

Early Reader Skills Scaffold

The Early Reader Skills Scaffold (ERSS) is Amira’s structured, highly supported practice pathway for pre-readers and early readers who are not yet ready to read connected text. Instead of starting with story choice/reading, students complete short, targeted activities focused on phonemic awareness, letter–sound knowledge, decoding, and early word reading skills. Student performance is captured in Amira reporting.

The ERSS was designed in collaboration with Dr. Katie Pace Miles and informed by student testing in kindergarten and first grade classrooms to ensure the activity sequence supports early skill acquisition while keeping students engaged and successful.

Who Should Use The ERSS

The ERSS is designed for:

- **Kindergarten and first grade students** (recommended starting point)
- **Students identified as early readers or pre-readers**, based on teacher observation or Amira assessment results
- **Students who have difficulty accessing connected text**, including those who are unable to read the kindergarten oral reading fluency passage during assessment and are therefore placed into ERSS

How to Enable or Assign ERSS

There are several ways students can be moved in or out of the Early Reader Skills Scaffold:

Automatic Placement

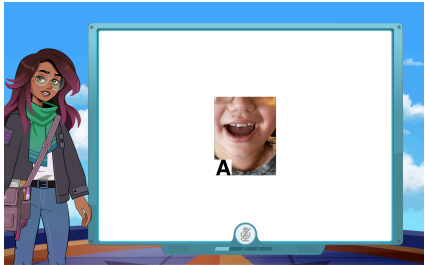
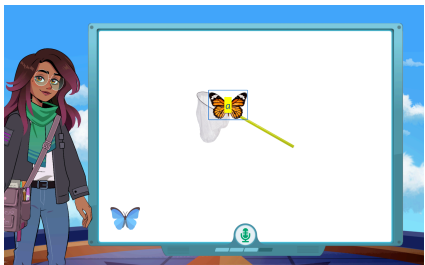
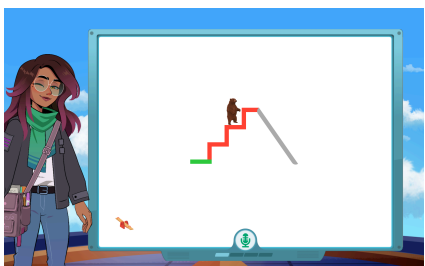
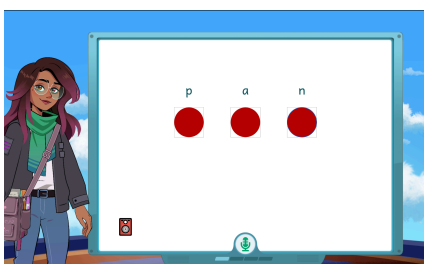
- All kindergarten and 1st grade students logging into Amira for the first time will automatically start in the ERSS
- After completing an assessment, students who are unable to read the Kindergarten Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) passage will automatically be designated with an “**Early Reader**” assessment status and enrolled in the ERSS for their Tutor or Tutora practice

Teacher Assignment

Teachers can manually place students in the ERSS for Tutor or Tutora practice through Tutor Settings. [View a walkthrough here.](#)

ERSS Activity Sequence – English

Students move through a repeatable sequence of activities that build skills step by step. Each activity targets a specific foundational reading skill with scaffolded support as needed.

Activity	Image
Letter/Sound Introduction Students receive explicit instruction and guided practice with a new letter–sound correspondence. Video Example	
Letterflies Students practice identifying the letter name and producing the sound. Video Example	
Segmenting Slide Students practice segmenting and blending spoken words with the target sound, without seeing any letters. Video Example	
Elkonin Boxes Students practice segmenting and blending words with the target sound using Elkonin boxes as a visual scaffold. Video Example	

Change One Part

Students practice decoding by changing one sound in a CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) word that includes the target sound.

[Video Example](#)

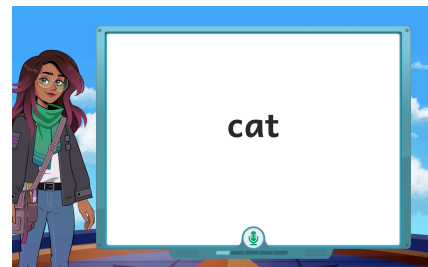


Word List

Students practice reading CVC words that include the target sound. If a student is unable to read a word, Amira provides scaffolded intervention and support.

*Students receive an **ARM score** for this activity.*

[Video Example](#)

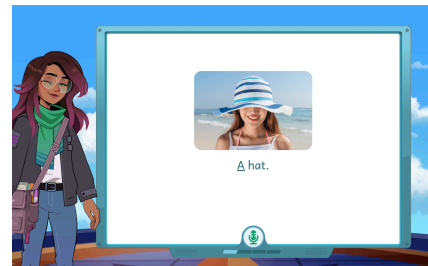


Decodable Sentences

Students practice reading simple sentences that include the target sound and previously practiced words. If a student is unable to read the words, Amira provides scaffolded intervention and support.

*Students receive an **ARM score** for this activity.*

[Video Example](#)



ERSS Skill Sequence – English

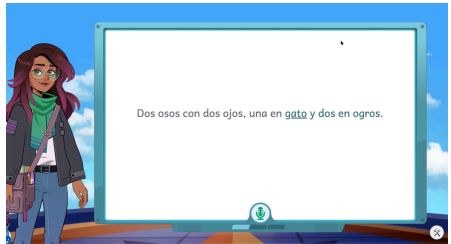
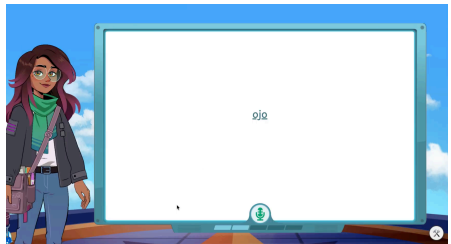
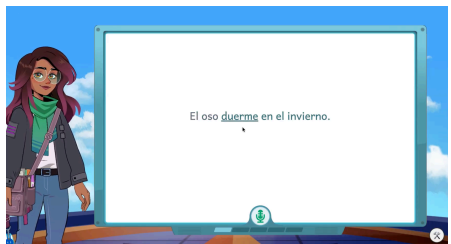
ERSS follows a defined phonemic scope and sequence that introduces letters, sounds, and high-frequency words across seven modules:

Module	Phonetic Elements	High Frequency Words
1	Aa, Mm, Tt, Pp, Ss	the, it, is, a
2	Nn, Ll, Hh, Bb, Ii	i, get, in
3	Ff, Rr, Cc, Ee	can, he, see
4	Dd, Gg, Kk, Oo	was, to, for, at, and, has
5	Jj, Ww, Yy, Uu	this, there, they

6	Qq, Xx, Vv, Zz	him
7	ch, sh, th	will

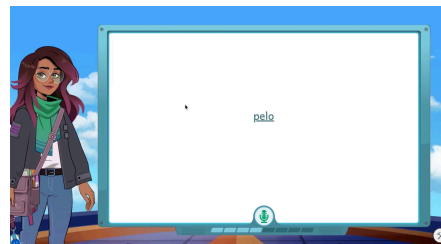
ERSS Activity Sequence – Spanish

Students move through a repeatable sequence of activities designed to build skills step by step. Each activity targets a specific foundational reading skill while providing scaffolded support as needed.

Activity	Image
Letter/Sound Introduction Students listen to and repeat the letter sound, then practice in contextual sentences that highlight the target sound. Video Example	
Word List Students read words containing the target sound, ranging from one to three syllables. Video Example	
Letter Story Students read phrases containing many words that feature the target sound. Video Example	

Word Team

After the first 10 letters, students practice reading words that use the letters they've learned so far.



ERSS Skill Sequence – Spanish

ERSS Spanish follows a defined scope and sequence that introduces letters, sounds, and word teams.

Module	Phonetic Elements
1	O, A, I, U, E, M, P, S, L, T
2	Dd, Rr, Cc, Nn, Ff
3	Bb, Jj, Gg, CH, Ññ
4	Vv, LLll, Qq, Zz, Hh
5	Yy, Xx, RRrr

Frequently Asked Questions

1. If a student is placed in the ERSS from their assessment, do I have to keep them there?

No. Teachers have the ability to move students in or out of the ERSS as needed. Teachers can also toggle students between the ERSS and Standard Practice throughout the week to allow students to practice in both modes.

2. Can I listen to the recording from my student's downleveled assessment passage?

Yes. If a student is unable to complete the Kindergarten ORF passage on an assessment, teachers will still be able to listen to the recording for deeper insights into why the student was downleveled. Navigate to the Progress Report. Scroll to view the activity list below the performance graph. Click on the most recent assessment completed and listen to the recording of the student's reading. [See a walkthrough.](#)

3. How is usage measured for ERSS students in the Usage Report?

For students enrolled in the ERSS, each activity they complete will be displayed as one Tutor story in reporting. Check the Usage Report to view the number of minutes and stories completed each week.

4. How can I see students' progress in the ERSS?

View students' ERSS activities in the **Progress Report**. Scroll to view their activity list below the performance graph and see a list of completed activities. Click on the Word List or Decodable Sentences activities to listen to a recording of the student's reading. [See a walkthrough.](#)

