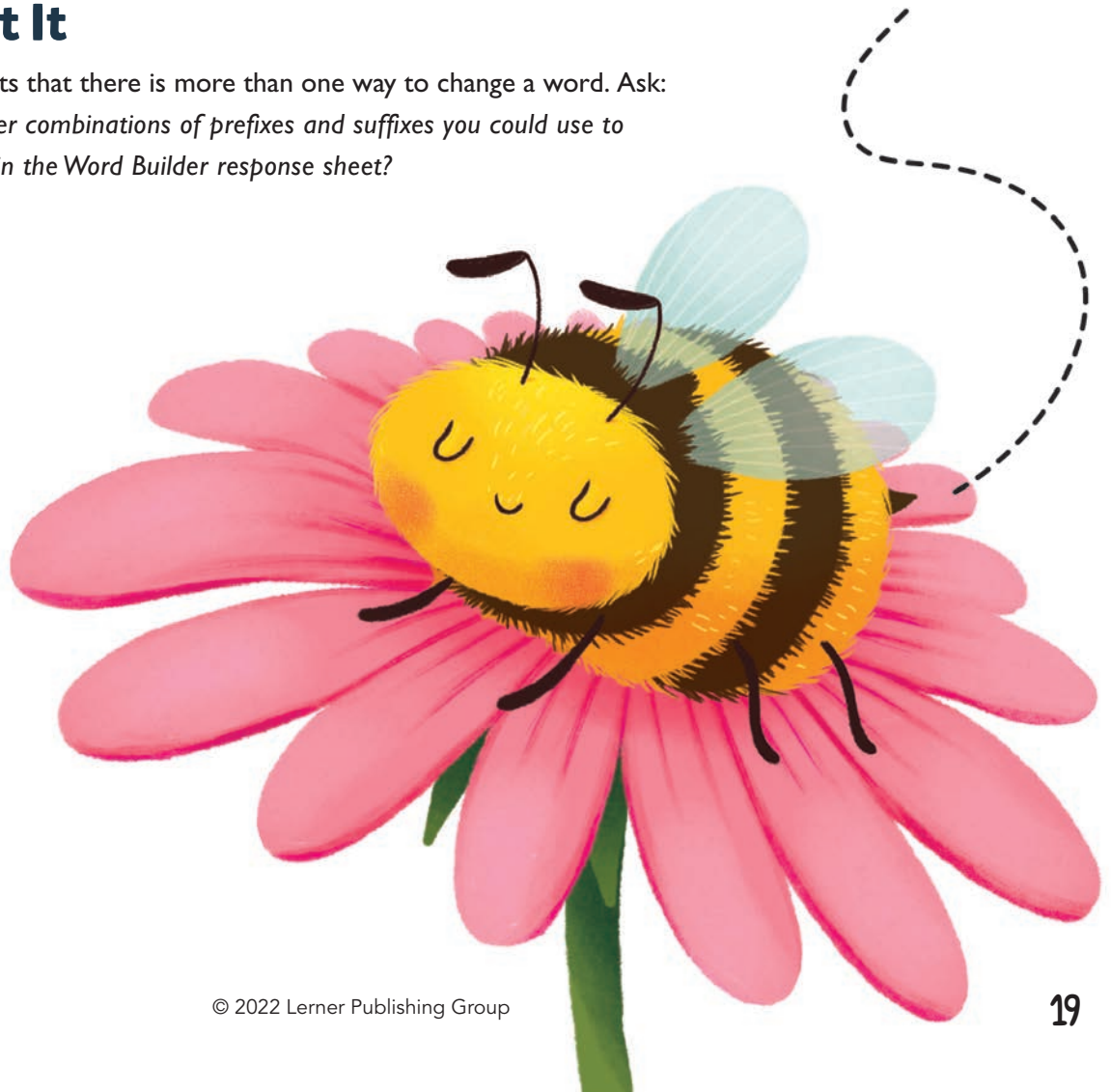
Write a few more examples of words with suffixes on the board, such as: *playing*, *kindness*, and *reader*. Invite students to call out the suffix for each word. Ask: *How does the suffix change the word's meaning?*

Try It

1. Read aloud an Early Bird Readers book that features prefixes and suffixes. Encourage students to raise their hand to "stop the story" each time they hear a word that might have a prefix or suffix. When they do, write that word on the board. Invite students to help you identify the prefix and/or suffix, and ask them how it changes the word's meaning.
2. Give each student a copy of the Word Builder response sheet. Encourage students to use the letters from the prefix and suffix word banks to build new words. While students work on the activity, walk around the classroom and offer one-on-one assistance as needed.

Think about It

Explain to students that there is more than one way to change a word. Ask: *Are there any other combinations of prefixes and suffixes you could use to make new words in the Word Builder response sheet?*





Word Builder

Student name: _____

Prefix Word Bank

re

un

non

pre

Suffix Word Bank

ing

able

ful

er

Pick prefixes and suffixes from the word banks above to make new words below!

_____build

wash_____

eat_____

color_____

read_____

_____fiction

_____fair

_____test