

Decodify™ Teacher Toolkit

Common Error Patterns & Teacher Hints

This reference sheet is designed to support any educator—classroom teachers, literacy specialists, interventionists, special educators, and substitutes—while using Decodify during instruction or gameplay. When a student becomes stuck on a word or meaning, this guide provides quick, research-based teacher prompts to reinforce accurate, structured-literacy routines. Each section describes what the error looks like, why it happens, and exactly what you can say to support the student. You do not need to be a decoding expert—simply read the prompts aloud or adapt them in your own words. Teachers may read prompts aloud to ensure decoding accuracy remains the focus.

Vocabulary Alignment Note:

Decodify uses consistent instructional terms across all prompts to support clear and predictable routines. Because different structured-literacy programs use different vocabulary, teachers may either use the vocabulary exactly as written OR swap any term for the equivalent language used in their primary program. The key is consistency within your classroom, so students hear the same terminology each time the routine is used.

How to Use This Cheat Sheet

1. Notice the error type (sounds, patterns, syllables, morphology, or meaning).
2. Find the matching section on this sheet.
3. Choose one teacher hint, and say it aloud.
4. Have the student try again. If they are still stuck, model once, then have them repeat.
5. Record repeated error patterns on the Decodify Data Sheet for targeted follow-up.

1. Phonological & Phonemic Awareness

Skill Focus: PA

What you might notice:

- Dropping or adding sounds (e.g., plant → pant)
- Difficulty blending or segmenting sounds
- Confusing sound order when reading or spelling

Teacher hints:

- Segment & Blend
“Let’s say it slowly together. Tap one finger for each sound.”
“What sound do you hear at the beginning? Now the middle? End?”
- Change a Sound
“Say **plant**. Now say it without /l/.”
“If we change /p/ to /b/, what new word do we get?”

If still stuck:

“Listen: /s/ /p/ /l/ /i/ /t/ → split. Now you try it.”

2. Sound–Symbol Confusions (Phonics & Sound Options)

Skill Focus: PA • SWP

What you might notice:

- Misreads vowel sounds (e.g., ride → rid)
- Confuses /ch/ vs /tch/, /j/ vs /dge/ vs /ge/
- Struggles with soft c/g patterns
- Treats VCe words as closed

Teacher hints:

- Mark the Vowel Pattern
“Do you see a silent **e** at the end?”
“Is **c** before **e**, **i**, or **y**? Then it usually says /s/.”
- Sound Options Routine
“This letter can make two sounds. Try both. Which one makes a real word?”
- Ending Pattern Check
“After a short vowel, /ch/ is often **-tch** and /j/ is often **-dge**.”

If still stuck:

“This word has magic **e**, so the vowel is long. Listen: **cage**. Now you say it.”

3. Syllable Division & Multisyllabic Words

Skill Focus: PA • SWP • MWS

What you might notice:

- Guessing long words instead of dividing them
- Reading multisyllabic words in a single chunk
- Misreading open vs. closed syllables

Teacher hints:

- Mark Vowels & Divide
“Put a dot under each vowel. How many do we have?”
“Two consonants in the middle? Use VC/CV and divide between them.”
- Scoop & Read
“Let’s scoop it into two parts. Read this part... now this one... now blend.”
- Open vs. Closed Check
“Is the vowel open at the end? If so, it usually says its name.”

If still stuck:

“Cab + in → cabin. Now you try: cab... in... cabin.”

4. Morphology: Prefixes, Suffixes & Base Words

Skill Focus: MWS • CMC • LD

What you might notice:

- Ignoring prefixes or suffixes while reading
- Mispronouncing because the base word is not identified
- Difficulty understanding the word’s meaning

Teacher hints:

- Chunk into Parts
“Do you see a prefix at the beginning or a suffix at the end?”
“Take the ending off—what’s the base word?”
- Meaning from Parts
“What does **re-** mean? What does **act** mean? Put them together.”
- Slide the Ending Off
“Read it without **-ed**. Now add **-ed** back. Does the pronunciation stay the same?”

If still stuck:

“Base word act → react → reaction.”

5. Spelling & Pattern Errors

Skill Focus: SWP • MWS

What you might notice:

- Incorrect use of -dge or -tch patterns
- Mistakes with silent e
- Errors applying the doubling rule

Teacher hints:

- Rule Reminders
 - “Short vowel + /j/ at the end → **-dge.**”
 - “Short vowel + /ch/ at the end → **-tch.**”
 - “Silent **e** usually makes the vowel long.”
- Which One Looks Right?
 - “Write both ways and pick the one matching the rule or pattern.”

If still stuck:

“This is **fudge** with **-dge** because the vowel is short.”

6. Vocabulary, Meaning & Language Development

Skill Focus: CMC • LD • MWS

What you might notice:

- Decoding without understanding the meaning
- Using the word incorrectly in a sentence
- Difficulty with Tier 2 vocabulary

Teacher hints:

- Morphology-to-Meaning
 - “**Pre-** means before, **view** means look—**preview** means...?”
- Context Clues
 - “What in the sentence helps us understand this word?”
- Use It in a Sentence
 - “Create your own sentence with the word to show understanding.”

If still stuck:

“**Reluctant** means not wanting to do something. Say: I was reluctant to...”