

Planning for Stations

When educators purposely create the conditions, structures, and routines for these literacy stations, students do in fact make more gains from the learning they are able to have with their peers, as well as the targeted instruction from the teacher with their peers (Maurer, 2010).¹


The teacher has small groups planned and ready to go! But, what does the rest of the class do while the teacher is working with a small group? The answer is stations!

This document provides guidance for planning and executing purposeful, and active, academic stations. (A refresher on what Small Groups with Stations should look like, feel like, and sound like, can be found in Planning for Small Groups.)

¹ Maurer, Caroline. "Meeting Academic Standards through Peer Dialogue at Literacy Centers." *Language Arts*, vol. 87, no. 5, 2010, pp. 353–362. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41804202>.

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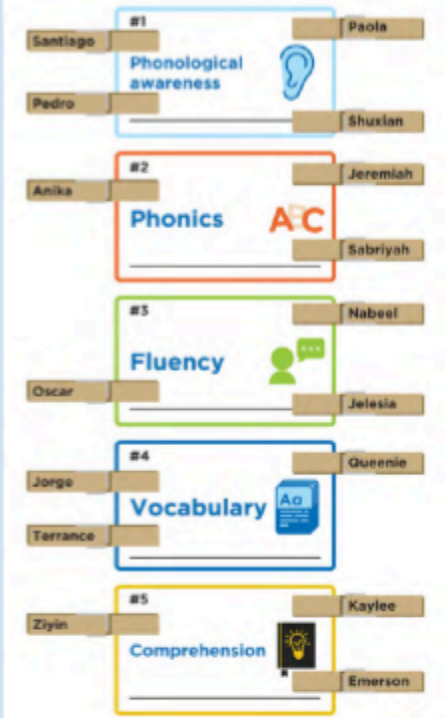
Small Groups with Stations requires teachers and students to build structure, routines, and transitions that allow students to work in collaborative groups, independent of the teacher, while the teacher facilitates targeted small group instruction. The table below provides guidance on how to set up the classroom, and ways to help prepare students for an active and collaborative learning environment. After reading the guidance, the teacher should use the “Stations Management Worksheet” that follows, to guide them through planning for stations in the classroom.

Topic	Description	Detailed Guidance
Set Up	It is important to set up the learning space in support of group learning experiences. Students will be moving around and the space must be arranged to safely support this movement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move desks and/or tables into 5 groupings. 2. There should be one area for each station. Ensure furniture placement allows students to transition to each station safely. 3. Designate each of the 5 stations with signage (found in the Small Groups with Stations folder). <p><i>Note: Don't forget to determine where the teacher will meet with small groups. A horseshoe table is a great option.</i></p> <p>Example:</p> 

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<p>Create Groups</p>	<p>So as not to disrupt an entire station group, students from each small group are divided up among the station groupings. See the example on the right for a step by step explanation of how to do this.</p> <p>Each student is on their own individual reading development journey. Be sure to use categories or names that do not have a sequential value. Numbers, letters, and even rainbow colors can be interpreted as better or worse. Planets, habitats, forest animals, or pokemon characters are fun group name choices.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher will consider the RR&P Formative Assessment data AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anecdotal observations about the student’s reading strengths Student’s ability to work collaboratively Student’s ability to work independently Student’s ability to remain focused Student’s independent problem solving skills The teacher will place students into 5 groups of 2-5 students thinking about all the above factors. The teacher will form a group of students that will be successful engaging in learning activities without teacher support. <p>There is a “Creating Station Groups Worksheet” in the Small Groups with Stations folder. A teacher will follow this guidance to create station groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the Small Groups already formed. (Refer to the <i>Formative Assessment Guidance and Planning for Small Groups</i>.) Take students from the first small group, and divide the students into 5 separate station groups. Take the students from the second small group, and divide them into the 5 station groups. Note the considerations above when placing students together. Once steps 1 and 2 are complete, there are two students in each station group. Continue taking the remaining small groups and dividing the students up in different station groups. Study each newly created station group to determine if this particular grouping of students will most likely be successful working together. Make substitutions as necessary. <p>Example:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="982 1143 1654 1442"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Small Groups</th> <th colspan="2">Stations</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Group Name</th> <th>Students</th> <th>Starting station</th> <th>Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bear</td> <td>Paola, Jeremiah, Nabeel, Jorge, Ziyin</td> <td>1. Phonological Awareness</td> <td>Paola, Shuxian, Santiago, Pedro</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bobcat</td> <td>Anika, Queenie, Shuxian, Jelsia</td> <td>2. Phonics</td> <td>Jeremiah, Anika, Sabriyah</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eagle</td> <td>Santiago, Kaylee</td> <td>3. Fluency</td> <td>Nabeel, Jelsia, Oscar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fox</td> <td>Emerson, Sabriyah, Oscar, Terrance, Pedro</td> <td>4. Vocabulary</td> <td>Jorge, Queenie, Terrance</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>5. Comprehension</td> <td>Ziyin, Kaylee, Emerson</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 	Small Groups		Stations		Group Name	Students	Starting station	Students	Bear	Paola, Jeremiah, Nabeel, Jorge, Ziyin	1. Phonological Awareness	Paola, Shuxian, Santiago, Pedro	Bobcat	Anika, Queenie, Shuxian, Jelsia	2. Phonics	Jeremiah, Anika, Sabriyah	Eagle	Santiago, Kaylee	3. Fluency	Nabeel, Jelsia, Oscar	Fox	Emerson, Sabriyah, Oscar, Terrance, Pedro	4. Vocabulary	Jorge, Queenie, Terrance			5. Comprehension	Ziyin, Kaylee, Emerson
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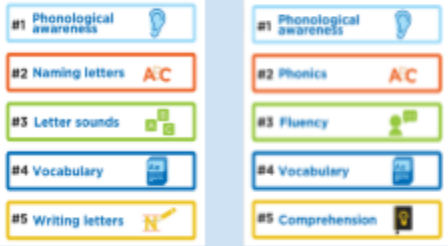
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<p>Transition Strategy</p>	<p>Thoughtful transitions are necessary to quickly and safely notify and move all students to their station, next station, or desk in order to maximize time engaged in learning and practice. Students should have between 10 and 12 minutes at each station.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a visual representation of the rotation schedule so that students can take ownership of this time. 2. Determine how the teacher will signal how much time students have at the station, when it is time to clean up, when it is time to move, etc. Consider the uses of a song, hand signal, bell, and/or timer, and how it can communicate to students what they should be doing. 3. Determine how a student will get the teacher’s attention if a student needs to interrupt small group instruction. 4. Give students time to clean up at their station before transitioning to the next station. <p><u>One example of an effective transition routine is:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Timer beeping signals to students that the time is up for that station. Students stop their work. b. The teacher plays a 1 minute song clip. Students know they have 1 minute to clean up their station. If they finish before the song is up, they can stand behind their chairs and dance. When the song ends, students face and point to their next station, quietly waiting. The teacher calls the names of the next group of students to come to teacher-led small groups. c. The whole class sings the transition chant (sung to “Following the leader” - “We’re moving in our classroom, our classroom, our classroom. We’re moving in our classroom to see what we can learn.”) as everyone moves to their next location. d. The teacher starts the timer and students get to work. <p>Example:</p> 

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<p>Setting Norms (i.e. expectations)</p>	<p>Students need clearly communicated expectations for their participation during Small Groups with Stations. Students also need feedback on how they met or failed to meet those expectations. Creating norms <i>with</i> student input is very important. It demonstrates that the teacher values student contributions and trusts that students respect their learning time. It also is aligned to the belief that students are positive leaders in the classroom who know appropriate participation and can articulate that.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the purpose of Small Groups with Stations time with students (to become more proficient readers). 2. Discuss how students should work together, supporting one another, at stations while the teacher is working with small groups. 3. When would be an appropriate time for a student to interrupt the teacher during small groups? Revisit the signal to be used and under what specific circumstances (<i>i.e. bathroom emergency, nurse emergency, etc.</i>). 4. Co-construct and determine student-friendly norms. Start by asking students for their ideas. Group ideas together and whittle the list down to something age appropriate for the class. (<i>i.e. Do Your Best, Stay on Task, Help Your Friends</i>). 5. Write the norms on chart paper, consider adding an illustration, and ask students to agree to them by signing their name. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of each session, ask the students to reflect on how well they followed the norms by sharing stars (1-2 things they did well) and stairs (1-2 things they want to work on next time). • The teacher shares a class star and class stair.

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<p>Get familiar with Station activities and resources</p>	<p>Get familiar with the resources available for stations. This will help the teacher determine what kind of materials management systems are needed. The teacher must also plan how to communicate the station focus area and directions to the students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the <i>Resources for Small Groups with Stations</i> document (in the Small Groups with Stations folder). 2. Log in to Raz-Plus and look at the suggested resources from the document. 3. Determine what resources will be used for the unit. 4. Prepare resources for each station (print, digital access, making copies, etc.). 5. Determine how the teacher will communicate the station focus area and directions to the students.
<p>Materials Management</p>	<p>It is the teacher's responsibility to prepare the materials for each station and decide how to store them so students can stay organized while accessing and cleaning up the station. This helps students take ownership for their learning. Use bins or folders to contain materials for each station.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine what kind of storage solution makes the most sense for the materials at each station. 2. Clearly label bins or folders with the station name and the provided signage. 3. Designate a separate folder or bin for completed work when a station calls for that. 4. Determine where to store bins and folders for each station so that students can access and clean them up independently. <p>Example:</p> 

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<p>Practice Practice Practice</p>	<p>The teacher must gradually teach and practice the station activities and specific management strategies used during Small Groups with Stations <i>before</i> executing the entire block of time. Remember, students must be able to engage in the stations without teacher support. Look over the detailed guidance and practice schedule below to make a plan.</p>	<p>Students need an opportunity to practice the following skills before being expected to <i>do</i> Small Groups with Stations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotating between stations and to and from the teacher-led small group back to stations • Transition signals and what to do when they hear or see the signal • Getting out and cleaning up stations • Station games and activities • When and how to ask for help • Reflections on how well they followed the norms during this time