

FAQs about F&F (information for parents)

What is F&F? *Foundations & Frameworks* is an instructional reading program that uses a collection of best instructional practices for equipping students to fully understand ideas conveyed in text. Through our reading program we don't just teach students how to read; we teach students how *to think* while they read to develop comprehension of a text and the author's intended purpose for writing it.

Why is SCA using this reading program? The latest findings in **neuroscience** reveal the need to tailor instruction to the way learning occurs. Understanding learning results in more effective teaching. Therefore, *Foundations & Frameworks* incorporates brain-friendly methods of instruction to maximize learning and equip all students to achieve their God-given potential.

What happens during F&F time?

- **Teachers explicitly model and teach thinking skills.** *When a student fails to think while he is reading, he is not truly comprehending but rather simply decoding words.* By breaking thinking down into its component steps, teaching these steps explicitly, and extensively modeling the use of these steps, teachers can equip students with the cognitive abilities needed to fully understand a text.
- **Time is dedicated to skill mastery.** Learning to use a skill requires extensive guided and independent practice. Insufficient time devoted to learning results in insufficient learning; students must understand the structures of text and the accompanying thinking skills so that independent application and transfer of thinking skills to other areas of learning can occur. Developing such understanding, such automaticity, requires time. *Foundations & Frameworks* units devote time and provide practice for students to truly master each comprehension skill.
- **High quality literature is used as a natural conduit for skill instruction.** Great literature captures a reader's imagination and motivates further reading. *Foundations & Frameworks* uses real, complete works of children's literature to engage students and provide adequate material for in-depth comprehension. The literature is clustered according to readability levels and is used for comprehension skill instruction. For example, a book with cliff-hanging events may be used to teach and practice understanding plot, whereas a book with great character development may be used to study and practice

character or comparison/contrast. Fifteen years of researching quality literature preceded the selection of *Foundations & Frameworks* titles.

- **Small group interaction is a daily practice.** Small groups enable teachers to know their students and adjust instruction to meet the needs of individuals. Small groups also provide an opportunity for students to further develop their understanding of text through thoughtful discussion with the teacher and with others reading the same text. The small group structure also gives teachers the flexibility to group students for re-teaching, reviewing, or for providing additional, individualized guided practice. While small group sessions take place, other students in the classroom prepare for their small group session by reading, adding entries to SPECS Logs, and completing practice with vocabulary words. SPECS Logs (**SP**ace for **E**xtending **C**omprehension **S**kills) are specially designed notebooks that foster student comprehension of text by providing space for the development of visual tools.
- **Visual tools are used to organize and represent patterns of thinking.** Visual tools are graphic tools used to organize and connect information from a text. Because they represent the thinking process that has been explicitly taught and modeled, visual tools foster the thinking necessary to comprehend a text. With an associated visual tool for each skill, *Foundations & Frameworks* equips students to think effectively in reading and in every other area of learning. For example, a flow chart used in the study of sequence of events provides an image of the process-sequence looks like a chain of boxes arranged in order. This understanding helps students understand the sequence of history, the sequence of the scientific process, the sequence of steps involved in long division, the sequence of throwing a ball correctly, and much more content in every area.
- **Vocabulary instruction emphasizes complete word understanding.** Vocabulary instruction must emphasize complete word understanding to be effective. Definitional, contextual and conceptual word understanding leads to ownership, allowing the student to not only comprehend new words, but to use them effectively in speaking and writing. *Foundations & Frameworks* emphasizes all three areas of word understanding through individual, small group, and whole class instruction and activities. Frequent feedback from teachers enables students to refine their understanding of words and promotes intentional and accurate word usage rather than basic word knowledge.
- **Phonemic awareness and phonics instruction is explicit and systematic.** Comprehension begins with accuracy and fluency in word identification. Phonemic awareness, the foundational understanding that words are formed from blended sounds, is an essential precursor

to phonics instruction. Phonics is best taught through multi-modal methods that incorporate listening, reading, spelling, and handwriting in explicit and systematic instruction of sound-spelling relationships. This is immediately followed by opportunities to practice decoding words in isolation and connected text. *Foundations & Frameworks* emphasizes both of these areas of word knowledge, getting students off to a successful start in both word recognition and comprehension.

How do parents know what's going on in the classroom if the SPECS logs stay at school? Teachers will communicate unit and skill information to parents in an ongoing fashion. Students will take their SPECS logs home at the end of each unit so parents can review the thinking progress that has taken place. The SPECS log must come back to school the next school day so students can use it during F&F instruction time. Lost SPECS logs can be replaced for \$15.

What can parents do to help?

- Read the information sent home by teachers.
- Remember we are practicing a skill—not just recalling information from a text. The intention is to be able to transfer this thinking skill to other area of instruction and to life in general.
- Review the unit pattern statement with your child, and look for ways to apply it. (Example: If the pattern statement is, “One thing can cause another thing to happen,” search for that truth during your family devotion time, at the store, going through the car wash, etc.)
- Ask students to explain the skill and encourage development of thinking by applying the skill to real-life situations. (Example: After a sporting event, ask students cause and effect questions. After watching a movie, ask students to determine character traits based on a character’s appearance, actions, and words)
- Encourage age-appropriate reading at home!
- Make reading a family affair. Read a book as a family and apply various thinking skills.