



The Five Essential Components of Reading:

What is reading?

Reading is an astoundingly complex cognitive process. While we often think of reading as one singular act, our brains are actually engaging in a number of tasks simultaneously each time we sit down with a book. There are five aspects to the process of reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency. These five aspects work together to create the reading experience. As children learn to read they must develop skills in all five of these areas in order to become successful readers.



Phonemic Awareness-

Phonemes are the smallest sound units used to form spoken words. For example, in the word bat, there are three specific phonemes or sounds, / b /, / a / / t /.

Phonemic awareness refers to the student's ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes (sounds) in spoken syllables and words. This includes giving children exposure to and experience with hearing and identifying similar word patterns (sound matching) and listening for and detecting spoken syllables (counting syllables).

Phonemic awareness is essential because children must be able to hear and manipulate oral sound patterns before they can identify these patterns in print. Reading programs that include systematic instruction for connecting oral language to

print lead to higher achievement in word recognition and spelling.



Why Teach Phonemic Awareness?

Children must first be able to hear the sounds and patterns in words before they can identify what letters represent those sounds. Therefore, children must be given extensive experience learning phonemic sounds and applying them repeatedly. Children who recognize the connection between oral language and print become successful readers. Phonemic awareness is the first essential step in this process.



How Is Phonemic Awareness Taught?

The goal of phonemic awareness is to help children hear specific sounds, identify sound sequence, and understand the role phonemes (sounds) play in word formation. Phonemic awareness is basically oral in nature. Meaningful, interactive games and activities give children the best practice in phonemic awareness.



Phonics-

Phonics is the relationship between the letters in written language and the individual sounds in spoken language. Phonics instruction teaches students how to use these relationships to read and spell words. Phonics associates sounds to written symbols (the alphabet). Phonics helps

children develop critical word recognition skills. Children can then apply the sound- symbol relationship to read print.



Fluency-

Fluent readers are able to read orally with appropriate speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency is the ability to read as well as we speak and to make sense of the text without having to stop and decode each word.



Vocabulary-

Vocabulary is closely connected to comprehension. The larger the reader's vocabulary (either oral or print) the easier it is to make sense of the text. Vocabulary can be learned incidentally through storybook reading or listening to others, and vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly.

Students should be actively engaged in instruction that includes learning words before reading, repetition, and multiple exposures, learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology.



Comprehension-

Comprehension is the complex cognitive process readers use to understand what they have read. Vocabulary development and instruction play a critical role in comprehension. Young readers develop text comprehension through a variety of techniques,

including answering questions and summarization (retelling the story).

THE MORE
THAT YOU READ,
THE MORE
THINGS YOU
WILL KNOW.
THE MORE THAT
YOU LEARN, THE
MORE PLACES
YOU'LL GO.

-DR. SEUSS

