

whole-class initial instruction in literacy

InitialLit is an evidence-based whole-class literacy program which will provide all children with the essential core knowledge and strong foundations to become successful readers and writers. In the context of a Response to Intervention framework, InitialLit is a Tier 1 program, designed to be delivered to whole classes by classroom teachers.



Who is it for?

- ▶ Children in the first three years of school (Foundation to Year 2)
- ▶ Schools seeking a reading and spelling program with a synthetic phonics approach alongside a rich literature and vocabulary component
- ▶ Schools that would like to see consistent instruction across year groups and a reduction in the number of children needing literacy support in higher grades
- ▶ Teachers looking to provide an evidence-based approach to reading and spelling aligned with the Australian National Curriculum

The InitialLit approach

InitialLit is designed to be implemented across the four terms of the school year. InitialLit-F and InitialLit-1 focus on two main components:

1. Phonics, to systematically and explicitly teach the basic and advanced alphabetic code in a set sequence. In addition to learning letter-sound correspondences and how these are applied to reading and spelling, children will be introduced to common morphemes and simple grammatical concepts.
2. Vocabulary, oral language and listening comprehension through quality children's literature. Detailed lessons, including writing tasks, are provided for each of the storybook titles selected for use with the program.



In InitialLit-2, the scope of the program broadens to cover four main components:

1. Spelling, teaching the remainder of the advanced alphabetic code systematically and explicitly, as well as new spelling rules and morphological concepts.
2. Reading comprehension and fluency. This involves explicitly teaching students comprehension strategies and how to apply them to different types of text, as well as working on reading fluency through echo, choral and paired reading.
3. Grammar, in which children learn key grammatical features and how to apply them to a writing task.
4. Vocabulary, oral language and comprehension through children's literature. Detailed lessons, including writing tasks, are provided for 15 storybook titles. Two novel studies are included for use towards the end of the year.



Program content and resources

In each year of InitialLit, a comprehensive package of resources is provided to implement the program, including:

- ▶ Handbooks detailing lesson scripts and session procedures
- ▶ Sounds and Words Books or RAD Reading Books for small group sessions
- ▶ Assessment Manual
- ▶ Flashcards and Picture Cards (Foundation and Year 1)
- ▶ Colourful posters, displaying key characters and concepts
- ▶ PowerPoint slides to accompany lessons (downloadable from MultiLit website)
- ▶ Access to hundreds of downloadables, such as:
 - Consolidation and handwriting worksheets (available in NSW, SA, Qld and Vic font)
 - Literacy games
 - Activity templates
 - Home Reading Diaries (one per term)
 - Assessment Recording Forms
 - Resources to help schools implement the program e.g., parent information sheets, certificates, planning documents, curriculum linkage information.

Program content and resources: year by year

InitialLit–Foundation

The InitialLit–Foundation (InitialLit–F) program, for students in their first year of school, is designed to be delivered in a 90-minute instruction block (ideally uninterrupted, but this can be broken up if timetabling requires). This includes:

- ▶ 20-25 minutes of whole-class teaching (ideally four times per week) using a detailed scripted lesson plan.
- ▶ 30-45 minutes of further literacy work (these are activities to consolidate the teaching, either completed independently or with a class aide/volunteer while the teacher works with groups on reading and word-building).
- ▶ 15-20 minutes for a storybook session. One storybook is used as a focus over four sessions.
- ▶ Regular progress monitoring using curriculum-based assessments (CBA) to identify needs of children.

In addition to the InitialLit–F Kit, a classroom set of InitialLit Readers (Levels 1-9) is also required to implement the program. Available for purchase from MultiLit, there are 60 Reader titles in this series, and a classroom set contains six copies of each title.

The Handwriting Workbooks and Home Reading Diaries designed to be used alongside the program are available from the MultiLit website as downloadables. Ready-printed versions are also available for purchase as consumables. Home Reading Diaries are available only in NSW font, while Handwriting Workbooks are available in NSW, Vic, SA, and Qld fonts.



InitialLit–1

InitialLit–1 continues on from InitialLit–Foundation for children in their second year of school. The InitialLit–1 literacy session includes the following:

- ▶ 25 minutes of whole-class teaching (ideally four times per week) using a detailed scripted lesson plan.
- ▶ 10 minutes of spelling, as the lesson directs.
- ▶ 30-40 minutes of small group and independent work (using targeted and differentiated activities to consolidate the teaching that has taken place during the whole-class lesson).
- ▶ 15-20 minutes for a storybook session. One storybook is used as a focus for four sessions, over a two-week period.
- ▶ Ongoing progress monitoring using curriculum-based assessments (CBA) to identify and respond to the needs of children.



As with InitialLit–Foundation, a set of decodable InitialLit Readers (Levels 10-16), have been developed to align with the InitialLit–1 instructional sequence for consolidation of skills and essential practice. A classroom set of Readers (six copies each of 60 titles) is required for program implementation, and can be purchased from MultiLit.

In addition to the Kit, there are also several sets of consumables which accompany InitialLit–1. These include:

- ▶ InitialLit–1 Activity Book: this optional consumable resource, available for purchase from MultiLit, provides students with reading and spelling practice to consolidate the content taught in the whole-class lesson. The Activity Book can also be used as a homework resource.
- ▶ InitialLit–1 Home Reading Diaries: these can be purchased as a consumable resource, and are also available as a downloadable from the MultiLit Members' Area.
- ▶ InitialLit Readers More to Explore workbooks: this optional resource accompanies InitialLit Readers, Levels 1-9 (Foundation) and Levels 10-16 (Year 1), to provide more in-depth comprehension activities. These books are available for purchase from MultiLit.



Having taught InitialLit–F and now as a Year 2 teacher teaching InitialLit–2, I can say with great confidence that the implementation of the InitialLit program has had a significant and positive impact on my student's literacy and English knowledge and growth. With explicit instruction and regular assessment, the program ensures no child is left behind and teachers have ample opportunities to ensure students are firm on the content being presented. Personally, the program has strengthened my ability to teach literacy explicitly, systematically and confidently. Professionally, I was able to place my trust in this program because it is research based and supported, and having all the resources readily available allowed me to focus on what matters most – my teaching!

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InitialLit-2

For Year 2, as children are on their way to reading independence, the program's focus shifts to consolidation of reading and spelling skills. The InitialLit-2 program structure is as follows:

- ▶ Two comprehension and fluency lessons per week [approx. 40 mins each]
- ▶ Three spelling lessons per week [approx. 20-30 mins each]
- ▶ Two storybook lessons per week [approx. 30 mins each]
- ▶ Grammar lessons to be timetabled into writing lessons
- ▶ Time for reading groups using RAD (Read and Discuss) Reading Books and any other appropriate reading materials, and independent work using a variety of resources
- ▶ Progress monitoring using curriculum-based assessments



Included with the InitialLit-2 Kit is a class set of 25 copies of the RAD (Read and Discuss) Reading Book, to accompany the Comprehension and Fluency component, as well as a class set of 25 copies of the Spelling Workbook (these are available for purchase as a consumable after the first year, and as a downloadable). Ready-printed Home Reading Diaries (one per term) can be purchased from MultiLit or downloaded from the Members' Area of the MultiLit website.

Professional Development

There is a compulsory two-day Professional Development Workshop that must be completed prior to implementation of InitialLit-F, InitialLit-1 or InitialLit-2, to ensure schools gain maximum benefit from the program.

The workshop covers:

- ▶ The theoretical framework on which InitialLit is based
- ▶ Detailed overview of the program content
- ▶ Implementation and assessment procedures
- ▶ Practical demonstrations of the lessons and opportunities to practise lesson delivery

This training can be undertaken via a public workshop (as advertised on the MultiLit Professional Development Workshop calendar), or as an on-site workshop at your school. Please see our InitialLit pricing table for details of costs and the discounts available when you have multiple teachers trained.

Schools interested in running an on-site workshop are encouraged to contact multilit@multilit.com, with requested dates, as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

Following the training, MultiLit will provide support for implementation of InitialLit via phone, webinar, email and our Facebook group, InitialLit Community.

Please note: The InitialLit Professional Development Workshop covers all three years of InitialLit-Foundation, InitialLit-1 and InitialLit-2. For teachers who have already undertaken the two-day InitialLit PD Workshop, and are now seeking to be trained in InitialLit-2, a bridging webinar series is available at a price of \$205 per school, to provide an update on the new content contained in InitialLit-2. Staff who have not been trained in InitialLit are strongly encouraged to attend the two-day PD workshop as outlined above.

The children have consolidated more early reading and writing skills than in previous years, we have halved the number of children requiring Tier 2 intervention and the teachers are confident with the content and delivery. Although they may be time-intensive, the progress monitoring tests, cumulative assessments and clear spreadsheets have been excellent. They helped inform teaching and intervention approaches from the very beginning. Likewise, they have been very helpful from a leadership perspective, where I could present clear, visual data to our executive team demonstrating the gains students have made, specific skill acquisition of each and every student and who/why some children have been identified for intervention. This saved me many hours of data collation!