

# Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities in Core Subjects

*A Classroom Guide for Reading, Writing, and Math Access*

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## Purpose & Overview

This guide supports teachers in providing targeted, structured, and intentional instruction for students with learning disabilities across core academic subjects. Students with learning disabilities often benefit from explicit teaching, repeated practice, clear modeling, and scaffolded supports to successfully access grade-level content and demonstrate understanding.

The purpose of this guide is to help teachers strengthen instructional clarity, reduce learning barriers, and promote academic confidence, independence, and measurable progress across reading, writing, and mathematics.

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## Instructional Outcomes

By applying the practices in this guide, teachers will be able to:

- Recognize patterns of learning difficulty that affect academic performance
  - Apply subject-specific instructional supports that increase access to content
  - Provide scaffolds that support understanding without lowering expectations
  - Strengthen student independence, persistence, and confidence in learning tasks
  - Align instructional supports with IEP goals, accommodations, and progress monitoring
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## Understanding Learning Needs Across Core Subjects

Learning disabilities may affect how students process language, organize ideas, recall information, or apply skills across academic areas. These challenges can appear differently in reading, writing, and math, which makes intentional, subject-specific instruction essential.

Effective support focuses on teaching strategies and building skills, rather than only providing help with task completion.

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## Core Instructional Supports by Subject

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Key Support</i>	<i>What It Looks Like in Practice</i>	<i>Example</i>
<b><i>Reading</i></b>	Explicit comprehension and decoding strategies	Teacher models thinking, pre-teaches vocabulary, and guides understanding	Graphic organizers, guided questioning
<b><i>Writing</i></b>	Structured organization and language supports	Students use frames, checklists, and modeled examples to build sentences and paragraphs	Paragraph frames, sentence starters
<b><i>Math</i></b>	Visual, step-by-step problem solving	Concepts are modeled with visuals and broken into clear procedures	Worked examples, visual models

These supports help students move from confusion to clarity and from dependence to independence.

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## Instructional Practices That Strengthen Learning

Across subjects, students with learning disabilities benefit when teachers:

- Provide clear modeling and think-aloud explanations
- Break complex tasks into manageable steps
- Offer guided practice before independent work
- Use visual supports and organizational tools
- Reinforce effort, progress, and strategy use
- Provide multiple opportunities for practice and feedback

These practices create predictable, supportive learning environments where students can succeed.

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## Teacher Reflection

During instruction, teachers may consider:

- Is instruction explicit, clear, and scaffolded?
- Are supports intentionally matched to the subject skill being taught?
- Do students receive guided practice before working independently?
- Are visual or organizational tools supporting understanding?
- Is student progress monitored consistently and used to adjust instruction?

Reflection ensures instruction remains responsive, intentional, and growth-focused.

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## Building Independence and Confidence

Over time, effective instruction helps students:

- Apply learned strategies across different tasks
- Complete work with decreasing levels of support
- Monitor their own understanding and progress
- Persist through challenging academic work
- Develop confidence in their ability to learn

These outcomes support both academic success and long-term self-efficacy.

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## Closing Reflection

Students with learning disabilities achieve meaningful success when instruction is clear, structured, scaffolded, and intentionally supportive. Through consistent use of explicit teaching and targeted strategies, teachers help students build the skills, confidence, and independence needed for lasting academic growth.