



The Five Essential Components of Reading

Reading with Children and helping them practice specific reading components can dramatically improve their ability to read. Scientific research shows that there are five essential components of reading that children must be taught in order to learn to read. Adults can help children learn to be good readers by systematically practicing these five components:

- Recognizing and using individual sounds to create words, or **phonemic awareness**. Children need to be taught to hear sounds in words and that words are made up of the smallest parts of sound, or phonemes.
- Understanding the relationships between written letters and spoken sounds, or **phonics**. Children need to be taught the sounds individual printed letters and groups of letters make. Knowing the relationships between letters and sounds helps children to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically, and “decode” new words.
- Developing the ability to read a text accurately and quickly, or **reading fluency**. Children must learn to read words rapidly and accurately in order to understand what is read. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. When fluent readers read aloud, they read effortlessly and with expression. Readers who are weak in fluency read slowly, word by word, focusing on decoding words instead of comprehending meaning.
- Learning the meaning and pronunciation of words, or **vocabulary development**. Children need to actively build and expand their knowledge of written and spoken words, what they mean and how they are used.
- Acquiring strategies to understand, remember and communicate what is read, or **reading comprehension strategies**. Children need to be taught comprehension strategies, or the steps good readers use to make sure they understand text. Students who are in control of their own reading comprehension become purposeful, active readers.

Source: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education