

# PHONEMIC AWARENESS



## What is phonemic awareness?

Phonemes are speech sounds. There are 44 phonemes in English (e.g., /m/, /sh/, /i/). Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate phonemes.



## Why is it important to reading?

Phonemic awareness is part of spoken language. Students who have difficulty identifying and manipulating phonemes will have a challenging time learning to read with letters. For example, a typically developing student needs to be able to put the sounds /c/ /u/ /p/ together to say the word *cup* before they can read the letters of *cup*.



## What you can do at home with phonemic awareness?

It's easy and fun to practice phonemic awareness with children because you don't need any supplies. You can practice while you are on a walk, making dinner, or hanging around home.

**Word Train:** Try to think of as many words as you can that start with the same sound. Take turns with your child. For example, if you say *dog*, they might reply *dance* or *door* or *done*. Take turns saying another word that starts the same.

**Silly Phrases:** Make silly phrases together where many of the words start with the same sound, for example, "Juno jumped just in January."

**Guess the Mystery Word:** Tell the child, "What is the mystery word?" Then tell them the sounds in order, slowly, of a very short word. If you say /r/ /u/ /n/, the child would say *run*. A teacher might share the PRESS Phonemic Awareness wordlist or you can make up your own words.

**Singing, Rapping, and Rhyming:** These are also fun ways to play with language and they are building blocks for phonemic awareness.



# PHONICS



## What is phonics?

English uses letters in the alphabet to represent sounds. Phonics is the relationship between the sounds in words and the letters in print.



## Why is it important to reading?

To read words, children must be able to say the sounds of the letters in the word in order and quickly enough to make a word. This is called decoding. Once a word is decoded in print, the child can recognize the word and understand it. Decoding is necessary to read and understand print.



## What you can do at home with phonics?

- Read a book to your child and occasionally point to a letter and ask them the sound it makes
- Ask your child to write a sentence or two about their day to give practice associating the sounds in words with letters. It's ok if the spelling is not correct.
- If your child's teacher has PRESS word lists to share, have your child read the list out loud to you and maybe to their sibling or pet
- Take words from the PRESS word lists and cut them apart. Have your child sort the words into groups such as words with the same vowel, or words that begin with the same letter, or words that have two consonants at the beginning or the ends of words.



# FLUENCY



## What is fluency?

Fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and expression. This skill increases as children learn other reading skills.



## Why is it important to reading?

When reading is fluent, readers don't struggle to recognize words and phrases. This allows them to focus their attention on understanding the meaning of what they are reading.



## What you can do at home with fluency?

Anyone, when encountering a variety of challenging words and phrases in a text, will struggle to read fluently. This is why it is important for children, when working to improve their reading fluency, to read texts that are not too easy but also not too challenging. The practices below can be done while reading together with your child, using a few sentences or paragraphs of text:

**Echo reading:** Model fluent reading by reading out loud while your child follows along with the text. Then ask your child to read the same text out loud to you. Give encouraging feedback, correcting any important words or phrases they may have missed.

**Choral reading:** Both you and your child read out loud together at the same time. This will help your child follow your pace and expression. Ensure that they are also following the words in the text while you both read out loud. You can use your finger to point to the words on the page as you read, if your child needs this additional support.

**Partner reading:** Take turns reading paragraphs of text out loud with your child. Stop and talk about what you just read to build understanding.



# VOCABULARY



## What is vocabulary?

Vocabulary is understanding the meaning of words.



## Why is it important to reading?

Knowledge of vocabulary is critical for understanding, both in oral and written language. In reading, vocabulary knowledge of nearly all words in a text is important for children to be able to understand the text.



## What you can do at home with vocabulary?

There is no one correct way to learn vocabulary. In fact, it is more effective to use multiple approaches to learning new words than only one approach. Here are a few suggestions to help build your child's vocabulary knowledge:

- Discuss the meaning of a new/difficult word (either from their reading or a class vocabulary list) and, if you can, think of a movement that would go with the word. Find fun ways to use the word/movement while you talk with your child during the week.
- When your child is learning a new word, share the meaning with them, and create a "word hunt" to find/listen for that word in other texts they are reading, while watching TV or movies, listening to songs, etc. Try to use the vocabulary word in conversation with your child.
- Find a text that your child is interested in. Help them choose interesting or challenging words from the text and have them write down each word on a small square of paper or index card. Use these words to create a "word wall" - in your child's room, on the refrigerator, etc. Continue to find more words with similar meanings and add those to the word wall. After there are a number of words collected, your child can use the pieces of paper to make up games to play with them.



# COMPREHENSION



## What is comprehension?

Comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of what is read. It is an active, intentional, social, and thinking process that takes place before, during, and after reading.



## Why is it important to reading?

Comprehension is the process of making meaning from text. The process is dynamic and often regarded as “the essence of reading.” Comprehension skills allow readers to gain information, enjoy reading, and experience literature more deeply.



## What you can do at home with comprehension?

Comprehension involves combining reading with thinking and reasoning. An adult can help a child think about a story as the adult reads aloud or when a child is reading independently. The important thing is to guide your child through a conversation about a book or text and keep it fun.

- Prior to reading, have the child look at the title, pictures or headings and tell you what they think the story or text will be about.
- When reading picture books with younger children, stop at every few pages and ask the child what is happening in the story, using the pictures to support talking about the book.
- Connect the book to prior books read or experiences by asking the child, *remember when...* (something similar to what you are reading).
- After reading a book together or after your child has read on their own, ask them about the story, their favorite part, etc. Specific questions about *what, who, when, where* and *why* will help you have a conversation with your child about the text.

