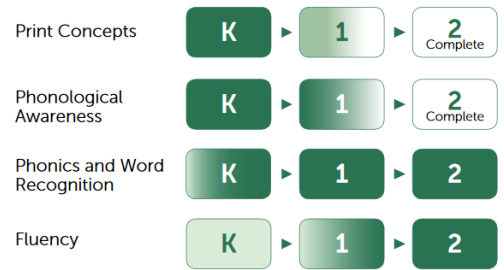


Reading Foundational Skills

Key Concepts and Terms

This document defines the key components of research-based reading foundational skills instruction. Structured, sequential reading instruction moves young readers along a continuum of skills (see the graphic on the right) and is best done with a structured program such as [EL Education](#) or [Core Knowledge](#) (both are free programs).

To learn more about what the concepts below look like in a classroom, access our grade-by-grade [Foundational Skills Instructional Moves](#) documents, take the [Foundational Skills Mini-Course](#), and use our [Foundational Skills Observation Tool](#).



This visual shows each content focus area by grade. The darker the shading, the greater the emphasis on that component.

Print Concepts

Definition: Print concepts include the features of print and organization of print. The most important early print concept is letter recognition, which should begin immediately in kindergarten. Additionally, students should begin learning basic skills such as page-by-page reading, and following words from left to right and top to bottom. They should begin noticing that words are separated by spaces and that these spaces are the same size.

Key Terms:

- *Return Sweep:* moving your eyes from the end of one line of text to the start of another line
- *One-to-One correspondence of words:* matching the printed word to the spoken word
- *Letter Recognition:* visually recognizing the name of a printed letter



Phonological Awareness

Definition: Phonological awareness is a broad term used for all things related to the sounds of spoken language. Phonological awareness is entirely oral and forms the building blocks for later reading before print is even introduced.

Building phonological awareness in students involves building their knowledge of:

- *Oral Rhymes and Alliteration:* recognizing the beginning and ending sounds of words. (Example: The end of the word "cast" sounds just like "blast." These words rhyme.)
- *Words:* hearing and counting the number of words. (Example: I hear five words in the sentence, "I ran to the cone.")
- *Syllables:* breaking words up into their largest parts and hearing and counting these parts. (Example: I hear two syllables in the word "kitten.")
- *Onset/Rime:* hearing and identifying the onset (the part of a syllable before the vowel) and the rime (the vowel and the consonants that follow). (Examples: Map-onset is "m," rime is "ap," skip onset is "sk," rime is "ip." Not all words have onsets. Example: it. The words "rime" and "rhyme" are not similar by accident. Think of "pat" and bat, or here and dear! The rime provides the rhyme!)



Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness is a subgroup of phonological awareness which focuses only on phonemes (the smallest unit of speech that can be combined to make words). Some phonemes correspond to letters (each letter in the word "bat" is a separate phoneme, as in /b/ /a/ /t/) and others, groups of letters (the word "day" consists of two phonemes, /d/ from "d" and /ā/ from "ay"). There are 44 phonemes in the English language.

Phonemic awareness activities include:

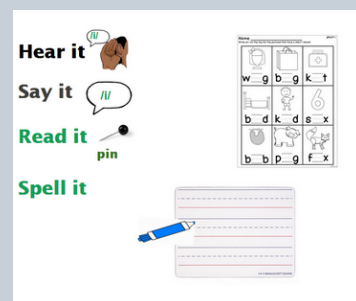
- Identifying phonemes in isolation or at the beginning, middle, or end of words
- Blending, segmenting, deleting, and substituting phonemes from/in words.

Phonics and Word Recognition

Definition: Phonics consists of the learning of sound and spelling patterns in a distinct sequence that allows students to recognize, decode, and encode the sounds letters make in print. Phonemic awareness connects directly to phonics, as students must be able to hear the sounds in order to recognize them in written form.

Key Terms:

- *Decoding:* learning to read words by recognizing and stringing together sounds
- *Encoding:* using letter sounds to write
- *Automaticity:* decoding that is done so rapidly that it seems the word has been recognized as a whole
- *Word Recognition:* recognizing words in the moment of reading
- *Graphemes:* letters or groups of letters that represent sounds
- *Sound and Spelling Pattern:* the phonics-based skill of focus in a scope and sequence, usually a letter, letter pair, or word part



Fluency

Definition: Fluency consists of reading accurately, at an appropriate rate, and with expression.

Key Terms:

- *Accuracy:* the ability to correctly decode a word on sight. Over time, accuracy will lead to developing a bank of "sight words," or words that are correctly and instantly recognized without applying decoding knowledge.
- *Rate:* words read per minute. Fluent reading is not speed reading; an appropriate rate reflects conversational speech and varies based on grade level.
- *Prosody:* reading with appropriate expression. Components of prosody include timing, phrasing, emphasis, and intonation.

