



THE OG UPDATE

DECEMBER 2025

CREATING AN EXPERIENCE OF SUCCESS

(submitted by Izabella Katz, Program Manager)

A main element of the Orton-Gillingham method is building student confidence. Practitioners are trained to create lessons that are both challenging and successful emphasizing the importance of meeting each student's individual needs. By building rapport, connecting with students, and understanding their current situation, practitioners can create a supportive learning environment. When working with older students who are frustrated by reading, my priority is to meet them where they are academically and emotionally.

A main goal during the initial intake sessions is to discover their key interests. I use an All About Me activity to learn topics such as their favorite color, food/candy, TV show or movie, subject, and hobbies like sports or cooking. This allows me to connect reading content to their interests making the sessions less frustrating and increasing engagement, especially with reading and spelling topics they might find less interesting. I have worked with multiple students who are very active in sports and participate on multiple sports teams. These students really enjoy reading about non-fiction stories related to the sports they are interested in. It not only helps build a connection between students and tutors but it also builds a connection between topics of reading and real life. It reminds students that even though reading can be difficult and frustrating, it can also have meaning and purpose they might not connect to initially.

Another strategy for connecting with students during reading sessions that are held four or five times a week is incorporating reading and spelling games. There's enough time to add review in game format when meeting with students often. Students often read and spell twice as much as they would in a standard session because they are focused on the game, not the work they are completing. Playing a review game with students allows for healthy competition and gives students a chance to win a game they might not normally win. It allows for open communication about different reading and spelling topics and helps the tutor to realize gaps that a student might still be facing. Some of my favorite resources include editable templates for games like Roll and Read, Connect 4, and Tic Tac Toe. Other games I use include like Magic Bridge (a silent E game), Giant vs Cyclops (soft c and g), Strawberry Smash (blends), Boat Trip (vowel teams), and Uno. These games allow students to feel like they are getting a break from all their hard work while still reviewing learned topics and working on building their skills. It also allows for moments of error correction that can be implemented.

Learning a student's interests can help a practitioner build a lesson that benefits both students and tutor. It helps to create an environment of success.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



**December 6:
OG Cohort
Training**

**We are closed:
December 23 -
January 3rd.
We will be back on
January 5th.**

SECRET SNOWFLAKE EXCHANGE



Our December activity will be a "Secret Snowflake." Each student will be assigned another student to write to throughout the month, but instead of signing their name, they will keep their identity a secret and see if their new friend can guess who they are. Students will work on a craft and a card and will exchange their homemade gifts and reveal who they are at the end of the month. We hope this activity will help to build relationships amongst our students and tutors and give them some extra fun during their OG sessions during the winter holiday season.

Week of 12/1 - Leave a secret note for your Secret Snowflake. Someone will leave you a note too. Read your note with your tutor and try to guess who is writing to you.

Week of 12/8 - Create a Snowflake Craft as a gift for your Secret Snowflake. (We will provide all the supplies. We will also provide art materials for you to make a card.)

Week of 12/15 - Leave your gift and card for your Secret Snowflake.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: BELLA

(submitted by Katia, OG Trainee)

Bella is a bubbly and bright 11-year-old young lady who is an absolute pleasure to work with. Her vibrant personality shines during every session. Bella loves singing and dancing, so we often incorporate brief dance breaks or songs during transitions. Our go-to theme song is "Girl on Fire" by Alicia Keys, and our height chant—performed to a steady beat—is: "Good job, good job (x2), g-o-o-d j-o-b; good job, good job."



Bella is a new middle schooler this year and has adjusted wonderfully. Recently in sessions, we've been targeting voiced and unvoiced /th/, beginning and ending consonant blends, and the FLOSS (fszl) spelling rule. She consistently stays engaged, puts forth her best effort, and brings joyful energy to every session.

Q: What do you like most about attending OG?

I like learning more about reading. I like that I am doing better in reading words that I struggled with last year. I've been more confident in reading and my grades in ELA have improved.

Q: Can you tell us a few fun facts about yourself?

I love seafood casserole with rice, cooking with my mom, singing, dancing, and hanging out.

Q: What is your favorite thing to do?

I like to watch the TV series Vampirina the Teenage Life.

Q: What is your favorite subject in school and why?

My favorite subject in school is math lab. My teacher is very funny and makes the class fun.

Q: What is one thing that you have learned attending OG?

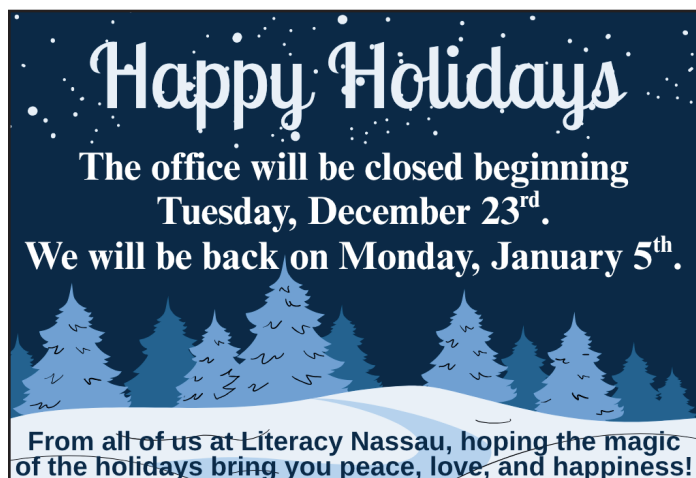
I don't have to be embarrassed about my reading because of all the other students that come here who are different grades and ages who are also getting help.

Q: What is your favorite thing that we do at OG tutoring?

I like learning cursive, reading the different word list, and sentences. I also like COPS.

Q: What are your reading goals?

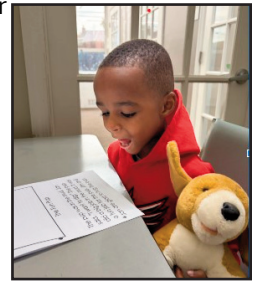
I want to be able to read harder books, like chapter books.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LOUIS

(submitted by Sarah, OG Trainee)

Louis has been working hard to master the short u vowel sound, and this week he shared his growing skills with a very special guest: a fluffy book buddy pup! Together, they enjoyed the decodable story *The Fun Pup*, where Louis tapped, blended, and read each word with focus and a smile. His confidence shines brighter every day, and we are so proud of his progress. Keep up the fantastic work, Louis!



Q: What do you like about reading?

It's fun - and I get to spin the wheel for a prize!

Q: What book buddy would you want to read to next?

A cute little baby bunny.

Q: What was your favorite part of *The Fun Pup* story?

When he was digging in the mud.

Q: If you had a dog like the pup in the story, what would you name it?

I would name it Georgie.

Q: What fun thing would you and your dog do together?

We would play and take a walk.

Q: What's something you've learned that makes reading easier?

Sounding it out and saying the word long and slow.

Q: How do you feel when you read a word all by yourself?

I feel proud and happy.

Q: What do you like to do for fun when you're not reading?

I like to go to Urban Air or play on my tablet.

Q: What's your favorite snack after working hard?

I like to eat Lay's potato chips.

Q: If your stuffed dog could talk, what would he say about your reading?

He would say "Good Job!"

