

# Using the PALS Teacher Level Grouping Function

## *For teachers of grades 1-8*

Teachers can get support for forming small, flexible groups based on instructional levels in reading and spelling so that they can deliver targeted instruction to students who have similar instructional levels and needs.

Teachers have this function available in their PALS Online account as soon as complete diagnostic data has been entered for the current assessment window. Teachers in grades 1-8 are able to create up to four groups within each class.

### ***Important points about how the teacher level Grouping Function works in the PALS Online System:***

- The groups created by the PALS Online System should be viewed as a **starting point**. Teachers have the ability to move students to different groups based on classroom observation and/or other data.
- The class PALS Grouping Function will only create **four groups**, as managing more than four groups for small-group instruction within one classroom is not recommended. This may mean that some students are not grouped initially.
- Initial grouping recommendations are based on each student's **instructional oral reading level and spelling stage**.
- The PALS Online System will **prioritize placement of the students who are reading and spelling at lower levels first**. This may increase the number of students reading at higher levels who are not grouped.
- **The grouping features are only available** when all required tasks for diagnosis of instructional oral reading level and spelling stage are completed and entered for the *current* assessment window.
- The PALS Online System **clears previous groups at the beginning of each window**, so that instructional groupings are based on the most current data.
- The grouping function assumes that the diagnosis of instructional oral reading level is accurate, which is **most likely when the Word Recognition in Isolation task is administered correctly** (allowing less than 1 second of exposure for each word).
- When making decisions about how to group students for instruction, consider the following:
  - **Use recent data** to make instructional grouping decisions.
  - Consider the **size of the class and the size of the groups**. Too many groups translates to less time and attention per group. On the other hand, students with more intensive needs may need to be in a smaller group to get more one-on-one attention.
  - Think about the **range of instructional levels** in the class, and which students share similar instructional needs.
  - Factor in your **daily schedule and the staff available** to provide instruction.
- Make sure to **keep your groups flexible**. Flexible groups are “groups that are formed and reformed at regular intervals on the basis of new student achievement data.” Revisit group assignments at regular intervals throughout the year (e.g., every 6-8 weeks). That said, avoid changing students' groups so often that students are unable to establish themselves and gain confidence within a group.

### ***What do I do with students who were not grouped?***

There are several reasons why some of your students may not have been grouped by the PALS Grouping Function.

- **Four groups** were already created. The grouping function only allows four groups per classroom.
- Some students may be **outliers**, and other students were not available at their same levels for grouping. Check with your neighboring teacher to see if that classroom has a group at the student's level.
- Having some students ungrouped allows you to **make the final call** on how to group and best meet the needs of these students.

Consider the following next steps for students that were not grouped by the PALS Online System:

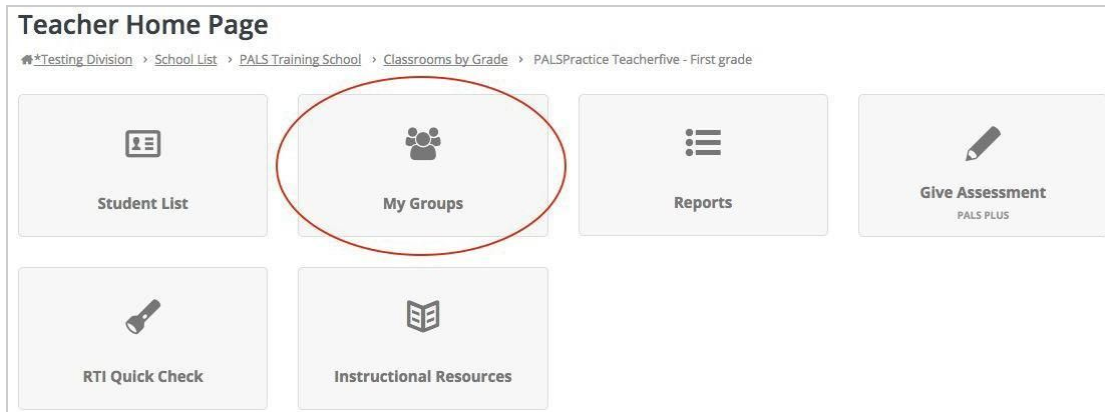
- The list of groups in the far right column of your *My Groups* screen is **interactive**. You can move students around to possibly fit a student into a more appropriate group where you can support or challenge when needed.
- If a student's reading level is slightly below one of the created groups, consider adding that student to the group and **providing scaffolded support** during instruction.
- If a student's **spelling stage is one stage above or below** the group with the same IORL, look at specific spelling feature scores to identify what instructional needs are similar, and what features may need to be reviewed specifically with certain students outside of small group time. Remember to address these needs before moving on.

***See below for step-by-step instructions for using the teacher level grouping function.***

# Teachers in Grades 1-8: *My Groups* feature

Teachers use the *My Groups* tile to create within-class groups of students who have similar instructional levels and needs. This would include all students in a class for which complete scores for the current assessment window have been entered.

## 1. Log in to your teacher-level account and click on *My Groups*.



## 2. The PALS Online System automatically groups students according to Spelling Stage and Instructional Oral Reading Level, as soon as score entry is complete.

- Use the far right column to click on and drag a student to a new group. The PALS Online System will allow you to create up to four flexible groups.
- Once satisfied with groups, click *Save*, and your Grouping Report will become available.

The screenshot shows the 'Grouping' interface with a breadcrumb trail: '\*Testing Division > School List > PALS Training School > Classrooms by Grade > Practice Plus Teacher Two - First grade > Grouping Chart'. The main table has columns for 'SPELLING LEVEL / READING LEVEL', 'EMERGENT / EARLY LETTER NAME', 'LETTER NAME', 'WITHIN WORD PATTERN', 'SYLLABLES & AFFIXES', and 'DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS'. The 'Current Groupings' sidebar on the right shows four groups: Group 1 (J, G, Q, F student PlusPractice), Group 2 (H student PlusPractice), Group 3 (S, K, R, O, M, T student PlusPractice), and Group 4 (N student PlusPractice). At the bottom right are 'Save' and 'View Group Report' buttons.

**3. Your Grouping Report will show spelling and IORL information for each student in each group.**

Remember to provide instructional support for reading comprehension before, during, and after the reading of texts that are at the group's IORL. Target spelling features that have scores of 2 or 3, supporting each student in making connections between what they read and what they write.

## GROUPING REPORT - MID-YEAR 2019

**Teacher:** SecondDemo Teacher-IL

**Grade:** Second Grade

**School:** Demo Training School

**Total Students in Class:** 17

**Total Students Assessed:** 16

### GROUP: 1

Student Name	Instr. ORL	Spelling Stage	Spelling Feature Scores											
			Beg/End	Dig	B	SV	N	CVCe	LV	R/L	AV	SJ	A	Der
1. Alex Demo2	btw P/1st	E/ELN	3	4	4	4	3	0	0	1				
2. Cameron Demo2	1st *	LN	4	3	3	4	3	1	0	1				

### GROUP: 2

Student Name	Instr. ORL	Spelling Stage	Spelling Feature Scores											
			Beg/End	Dig	B	SV	N	CVCe	LV	R/L	AV	SJ	A	Der
1. Bart Demo2 <b>ID</b>	1st	WW	4	3	4	4	4	0	3	0				
2. Skip Demo2 <b>ID</b>	btw P/1st	WW	4	4	4	3	4	1	1	1				
3. Steve Demo2	1st	WW	4	3	3	4	4	3	1	1				
4. William Demo2	1st	WW	4	4	4	4	4	2	0	1				

### GROUP: 3

Student Name	Instr. ORL	Spelling Stage	Spelling Feature Scores											
			Beg/End	Dig	B	SV	N	CVCe	LV	R/L	AV	SJ	A	Der