Practical Applications of Decoding Strategies: Handout

Spot It · Teach It · Hunt It

10 minutes. Any text. Any subject.

1. Spot It (teacher prep) Skim tomorrow's text. Pick **ONE** pattern that repeats and 3–5 words that show it.

- Which sound or spelling pattern shows up 3+ times?
- Which long words will need dividing?
- Which irregular words might stop students?
- Which prefix, suffix, or root carries meaning?

2. Teach It (10 min, before reading) Teach the pattern explicitly: listen for the sound, predict the letters, look for them. Then a quick practice: a sort, a syllable chop, or a rapid word chart.

3. Hunt It (10 min, during or after reading) Send students back into the real text to find, mark, and read words with the pattern.

When a Student Gets Stuck on a Word

Try these instead of "look at the picture" or "what would make sense?"

1. **"Is there a part you know?"** A prefix, a suffix, or a smaller word.
2. **"Where would you split it?"** Chop it into syllables.
3. **"What's the vowel doing?"** Sound out each chunk.
4. **"Read it again. Does that make sense?"** Context checks the word. It doesn't find it.

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Partner Planning Sheet

Names: _____ **Grade band:** K–2 / 3–5 / 6–12

Passage: _____

Step	Your plan
Spot It: The ONE pattern we noticed	
Spot It: 3–5 words from the text that show it	
Teach It: How we'll introduce the pattern	
Teach It: Our quick practice (sort, chop, word chart, other)	
Hunt It: What students will find and mark in the text	
Stuck words: One long word we'd use the prompts on	

Practice Passages

Choose the passage closest to the students you teach. The K–2 passage is meant for shared or read-along reading.

K–2: The Accidental Ice Pop

One cold night in 1905, a boy named Frank Epperson wanted a fruity drink. He mixed some powder and water in a cup. He left the cup on the back porch with a stick still in it. Then he went to bed and forgot all about it.

That night it got very cold. In the morning, Frank went back to the porch. His drink was frozen solid! He grabbed the stick and pulled. Out came a frozen treat on a stick.

Frank kept making icy treats for his friends. Years later, he started selling them. His kids called them "Pop's sicles." Today we call them Popsicles.

3–5: The Spring That Walked

In 1943, a naval engineer named Richard James was working on a problem. He was trying to design springs that could keep delicate equipment steady on ships at sea. One day, he accidentally knocked a spring off a shelf. Instead of simply falling to the floor, the spring flipped end over end. It seemed to walk down a stack of books, onto a table, and then onto the floor, where it landed in a neat coil.

Richard was amazed. He brought the spring home and showed his wife, Betty. They wondered if children would enjoy playing with it. Betty searched the dictionary for the perfect name. She chose *slinky*, a word that means smooth and graceful.

At first, stores were unsure about such an unusual toy. Then, in 1945, a department store in Philadelphia let the Jameses demonstrate it during the holiday season. Shoppers crowded around to watch the spring walk down a set of stairs. In about ninety minutes, all four hundred Slinkys were sold.

The toy that started as an accident is still walking down stairs today.

6–12: A Glue That Failed

In 1968, a chemist named Spencer Silver was working in a laboratory at 3M, a company known for tapes and adhesives. His assignment was to create a super-strong glue. Instead, he invented the opposite: an adhesive so weak that it could be peeled away without leaving any residue behind. Even more unusual, it could be reused again and again.

For years, the discovery seemed useless. Silver presented his invention to colleagues throughout the company, but no one could think of a practical application. The weak glue was an answer waiting for a question.

That question finally arrived in 1974. Art Fry, another 3M scientist, sang in his church choir. The paper bookmarks he tucked into his hymnal kept slipping out, leaving him searching frantically for his place. Fry remembered Silver's glue. What if a bookmark could stick to the page without tearing it?

Fry and Silver began experimenting with repositionable notes. Their coworkers soon discovered that the little notes were useful for much more than marking pages. They left messages, labeled files, and organized ideas. Still, the first test launch in 1977 disappointed the company, because customers didn't understand the product until they actually tried it. When 3M gave away free samples, demand grew quickly. In 1980, Post-it Notes were released across the United States.

Today, the "failed" glue is one of the most recognizable office supplies in the world.