

La Grange School District 102

Structured Word Inquiry & Orton-Gillingham The Two Hands of Early Literacy



Structured Word Inquiry

What is Structured Word Inquiry?

Structured Word Inquiry (SWI) is a linguistically-sound approach to language instruction. It provides a method for understanding the spelling and structure (grammar) of all English words and is unique in its approach to investigating a word's meaning, history, and spelling.

A scientific, inquiry-based approach, SWI allows children to explore and come to understand the English language they use everyday. It draws upon the sciences of Morphology (structure), Etymology (word origin & use), and Phonology (sound system). Through investigation, students discover patterns, structures, and applications as they learn to play with words in a creative environment.

How does SWI work?

A structured word investigation is led by four guiding areas of inquiry. Words are chosen for study based on the interests of students and classroom curriculum. The objective is to teach deep, comprehensive understanding of our language and how to investigate it, not memorization of surface structures or phonics patterns.

- ✓ **Meaning - what does the word mean?**
- ✓ **Structure - what structures do I notice (prefix, suffix, etc.)?**
- ✓ **Relatives - what other words might share this base element or meaning?**
- ✓ **Pronunciation - how is the word pronounced?**

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Orton Gillingham

What is Orton-Gillingham (OG)?

Developed by Dr. Samuel T. Orton and educator, psychologist Anna Gillingham, the Orton-Gillingham approach combines multi-sensory techniques, phonics, and the structure of the English language. In this approach students are taught explicitly using phonemes and morphemes, such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots to understand how words are put together. Common spelling conventions are introduced as well. Multi-sensory education incorporates the three learning pathways, which are: auditory, kinesthetic, and visual.

How does OG work?

An OG lesson uses a multisensory, phonics-based approach based upon a research based sequence of instruction. Students are introduced to graphemes (letter or letter combinations) and phonemes (sounds or sound combinations) as well as syllable types and common conventions used in English Phonology (spoken language). The objective is to show students how phonological patterns in our language can help decode and pronounce words.



Core Principles of the OG Approach

- ✓ **Personalized**
- ✓ **Multisensory**
- ✓ **Structured & Sequenced**
- ✓ **Focused on Phoneme/Grapheme Relationships**