

Guided Reading with

## Elena's New School

Guided Reading Level: G

DRA Level: 12

by Barbara Flores, Elena Castro, and Eddie Hernandez, illustrated by Mary Ramirez-Greene

**Overview:** It's Elena's first day at her new school. Read this story to find out what happens.

8 pages, 131 words

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

### Focus: Concepts of Print and Reading Strategies

- use context to predict unknown words; confirm by attending to letter sounds
- blend letter sounds to read phonetically regular words, relying on a wider variety of spelling patterns
- use a wide variety of high frequency words to support fluent reading
- read simple plural words and verbs with -s endings
- use background and vocabulary knowledge to read unknown words
- read longer and more varied sentences fluently, with expression and stamina
- use text and illustrations to visualize story events

### Supportive Text Features:

- illustrations support most text details
- text depicts a series of simple, related ideas
- most vocabulary is familiar

### High-frequency words:

- *the, of, and, is, a, she, to, where, off, will, her, from, at, our, I, you, it, here, with, into, then, in, they, look*

### Phonics:

- vowel digraph ew (e.g., new)

### Common Core Standards:

- RF.1.1, RF.1.2, RF.1.3, RF.1.4
- RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.7

### ELL/ESL

*La escuela nueva de Elena* [See back page](#)

## Getting Ready to Read

### 1. Introduce the concept and vocabulary by asking open-ended questions:

- Have you ever been new at school or another class or activity? What was it like for you?
- When a child moves to a new school, what feelings might he or she have?
- What are some ways to help someone new feel comfortable?

### 2. Connect children's past experiences with the story and vocabulary:

- Hold the book. Call children's attention to the title. Read: "*Elena's New School.*"
- Ask children to predict what will happen in the book.
- Show the back cover and read the copy. Have children predict how Elena might feel when she starts at a new school.
- Have children predict some words they might read in the story.
- Give children the book and have them look at the pictures. Ask them to describe what Elena is doing on each page.



### 3. Remind children of the strategies they know and can use with unfamiliar words:

- Ask them, “What will you do if you come to a word you don’t know?”
- Encourage children to look at the pictures and the beginning sound of the word of the unknown word. Have them read on and return to the word after completing the sentence.
- Suggest that children also remember what they know about the subject or topic of the book and choose a word that makes sense in the sentence.

### 4. Be aware of the following text features:

- The book contains familiar words: the, of, and, is, a, she, to, where, off, will, her, from, at, our, I, you, it, here, with, into, then, in, they, look
- The text also includes the contractions: it’s and doesn’t.
- Text includes several compound words: classroom and anyone.
- The text describes Elena’s first day at a new school. Phrasing and sentence structure vary, though vocabulary is mostly familiar.

## Reading the Book

**1. Set a purpose by telling children to read the book to find out what happens when Elena starts at a new school, in particular how she feels and who helps.**

**2. Have children read quietly, but out loud.**

Each child should be reading at his or her own pace. Children should not read in chorus. Listen to children as they read by leaning close or bending down beside each child.

### 3. Look for these reading behaviors during the first reading:

- Have they begun to cross-check, using a variety of strategies, and to self correct?
- Do they rely less on the pictures and more on print when reading? Do they use multiple sources of information?
- Do they have a growing sight vocabulary?
- Do they use beginning, middle, and ending sounds to read unknown words?
- Are they monitoring meaning and rereading when they lose meaning?
- Do they easily move from one line of text to the next when making a return sweep?
- Do they use punctuation appropriately and to gain meaning?
- Do they make more accurate predictions and confirm or revise them while reading?
- Can they connect the text to past experiences?
- Have they begun to draw conclusions and make inferences?

### 4. As children read, suggest a reading strategy if they are struggling:

“Try rereading the sentence. Try looking at the picture to make sense of the print.” Encourage children to take a guess based on the subject of the book or to use the beginning sounds or known parts of the word. Encourage children to take a guess or read past the unknown word and return to it.



## 5. Possible teaching points to address based on your observations:

- Call attention to all the high-frequency words children have learned and used.
- Review how to find a known part in an unknown word.
- Show children how to use analogies to move from the known to the unknown when encountering new words.
- Work with suffixes and prefixes.
- Review using grammar (syntax) to unlock words by considering the sentence structure or parts of speech in the sentence.
- Review how to determine what is important in a picture or sentence.
- Model asking questions or making “I wonder...” statements to extend comprehension.
- Review using punctuation marks to guide the meaning-making process. Discuss the use of question marks and exclamation points as keys to reading with a particular kind of expression or inflection.
- Call attention to the sequence of events in the story.
- Model how to revisit the text to find specific examples or ideas.

### After the First Reading

**1. Have children confirm their predictions and talk about what happened on Elena’s first day at her new school.**

## 2. Ask questions like:

- How did Elena feel on her way to school? How do you know?
- What happened when she arrived at school? What did her teacher do and say? How was the teacher helpful?
- What else do you think might have happened during the school day not included in the book?
- How did Elena feel at the end of the book? Why?
- What does this book teach us about how it feels to be new, or what a new person thinks about? What does it show us about how best to support a new person?
- What do you think Elena’s next day at school will be like?
- How could Elena stay in touch with her old friends?

**3. Encourage students to share their experiences with starting a new school, new year, or new grade.** What were they excited about? What made them scared or nervous? What advice do they have for Elena to adjust to the new school?

### Second Reading

**1. Have children reread the book in a whisper voice or to a partner.**

**2. This is a time for assessment.** While they are reading, watch what children do and what they use from the teaching time. Alternatively, you might take a running record on one student



as an assessment of the student's reading behavior.

### Cross-Curricular Activities

**Language:** Have students turn the book into a short performance by acting out the story events. To add more reading material, have students add speech bubbles or thought bubbles on sticky notes to some of the pages.

Practice providing evidence from the text to support statements about the book. Make a three-column chart labeled "When" "Feeling" and "Evidence." List different events/points in the story and how Elena felt at each one. Find sentences from the text that give evidence of each feeling.

Study the digraph "ew" using the word "new." Brainstorm additional words with ew and practice reading them and writing them in sentences.

Study the different uses of apostrophes in the book. Using the included contractions and "Elena's" in the title, sort other examples of apostrophe use into "Possessive" or "Contraction" categories.

Review the list of high-frequency words in the story. Choose some of the words to talk about in more detail. Talk about how the letters reflect the sounds of the words, or don't (e.g., "they" has an audible "th" initial sound but the end sounds more like -ay). Write some of the sentences on from the book, or others, on sentence strips and practice reading them fluently, reviewing the strategy of using the high-frequency words as markers.

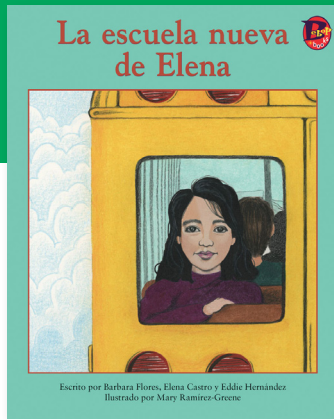
Use some of the longer sentences from the book to practice fluent phrasing. Read the sentences in different ways and talk about which are most effective to reflect the meaning of the story and sound like smooth speech.

**Social Studies:** Read and learn more about children's school experiences around the world. Diverse read alouds such as *Elizabeth's School* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/elizabeti-school>) or *Armando and the Blue Tarp School* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/armando-and-the-blue-tarp-school>) may be helpful. Talk about how this book might have sounded different if written about a different child.

Have students write "welcome" letters for students new to your school. Talk about what a new student might find helpful, including empathetic statements, encouragement/offering of friendship, and practical advice. Talk about particular challenges new students might face depending on language spoken, background, or circumstances of their move.

**Writing:** Encourage students to write a letter to a future teacher—what would they like the teacher to know about them? How can the teacher make the classroom welcoming and friendly?

**Art:** Have students design "welcome" posters for your school. Discuss imagery that would be welcoming to all newcomers.



## Guided Reading with **La escuela nueva de Elena**

The directions given for the introduction, first reading, and second reading of the English edition can be used with the Spanish edition of the book. To read the book successfully, children need the same kinds of support as their English-speaking classmates. Second language learners often benefit from acting out new words, seeing pictures, and talking about them using concrete examples.

*Guided Reading Level: F*  
*DRA Level: 10*

### Verb Support

The following verb phrases are used to describe Elena’s feelings about her new school and what she does during her first day: *está un poco asustada*; *espera que le guste su nueva escuela*; *extraña a sus amigas de su escuela anterior*; *la maestra nueva de Elena la ve*; *entra a la escuela con su maestra*; *se ve que son amables y amistosos*; *está contenta*

Print the verb phrases on individual index cards and photocopy the illustrations without the text from the story and cut them out. Rearrange them so the illustrations are not in order. Then, have students match the verb phrases with the appropriate illustration.

For students engaging with both English and Spanish texts, have students note that there is an exclamatory statement on the last page. In Spanish, the exclamation points come before the sentence in an upside-down orientation and after the sentence in the opposite orientation.

The book language used may differ from children’s oral language. Comparing any differences will help children read and understand the story. Also help children understand that we often speak differently than we write, and that both ways of using language are important.

**Guided Reading** Guided reading levels were assigned by literacy experts and certified Reading Recovery® teachers using the guidelines identified in Guided Reading and Matching Books to Readers by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell.

**INT. (Intervention)** Intervention levels were assigned by literacy experts and certified Reading Recovery® teachers and are intended for use in early intervention and one-on-one tutorial programs, including Reading Recovery®. These levels are not officially authorized by Reading Recovery®. Reading Recovery® is a registered servicemark of The Ohio State University.

**DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)** and **EDL (Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura)** DRA and EDL levels were determined using information in the Developmental Reading Assessment Resource Guide and EDL Resource Guide by Joetta Beaver.

All level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

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