

The Essential Components of Reading

2014

The National Reading Panel (2000) of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, has identified 5 Essential Components to Reading

1. **Phonemic Awareness** – the ability to work with the sounds as a part of language
2. **Phonics** – the connection between sounds (auditory) and letter symbols (visual), leading to creating words. Synthetic and analytic; also sight words.
3. **Vocabulary** – knowing and understanding the meaning of words or word parts in order to read with meaning
4. **Fluency** – reader’s ability to read with speed (automaticity), accuracy, and expression
5. **Comprehension** – Why we read, understanding what is read. Meaning. Most complex of all components.

1. Phonemic Awareness – ability to manipulate and work with sounds, with or without letters in print. Auditory based. Not necessary to teach nor master all skills listed. 2-3 skills are enough.

- a. **phonemic isolation**: recognizing individual sounds in a word c-a-t
- b. **phonemic identification**
 - given two words, can identify if beginning sounds are same or different e.g. bat, mat OR big, bat
 - given two words, can identify if ending sounds are the same or different e.g. sad, sat OR fed, mad
 - given two words, can identify if medial sounds are the same or different (vowel) e.g. mane, cane OR pin, pen
- c. **phonemic categorization**: recognizing words with one sound that is the same e.g. bun, bug, rut
- d. **phoneme blending**: listening to individual sounds and blending them e.g. b – a – t
- e. **phoneme segmentation**: recognizing and counting individual sounds in a word (not letters necessarily) e.g. me is m – e, two sounds; meet is m – e – t , three sounds
- f. **rhyiming** – recognizing and creating rhyming pairs of words e.g. get, set; sap, tap. When hearing rhyming words, can identify the vowel word family (ending) that is the same and the initial phonemes (that are different).
- g. **phoneme deletion**: recognizing what remains when a phoneme is deleted e.g. smile, take away S = mile

Note – regional dialect and/or ESL may affect phoneme categorization

*******This is an area that is usually weak in children who struggle. Some need conscious, careful instruction that will help them strengthen their reading. Some cannot adequately hear the sounds accurately and would benefit from emphasis in other areas of reading instruction to support their development.***

Phonemic awareness improves reading comprehension, word identification and spelling for most.

2. Phonics – recognize and identify sounds related to letter symbols. Visual and auditory based. Analytic and synthetic.

- a. **Letter Knowledge**: recognizing name and distinguishing upper- and lower-case letters.
- b. **Letter Sounds**: associating a sound with a letter or letter combination. About 44 sounds with over 1,000 spellings of these sounds in the English language. See separate document entitled “Teaching Phonics in Reading.”
- c. **Word segmentation**: recognizing individual words in a sentence. (The dog barked. – 3 words)
- d. **Syllable Segmentation**: Recognizing and separating syllables in a word. (talking – talk-ing)
- e. **Syllable Blending** – can listen to simple syllables and blend them into a word (let - ter = letter)
- f. **Sight words** – recognizing a word by sight (how fluent readers read most words). Learning the first 100-200 high frequency words builds a strong foundation.
- g. **Systematic Approach** more effective than a non-systematic approach.
- h. Continued teaching of phonics for **2-3 years is more effective** than one year and then expecting independent progress.
- i. **Associating letters to a story, characters, or movement** is important for effective learning.
- j. Goal should be to **apply phonics knowledge** in daily reading and writing.
- k. Overall **balanced instruction** that includes other reading instruction.

Work in phonics improves ability to decode words, reading comprehension, oral reading, some spelling.

3. Vocabulary – a variety of methods seem effective including:

- learning through context in reading
- synonyms (or “key” words)
- repeated exposure to specific words
- preview of words in text
- meaningful experience with the word (discussion, image, drama, etc.)
- rich language environment

4. Teaching Fluency –

- a. **Most effective**
 - **Teacher models** - the teacher models how to read a section aloud and then the students reread it with the teacher.
 - **Repeated oral readings** – the child rereads the same passage or parts of a passage several times to improve speed, accuracy, phrasing, and expression. May need support from adult in the beginning.
 - **Guided oral reading with feedback** – oral reading of passages with guidance and feedback from teacher
 - **Choral reading** – groups or whole class reading passages aloud together (everyone following the text, line by line)
 - **Struggling readers** – more skilled guidance given to individuals
- b. **Additional strategies** that will support the development of fluency
 - **Sight words** – practice instant recognition of high-frequency words through word lists or activities.

- **Dramatic reading** – practice oral reading of parts of a passage with dramatic reenactment
 - **Chunking** (for transitional readers) - Fluent readers group a few words together at one time, as they read. Some children don't realize this unless they are explicitly taught. Copy a passage and have children circle in color logical groups of words. There is not one correct way to group words, but typically we end a group with a noun or verb.
- c. **Further strategies (for those who struggle) in addition to those strategies above**
- **Impress Reading** (also called NIM Neurological Impress Method)– The teacher and child(ren) read together. The teacher's voice should be a little louder and possibly a little faster than the child(ren). If working with one child, it is best to sit near the dominant ear of the child.
 - **Following with Finger/Card**- Teacher and/or child can do this. Helps to build fluency and gives an experience of individual words.
 - **Window or Wall and Floor** – If a child cannot follow with a finger or card under the line of print, create a window, cut into a blank index card, OR use two index cards (taped together) for a wall on the right side of the word and a floor.

Phonemic awareness, sight word vocabulary, phonics, and understanding of vocabulary, all influence fluency.

5. Teaching Comprehension

- Recall details
- Sequence details
- Identify and/or recognize main idea
- Retell story in own words
- Summarize
- Describe a character
- Draw conclusions
- Predict outcomes
- Identify mood or feelings
- Make inferences
- Keep students actively engaged, model own thinking processes, and explain what they are doing/why as they are learning to read.
 - monitoring what one is reading (did that make sense? is that a word?)
 - cooperative learning – students work together
 - graphic organizers for parts of the story
 - story structure – characters, story events,...
 - question answering – answer teachers' questions
 - question generating – student generates own questions
 - summarization (or drawing of a part that was read)

Methods to actively engage children in comprehending what was read, may include: drama, drawing/painting, modeling, writing, speaking, sharing with a classmate.