The 15-Minute Decoding Block

A daily lesson structure for multisyllabic decoding intervention, grades 4-12. Run it with 3 to 5 students in any Tier 2 or Tier 3 slot.

#	Step	Time	What happens	Keep in mind
1	**Warm-up**	1-2 min	Flash the vowel patterns appearing in today's words (ai, oa, VCe...). Students say each sound chorally.	Keep it brisk. This primes the patterns; it does not reteach them.
2	**Flexible strategy**	4-5 min	Apply the four steps to 5 to 8 multisyllabic words: circle affixes, underline vowels, read by parts, read the whole word and confirm. Teacher models the first word aloud; students work the rest on whiteboards, talking through the steps.	Mix 3 to 5 review words from prior weeks into the list. Do not label them as review.
3	**Spell it back**	2-3 min	Students cover two or three of the same words and write each from memory, chunk by chunk, saying the parts as they write.	Encoding is the cheapest intensifier available. Two words is enough.
4	**Words in sentences**	2-3 min	Students read today's words embedded in sentences or a short passage.	A word read only in isolation is half-learned. Pull sentences from content-area text when possible.
5	**Repeated reading**	2-3 min	One short passage read twice. State a purpose for the second read: first for accuracy, then for smoothness or expression.	Rate may dip when word length jumps. Slower but accurate is progress.

Prep (5 minutes, once per lesson)

1. Pick 5 to 8 new words from your students' content classes that carry this week's pattern. 2. Add 3 to 5 words from earlier weeks, mixed in. 3. Write or pull 3 to 4 sentences using the words, or one short passage that doubles as the repeated reading.

Two principles that make the minutes count

Volume. Students need on the order of 4 to 14 exposures before a word becomes automatic, so words reappear across several sessions rather than retiring after one. **Mixing.** Interleaving review words with new ones, unlabeled, produces more durable learning than blocked practice, and never announces to a student which words they are still on.

Dignity rules for the block: no round-robin reading, groups of 3 to 5 with similar profiles, content-area words as the material, and the work named as breaking down academic vocabulary.

Sample plan (filled)

A week-two example for a group working on vowel teams ai and oa.

Date / Group	Oct 14 · Group B (4 students)
Pattern focus	Vowel teams ai, oa
Warm-up patterns	ai, oa, a-e (review)
New words (5-8)	sustain · complain · approach · maintain · raincoat · coastal
Review words, mixed in (3-5)	fantastic · athlete · compensate
Spell-back words (2-3)	sustain · approach
Sentences / passage	The crew worked to sustain the old lighthouse. Storms would approach the coastal town each fall, and the keeper would complain about the raincoat he had to maintain.
Repeated reading purpose	Read 1: every word accurate. Read 2: smooth, like telling the story.
Observations / exit notes	One student still lumps two-syllable bases; make Step 2 overt again tomorrow. All four flexed “coastal” without prompting.

Notice what the sample does: the words carry the target pattern and come in content-ready sentences, the review words are from earlier levels and sit unlabeled in the list, the spell-back words are drawn from the new set, and the passage reuses the words so steps 4 and 5 share one text.

Weekly plan (blank)

Copy this page. One per lesson, or one per week with the word list refreshed daily.

Date / Group	
Pattern focus	
Warm-up patterns	
New words (5-8)	
Review words, mixed in (3-5)	
Spell-back words (2-3)	
Sentences / passage	
Repeated reading purpose	Read 1: accuracy. Read 2:
Observations / exit notes	

Timing reminder: 1-2 warm-up · 4-5 flexible strategy · 2-3 spell it back · 2-3 words in sentences · 2-3 repeated reading.