

# Foundations for Literacy III

## FFL 3.2

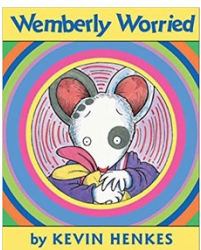
### Bossy R

Review all the short vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u), and review the sounds for a-r, /ar/, and o-r, /or/. Be sure to use our motions to promote the proper sound production for each letter and letter combination. Listen closely and be sure your kids have these sounds mastered. If you need to go back and review a previous lesson or two, please do so.

Now it's time to introduce the "bossy r." Introduce the concept by talking about how some friends are bossy and they only want to do what they want to do. Bossy r is the same way! Bossy r doesn't let vowels make a single sound—not a long sound (its name) OR a short sound (as in the *Old MacDonald Had Some Vowels* song). R "bosses" vowels so that even though there is a vowel in front of the r, the vowel makes no sound at all. Only the r can be heard making *its* sound, /r/.

Say: "We know that a-r says /ar/ (do the motion) most of the time. We know that o-r says /or/ (do the motion) most of the time. Now I am going to teach you about a bossy letter that often does not let vowels make any sound **at all**. Sometimes a-r and o-r, both, can just say /r/. In fact, any vowel preceding an r can stay quiet and the bossy r simply says, /r/. Usually, it's an e that is bossed by an r. But sometimes the other vowels get bossed, too.

Use the vowel five headers to show each vowel being "bossed" by an r. Place them in alphabetical order saying, "a-r can say /r/, e-r can say /r/, i-r can say /r/, o-r can say /r/, and u-r can say /r/. That's every single vowel! That r is SO bossy!



**Read: Wemberly Worried, by Kevin Henkes**

materials needed: Bossy r headers, Spot the Bossy r word list from *Wemberly Worried*, purple crayons

(Notice that both the final e in *Wemberly* and the o in *Worried* are being "bossed." Neither the e nor the o makes a sound at all. Not short. Not long. Nothing. Bossy r is being bossy—only doing what IT wants to do.

*Note: Words with a-r saying /ar/ and o-r saying /or/ are NOT bossy r words. They are R-controlled. Those vowels make some sort of sound. (Consider the difference in the words car /ar/ and dollar /r/.)*

Share the Bossy r word list to show just how many bossy r words can be found in the book

*Wemberly Worried*. Note that the r's are enlarged so students remember they're being "bossy" and aren't letting the vowels in front of them make any sound at all. The r is simply saying its sound, /r/.

Next, give the students their Spot the Bossy r word lists. Invite them to "highlight" the bossy r and the vowel its bossing by circling the r and the preceding vowel and then lightly coloring in the circle with their crayons. Note that we're using our purple crayons because the u in purple is being *bossed* by the r.

### **Bossy r Game Board**

materials include: bossy r headers, game board papers/white construction paper, colored dot stickers, game board rule reminders, glue, bossy r word cards, dice, movers

Give the students game board papers/white construction paper and some colorful round stickers. (Note with your students that e-r is the most common bossy r combination. When in doubt spelling a bossy r word, try e-r!) Have your students affix stickers around the perimeter of the construction paper to make a game board. (Please use the word perimeter and show an example of a finished game board.) Direct the students to apply some glue to the back of the game board rule reminders ("Sh! Don't make any of your sounds, vowel. Let me make my sound, /r/.") and place them in the centers of their game boards.

To play the game, place the word cards alongside the game boards and arrange the headers, set up in a-b-c order— ar, er, ir, or, and ur. Your students will draw a word card, put their pointer fingers under the first letters and slide them from left to right, making the sounds they see. When the words are read correctly and discarded to make a column beneath the header section indicating the vowel that is being bossed (*which you'll coach them to do*), they have "earned the right to roll the die" and move their movers around the board the number of spaces indicated on the die. Please give lots of tips to help kids recall which vowel is being "bossed". For example, say things like, "I am in first grade." Or "I will be in third grade." I say, "I can see a tiny shape like Earth in the word world." "Everyone in my family (land hard on the long e sound in family) has an e." (mother, father, sister, brother) Get creative!

Continue playing the game until there are lots of word cards underneath each vowel + r header. It is essential that you continually monitor to be sure the students are decoding the words aloud, and *then* placing the words according to which vowel is being bossed. Kids have two tasks. They must decode the words and then place the words in the proper column before rolling the die to move their movers.

Continually direct your students to make the sounds they see. If they make the vowel sound, initially- that's great! Just say, "Well, that doesn't make a word we know. Is there a **rule** you know?" Point to the game board reminder, and say, "What about a bossy r? It wouldn't let the vowel make a sound. Try that."

Are you working with a small group? It can be challenging to monitor more than one student at a time, but it is certainly possible, and your engagement makes all the difference. Kids are learning from listening to your interactions with other students, too, so your coaching will never be wasted.

*\*After playing the game the first time, you may want to add some energy to the next playing of the game by adding some pitfalls and advances. You may wish to add a star sticker or two for a "Roll again." or a sad face for "Go back 5 spaces." You could even create a shortcut with your crayons or with extra stickers.*

## Magic e can Beat Bossy r

materials include: information page

Share with your students that there are times when a magic e will “beat” a bossy r. Share the provided examples and talk through the process of “flipping” the sounds, knowing what we know about how words work, until we arrive at a word we know. Again, researchers call this *set for variability*. We never guess what words say. We make the sounds we see. Though we can be flexible, within the confines of the phonics rules we know, with those sounds. (her→here, fir→fire, etc.)

## Bossy r Board Game

materials include: board games, movers, dice, crayons

Invite your students to play the printed Bossy r board game. They will place their movers on any space, roll the die, and move the indicated number of spaces. The students will decode the words upon which they land. When you have ensured a word has been decoded accurately, you will color in that space, and that word will not be in play for the remainder of the game. This practice will provide decoding practice, and it will also promote orthographic mapping which yields accurate spelling.

## Writing with a purpose-

materials include: dry erase board (upon which you'll write *bird*), pre-folded pop up papers, pre-cut purple conversation bubbles (can be made from sticky notes), crayons, pencils

Present your students with a Pigeon book such as . . .



### Don't Let Pigeon Stay Up Late, by Mo Willems

Write the word bird on a dry erase board. Talk with your students about this crazy bird and their favorite Pigeon books. Then, note together that i-r says /r/ in bird. (Hint: Birds have eyes/I's.)

**Say, “At the beginning of every year, I have students who spell the word *bird* like this: *brd*. I completely understand why they do that. They are spelling the words by making the sounds and representing those sounds with the correct letters and we don't hear an i in *bird*. Here's the thing: Every word has to have a vowel. In fact, every SYLLABLE of every word has to have a vowel. So, when we spell words, we must check to be sure there is at least one vowel within each syllable of every word. If there's no vowel you hear, and there's an r in the word, you can bet that a bossy r is at work, and we must place a vowel in front of that r. (And it's *probably* an e.)”**

This is a perfect time to state, again, that the letter **y** can act like a vowel, otherwise your students may think that words such as *my*, *fly*, and *by* do not have vowels. Note that when y is acting like a vowel, it makes the sound of an i or an e – which are vowels.

Remember . . .

Y's at the ends of short words *usually* make the long i sound. (my, by, shy, fly, etc.)

Y's at the ends of long words *usually* make the long e sound. (mommy, silly, happy, crazy, etc.)

If those rules don't make a word you know, just *flip it to the other sound*, and you'll likely get the word. (imply, reply, any, etc.)

There are times when y's in the middles of words make the short i sound. (mystery, hysterical, gym, symbol, etc.)

A formal lesson on this topic is coming in FFL 4.

\*Note that y's with vowels in front of them have different rules. We'll get to those!

When y says /y/ as in the beginning of *yummy*, it's a consonant. At the end of that word, the y is acting like a vowel. It's making the long e sound. In the first syllable of the word *yummy* the vowel is the u. In the second syllable of the word *yummy* the y is the vowel, and it sounds like a long e.

Show the Pigeon book and find an illustration where you can see both of the pigeon's eyes at one time.

Use the prefolded "pop up" cards (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-oRJ6MsQDc>) to make two-eyed **birds**, like Pigeon (see the sample), and use the **purple** cutouts to add a speech bubble. Your readers must write a message that includes at least one bossy r word from the provided word list. ☺ They can make it funny if they'd like to. Please take this opportunity to coach your students to begin sentences with upper case letters, to end them with proper punctuation, and to use proper letter formations and spacing.

**Fun Words to Use-** bird, worm, burp, collar, smirk, flirt, turkey, world, color, quarter, dollar, first, cracker, dirt, squirt, perch, burst, chirp, third, word, etc.

*\*Note: Sometimes bossy r's boss more than one letter. Think about the following words: earth, learn, early, nourish, journal, courtesy, etc. You don't need to teach this, but you should notice it so you can address it with your students as needed. Knowing how Bossy r works—even when it bosses multiple vowels (learn, journey) helps students access quite a few tricky words. There is a formal lesson on this topic later in FFL 4 and in FFL 5.*

### **Bossy r Spelling**

materials include: Bossy r spelling papers with headers, sharpened pencils

Ask your students to guess (trying to remember the words they've decoded and sorted) whether the word you call contains an a, e, i, o, or u that's being bossed by an r and making only the sound /r/. The students will simply place their pencils in the column that they *believe* will represent the sound. When kids make predictions, it tunes their minds into the work they've done and promotes recall. Whether they guess correctly or not, the engagement when looking to see if their guesses are correct or not accentuates the moment and promotes orthographic mapping.

As students write each word in the correct column, after you've confirmed with them the accurate spelling for the sound /r/, require that the students make the sounds, one-by-one, stretching out the sounds and representing them with letters and letter combinations they know. We call this *sound spelling*.

Have the students spell at least 5-7 words from today's practice. Remind them of the rules we've learned as they're spelling. Remember, our goal is to equip them to spell well, not to "test" them to show what they don't know, yet, by heart. After the students have made their initial guesses, please give tips like this: "*I always remember that there's an a in the word dollar, because I say, 'I have a dollar.'*" Strive to equip your students to recall which vowel is being bossed. Coach your students to success.

*NOTE: This spelling practice is quite difficult because there is no indication of which vowel is being bossed. We're leaning on the sorting and the tips we share—not the sounds—to help our students to recall which vowel should be used.*

### **Bossy r Spelling Syllable by Syllable**

materials include: syllable counting and spelling sheet

Provide each student with a syllable counting and spelling sheet. Provide a word for your students to investigate (such as *perfect*). Invite the students to determine how many syllables they hear in that word (2 in *perfect*) and to record the number in the appropriate box. Next, they'll spell that multisyllabic word, syllable by syllable (*per-fect*), and record the letters matching the sounds they're saying. As they are spelling, the students should make sure the number of vowels within the word is equal to (or greater than, if it has a double-vowel syllable) the number of syllables they hear in the word. (*Perfect* can't be right because it's a **two**-syllable word. It must have at least **two** vowels.) Lots of multisyllabic words are provided for you to use with your students.

### **Bossy r Scratch Offs**

Materials include: scratch off pages, coins or plastic counters (for scratch offs), Bossy R Scratch Off Guess & Spell practice page, scratch off sticky dots to be placed over the vowels being bossed by an r (available on Amazon.com at [scratch off stickers for bossy r](#))

After printing (but before distributing) the practice pages, place a scratch off sticky dot over every vowel being "bossed" by an r.

When you begin this part of the lesson, invite your students to guess which vowel they'll find when they scratch off the dot covering the vowel in the first word. Each student will record his or her guess on the provided Bossy R Scratch Off Guess & Spell practice page. Have a student scratch off the first dot. When they see which vowel was "bossed", the students will spell the word correctly on their practice pages. Then proceed to the next word using the same process.

### **Bossy r Sweet Treat Decoding**

materials include: *Hershey's* chocolate bars (a large one to share just a bit or small individual bars)

Have your students decode the word *Hershey's* and identify the r that's being "bossed" and then enjoy savoring (There's a bossy r there, too!) the sweet treat.

### **Additional Ideas-**

Why there are more bossy r words with er (than ar, ir, or, and ur)-

1. When the e-r is at the end of a word, it often means that a person works at a particular job.  
baker, teacher, lawyer, farmer, trucker

2. When the e-r is at the end of a word, it often means that it's more *something* than another item when compared.  
longer, lighter, darker, narrower, softer
3. When the e-r is at the end of a word, it can mean someone is from a particular area.  
southerner, foreigner, Londoner, west-sider, first grader
4. When the e-r is at the end of a word, it can mean that a person, animal, or thing does an action.  
reader, saver, jumper, eater, showstopper, speller

Well, it's no wonder a lot of words have e-r's that just say /r/!

### **Dictated Sentence and Decoding Sentence Practice Page**

materials include: dictated sentence practice pages, pencils

Students will be challenged to write one sentence from the dictated sentence page for this lesson. You will read one sentence of your choosing, as many times as needed, as the students record that sentence— using capitals, spaces, and end marks. Of course, you'll also coach them to correctly use the phonics rule you've been teaching this week (and in previous weeks).

TIP: With the dictated sentence page in front of your students, on their tables or at their desks, have them flip the paper upside down and fold on the dotted line so the handwriting lines show at the bottoms of their papers. When done this way, it'll be easy for your students to flip that fold back up to check their sentence writing with the one on the front of the page. Their sentences will be right side up when they unfold them to check their work.

This self-checking promotes skilled reading and writing. And remember, this work is not to be graded. This is our practice. We want to use no-stakes assessments, so our kids feel comfortable taking risks and trying out the skills they're learning.

Finally, your scholars will practice decoding words, featuring this new learning, as they decode the remaining sentences.