



# Viewer's Guide

This guide was produced in partnership with the **National Education Association**



## EPISODE 3

# Mastering Short Vowels and Reading Whole Words with Calista, First Grader

**Video length:** 19 minutes

**Watch the video here:**

[ReadingRockets.org/interventions/mastering-short-vowels-and-reading-whole-words-with-calista-first-grade](https://www.readingrockets.org/interventions/mastering-short-vowels-and-reading-whole-words-with-calista-first-grade)

## Calista's profile

Calista is a first grader. She reads one-syllable words with short vowels by sounding them out. She knows her letter sounds. With regard to phonological awareness, she can segment and blend sounds in spoken words, but she has not yet learned how to substitute sounds.



## Video overview

Calista demonstrates that she knows the short vowel sounds, and Calista learns how to manipulate sounds in spoken words while learning to think about the sounds without saying them. Next, she learns to read words as whole words, without saying the sounds before reading the word aloud. She practices reading words without sounding them out aloud first.

Calista's teacher is Ms. Farrell. She is a reading specialist and educational consultant working with Calista for the first time. The video clips of Calista are taken from a 25-minute lesson.

Ms. Farrell's lesson is purposefully not from any program. She and Calista demonstrate strategies that can work with any program.



## Ms. Farrell's lesson plan is to:

1. Check that Calista has the necessary prerequisite skills to read words whole.
  - Is Calista solid with the short vowel sounds?
  - Can Calista segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes?
2. Teach Calista to read words without sounding them out aloud, so that she thinks through the sounds in her head before she reads the word aloud.
3. Enable Calista to start experiencing reading with more fluency, beginning with decodable phrases and sentences, and ending with Calista reading a decodable passage.

## Things to notice while watching the video

- As you watch the video, notice Ms. Farrell's style of instruction.
- She never reads the words before asking Calista to read them.
- She always guides Calista and never provides the answer.
- She does **not** teach vocabulary in this lesson.
- When Calista makes a mistake, Ms. Farrell responds by telling Calista the part of her response that is correct, then guides her to the complete correct answer.
- Ms. Farrell allows plenty of time for Calista to think about the answer without interrupting her.
- When Calista misreads a word, Calista always rereads so that she finishes by accurately reading all the words that she was reading.

## Questions to consider while viewing the video the first time

1. At the beginning of the video, how does Calista read the words?
2. Does she read the words accurately or inaccurately?
3. What pre-reading skill/knowledge does Ms. Farrell check first with Calista?



## Questions to consider while viewing the video the first time

4. When Calista is changing sounds with colored tiles, how does she initially answer: "What is the first sound?" and "What is the last sound?"
5. How does Ms. Farrell guide Calista to say the sound instead of the letter name?
6. What does Ms. Farrell ask Calista to do when reading words to help Calista stop pronouncing each word sound-by-sound?
7. What is different about how Calista reads the words at the end of the video compared to her reading at the beginning of the video?

**Answers:** see the next page for the answer key.

Watch the whole "Looking at Reading Interventions" series here:  
[ReadingRockets.org/interventions](https://www.ReadingRockets.org/interventions)



## Answer key

1. At the beginning of the video, how does Calista read the words?

Calista reads the words sound-by-sound, saying each sound aloud before reading the whole word aloud.

2. Does she read the words accurately or inaccurately?

Calista reads the words accurately.

3. What pre-reading skill/knowledge does Ms. Farrell check first with Calista?

Ms. Farrell checks that Calista is solid with the short vowel sounds.

4. When Calista is changing sounds with colored tiles, how does she initially answer: "What is the first sound?" and "What is the last sound?"

Calista says the letter name instead of the sound.

5. How does Ms. Farrell guide Calista to say the sound instead of the letter name?

Ms. Farrell says, "That is the name of the letter, what is the sound?"

6. What does Ms. Farrell ask Calista to do when reading words to help Calista stop pronouncing each word sound-by-sound?

Ms. Farrell asks Calista to read without opening her mouth until she is ready to read the whole word.

7. What is different about how Calista reads the words at the end of the video compared to her reading at the beginning of the video?

Calista reads accurately without sound-by-sound reading.