Coach the Tiger

180 coaching opportunities for third grade

Mrs. Valentine's classroom collection / 36 weeks / 5 opportunities per week

Tiger is learning right alongside us. In these short fictional situations, children help him notice a difficulty, choose a useful strategy, and try one next step. Every opportunity combines coaching with a reading move and a small writing task. Use a tiger puppet, a quick drawing, or simply your voice.

A routine you can use tomorrow

1 Start Read one Tiger situation. Ask, "What might help Tiger here?"

2 Model Show one useful action or think aloud. Offer two choices if the group is stuck.

3 Practice Students coach Tiger through pointing, words, drawing, AAC, or a voluntary demonstration.

4 Check Have Tiger try the suggestion. Ask, "Did it help with this task? What could change?"

5 Finish Use the reading and writing moves. End with one strategy Tiger can try again.

Time Plan for 3-5 minutes for the coaching conversation, plus 3-5 minutes for the literacy moves. On a busy day, coach now and use the reading and writing prompts within the existing literacy block. These are estimates; shorten the amount before rushing learners.

Preparation The situation already supplies the prompt. Put the short reading text on the board, and use existing paper or whiteboards. Where a classroom book, graph, or work sample is requested, use one already in the current lesson.

Student coaching language

"Tiger, you could try ___." "Would ___ or ___ help?" "Let's do the first step together." "We can check and change the plan."

Keep Tiger's mistakes fictional. Avoid reenacting a child's recent incident, rewarding public disclosures, or asking peers to manage unsafe behavior. Adults handle safety and co-regulation; practice repair when learners are ready.

Access and alignment

Keep the challenge and adjust the response

Offer a choice of watching, pointing to two options, moving a puppet, using AAC, speaking, drawing, dictating, typing, or handwriting. Students may pass and return later. Listening does not require eye contact or stillness. Provide movement and sensory supports according to each student's established plan.

For composition tasks, a student can dictate while an adult scribes. For spelling or handwriting targets, include a brief supported attempt at that particular skill; dictation to an adult alone does not show spelling or handwriting mastery. Use letter tiles where useful, then separately practice letter formation when that is the target.

How the five connections work

OAS means Oklahoma Academic Standards. Each item lists its closest Grade 3 ELA reading and writing connections. All partner or group discussions also connect to 3.1.S.2; listening and teamwork can connect to 3.1.L.1 and 3.1.S.1. Codes identify practice toward an objective, not proof of mastery. Short sentences and word exercises are scaffolds; some address prerequisite skills within a broader Grade 3 target. [1]

EF means executive functioning. Weekly goals name the planning, remembering, shifting, inhibiting, or checking actions practiced through the coaching. The teacher supplies external supports instead of treating difficulty as unwillingness.

SEL means social-emotional learning. Weekly goals focus on understanding needs, communicating, considering others, making choices, and repairing harm. Feelings are information; a learner does not have to appear cheerful or calm to participate.

SoR means science of reading. The reading move practices a component such as decoding, word meaning, fluency, or comprehension. Model sound-spelling connections explicitly; students decode a word before using context to check its meaning. Choose words consistent with taught patterns. The mini-texts here are not a sequenced decodable curriculum. [2]

SoW means science of writing. The writing move targets spelling, sentence construction, planning, revising, or communicating to a reader. Model, rehearse, support practice, and provide focused feedback. Small tasks contribute to later paragraphs and longer pieces. [3]

Use the sequence flexibly. Begin coaching early, and select phonics activities according to instruction already taught rather than calendar week. Continue daily connected-text reading and full writing instruction. The collection is an original practice resource, not a validated intervention or a complete standards curriculum.

Week 1 Getting started

EF focus: Task initiation and planning

SEL focus: Self awareness and help seeking

1 The backpack mountain

Coach: Tiger stares at his overflowing backpack. Coach him to choose one item, put it away, and check the next step.

Read / SoR: Read "First unpack. Next choose a book." Explain first and next.

Write / SoW: Write a two-step arrival plan.

OAS: 3.4.R.5 - reading move; 3.2.W.1 - writing move.

2 The blank beginning

Coach: Tiger says, "I cannot start anything!" Offer two tiny starting actions and help him choose one.

Read / SoR: Read "Tiger opened his notebook and drew one idea." Retell what helped.

Write / SoW: Complete "My first step is ___." Check that it is a complete thought.

OAS: 3.2.R.3 - reading move; 3.5.W.1 - writing move.

3 Too many choices

Coach: Tiger wants to read, build, and draw at once. Coach him to choose one now and save another for later.

Read / SoR: Read the words now and later; explain their relationship to a plan.

Write / SoW: Write "Now I will ___. Later I can ___."

OAS: 3.4.R.5 - reading move; 3.5.W.1 - writing move.

4 The missing pencil

Coach: Tiger stops working because his pencil is missing. Rehearse borrowing one or using the classroom supply spot.

Read / SoR: Read "May I borrow a pencil?" with phrasing that fits the question.

Write / SoW: Write a clear request and add a question mark.

OAS: 3.2.F.2 - reading move; 3.5.W.4 - writing move.

5 Ready enough

Coach: Tiger thinks everything must be perfect before starting. Help him pick the materials needed for just the first step.

Read / SoR: Read "Tiger needs paper and a pencil." Identify the essential supplies.

Write / SoW: Write a starting sentence for a story about Tiger.

OAS: 3.2.R.1 - reading move; 3.2.W.1 - writing move.

Keep coaching Tiger

You have tried the first five opportunities. The complete collection includes all 180 opportunities, a 36-week map and teacher guidance.

Supported Teacher $29 / Standard Teacher $49 / Pay-It-Forward Teacher $69

All three options include the same curriculum for one teacher's classroom use. Visit LiteracyIsNonNegotiable.com to explore the full program.

Sources and standards notes

Standards connections were checked against the 2021 OAS ELA document linked by the Oklahoma State Department of Education on September 20, 2026, Grade 3 pages 44-52. Item codes are planning crosswalks created for this resource. [1]

[1] Oklahoma State Department of Education - ELA Standards

Reading design draws on instruction in speech sounds and print, word analysis, vocabulary, and meaningful connected reading. The strength of evidence differs across recommendations; the guide does not evaluate this Tiger collection. [2]

[2] IES - Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

Writing design draws on explicit writing-process instruction, practice with transcription and sentences, and purposeful opportunities to write. [3]

[3] IES - Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers