

Effective reading

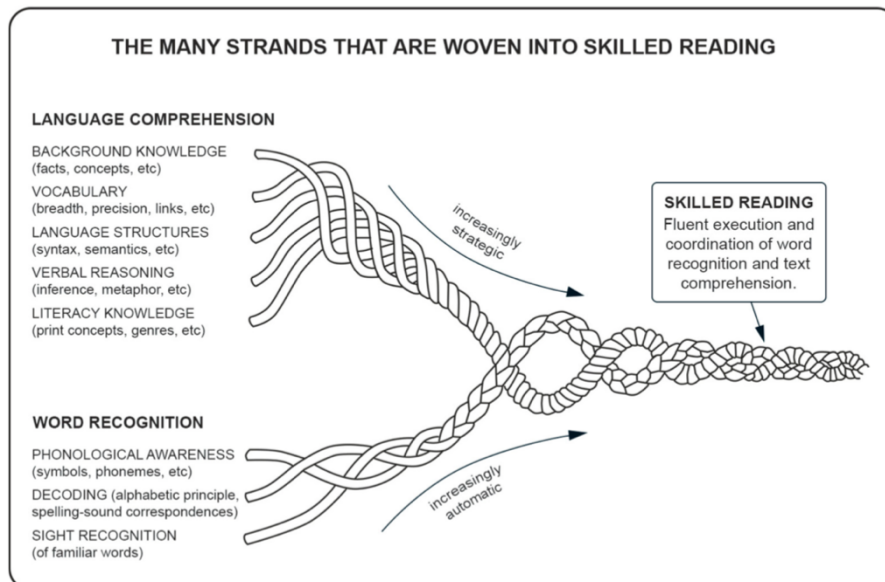
Kindergarten to Year 2

Phonological awareness is a crucial skill for all students.

Reading is a complex cognitive process. It requires our brains to make new connections between the parts that were designed to enable us to develop oral language and process visual information. Learning to read requires explicit teaching in order for our brains to make those new connections.

The Simple View of Reading (Gough and Tunmer, 1986) suggests that reading comprehension is the product of two sets of skills: decoding and linguistic comprehension. Since Gough and Tunmer's original paper, many researchers have provided evidence that 'measures of decoding and linguistic comprehension each predict reading comprehension and its development, and together the two components account for almost all variance in this ability' (Castles et al 2018).

The work of Hollis Scarborough (2001) further developed the Simple View of Reading through the use of a rope metaphor with strands of the rope representing the various interconnected components of skilled reading (refer to image below). This framework expands linguistic/language comprehension to include background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, language structures, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge. Scarborough also expanded the decoding/word recognition component of the Simple View of Reading to highlight the importance of phonological awareness, decoding and sight recognition.



Scarborough, H.S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickson (Eds.), *Handbook for research in early literacy* (pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Reading researchers (as summarised in National Reading Panel, 2000, Rose, 2006 and Rowe, 2005) agree that well-developed skills in both word recognition and language comprehension are critical for skilled reading comprehension. Strength in one area cannot compensate for a deficit in the other area. Scarborough suggests that skilled reading involves the 'fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension'.

All teachers need a thorough understanding of how the complex cognitive process of reading develops, and how the many components work together as students read increasingly complex texts skilfully, strategically and critically. Reading is required for success in every subject area and so every teacher has a responsibility to develop the general and subject, or discipline-specific, reading skills of their students.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness is a critical skill for all students' literacy development and a predictor of later reading and spelling success. Phonological awareness refers to oral language and is the understanding of the different ways that language can be broken down into smaller parts.

Phonological awareness development progresses from an understanding of the larger units of sound, beginning with the subskills of word, syllable and onset/rime awareness, moving to the more complex subskills of basic and advanced phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the most important phonological awareness skill and a prerequisite for learning the alphabetic or phonic code. When a student can hear and say the separate phonemes in spoken words, they can then relate the phonemes to the graphemes that are used to represent them in writing.

What does phonological awareness look like in a K-2 classroom?

Students

- use the language of phonological awareness – word, syllables, rhyming, onset/ rime, phonemes, blending, segmenting, first, middle, last as they practise learnt oral phonological awareness skills
- use learnt oral phonological and phonemic awareness skills alongside taught phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words when reading.

Teacher

- understands the importance of phonological and phonemic awareness as a foundational skill for all literacy learning
- explicitly teaches and uses the language of phonological awareness – word, syllables, rhyming, onset/rime, phonemes, blending, segmenting, first, middle, last

- understands that phonological and phonemic awareness is a precursor to learning the phonic or alphabetic code
- uses Best Start Kindergarten Assessment analysis to find out what phonological awareness skills students have on entry to school
- plans and implements targeted explicit and systematic teaching and learning of phonological awareness skills as the focus for Terms 1 and 2 of Kindergarten
- explicitly teaches phonological and phonemic awareness skills using the gradual release of responsibility model (I do, we do, you do) so that students view modelled instruction and participate in shared, guided, collaborative and independent practice of the oral skills
- scaffolds and supports learning for students using hand and body gestures, physical movements, pictures and props, boxes and markers and Elkonin boxes to represent blending, segmenting and manipulating units of sound
- uses formative assessment information to inform differentiated instruction for all students
- identifies students who need intensive targeted support using the [Phonological Awareness Diagnostic Assessment](#)
- supports the planning and implementation of intensive targeted teaching for students who need further instruction in phonological awareness
- collaborates with literacy experts to refine practices in using evidence-based strategies, to analyse data, and to plan for student improvement.

PHONICS

Phonics is the relationship between printed letters and the sounds they represent and is a vital component of learning to read. Phonics relies on phonemic awareness. The reader must understand that words are made up of phonemes or units of sound. Phonics instruction connects these phonemes with written letters so that the reader can transfer knowledge of sounds to the printed word. Students need to learn to blend together phonemes to read words. The goal of phonics instruction is to help readers quickly determine the sounds in unfamiliar written words. When readers encounter new words in texts, they use the elements of phonics to decode and understand.

What does phonics look like in a K-2 classroom?

Students

- use phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words when reading
- participate in shared, guided, collaborative and independent practice of using phonic knowledge to decode and encode
- use knowledge of phonemes to orally blend
- practise their phonics skills by reading decodable texts that match the phonic code they have been taught
- apply their phonic knowledge by writing words and sentences that match the phonic code they have been taught.

Teacher

- understands that phonic knowledge relies on phonemic awareness and makes clear to students how phonemic awareness is connected to word reading and spelling
- plans for and explicitly teaches phonics skills using the gradual release of responsibility model (I do, we do, you do) so that students view modelled instruction and participate in shared, guided, collaborative and independent practice of the skills
- scaffolds and supports learning for students using phonic skills for decoding words by:
 - a) looking at grapheme/s from left to right within a word, saying the phoneme/s
 - b) blending phonemes to model pronunciation
 - c) mapping phonemes back to the graphemes
 - d) reading the word
 - e) linking the word to meaning.
- explicitly teaches the reciprocal relationship between decoding and encoding (spelling) to support writing development

- continues teaching the basic and advanced skills of phonemic awareness alongside the teaching of phonics to develop skilled and strong readers
- uses decodable texts that closely match the teaching sequence of letter-sound relationships that have been taught
- uses materials to support, scaffold and practise learning such as Elkonin boxes and decodable texts
- uses formative assessment information to inform differentiated instruction for all students
- identifies any students who need intensive targeted support using [phonics assessment tools](#)
- supports the planning and implementation of intensive targeted teaching for students who need further instruction in phonics, to support automatic word recognition and spelling automaticity
- collaborates with literacy experts to refine practices in using evidence-based strategies, to analyse data and to plan for student improvement.

FLUENCY

Reading [fluency](#) refers to the reader's ability to read texts accurately, at an appropriate pace and with appropriate expression. Fluent reading acts as a bridge between automatic word reading and comprehension.

Fluency contains the skill of automaticity which allows a reader to recognise words quickly. Achieving automaticity in reading is essential to becoming effective readers. When reading skills have developed to a point of automaticity, students no longer need to use their working memory to decode. Their working memory is then available to be used for comprehension.

In Kindergarten and Year 1, fluency instruction should focus more on accuracy and automaticity in decoding and reading texts with purpose and understanding. In late Year 1 and in Year 2, the focus of targeted teaching can change to modelling other components of fluency such as prosody (expression that includes phrasing, emphasis, intonation, and timing) as well as addressing reading rate or speed.

What does fluency look like in a K-2 classroom?

Students

- participate in singing, reciting poetry, choral reading, performing reader's theatre and paired reading
- read often, widely and deeply, including information books, poetry and plays
- use expression (prosody, tone, stress and intonation) appropriate to the text
- repeatedly read a text to improve rhythm and phrasing
- read familiar texts smoothly and with natural expression
- recognise examples and non-examples of fluent reading
- reflect on their own reading and ask questions to ensure they are reading in a fluent way, to reflect the meaning of the text
- use the vocabulary of fluency such as 'expression', 'smooth,' 'pace,' and 'volume'
- read texts in which they have an interest and prior knowledge of the vocabulary and content.

Teacher

- understands that fluency is the essential link between decoding and comprehension
- knows that fluent readers read words with accuracy and automaticity, allowing them to focus their attention on the meaning of text
- plans for and implements targeted explicit teaching and learning of the components of fluency
- frequently reads quality texts aloud to model and discuss what fluent reading sounds like
- reads in phrases, demonstrating that words can be read or grouped together to make meaning reflective of the author's intent or message
- provides ample opportunities for students to practise decoding and word recognition using decodable texts
- uses examples and non-examples of fluent reading to assist students to articulate the components of fluent reading
- co-constructs and uses retrieval or anchor charts that outline what reading fluency sounds like
- uses supportive or assisted reading where students practise reading fluently; this can be done where a student reads a passage whilst being read to by a fluent reader, reading chorally in a group, reading to a more fluent partner and reading independently

- provides authentic opportunities for repeated reading of a text – students may use this as a rehearsal or performance whereby they may deliver a presentation, share their reading with a partner, group or class, give a speech, recite a poem or perform in a play
- assesses and monitors the three dimensions of reading fluency:
 - a) accuracy and automaticity can be measured by tracking the errors and the count of words read by the student. This can be timed to calculate the word count per minute or the WCPM (Rasinski, 2014; Hudson, Lane and Pullen, 2005)
 - b) prosody can be assessed by teachers listening to students read and assessing elements such as their expression, inflection, volume and pace (Hudson, Lane and Pullen 2005).
- recognises dysfluent readers and implements targeted explicit teaching and intervention
- collaborates with literacy experts to refine practices in using evidence-based strategies, to analyse data and to plan for student improvement.

VOCABULARY

- **Vocabulary** refers to the words we know, understand and use to communicate effectively. It is critical for skilled reading comprehension and also plays an important role in word recognition.
- Beginning readers use knowledge of words from their oral vocabulary to recognise words that they encounter in print. When students ‘sound out’ a word, their brain connects the pronunciation of a sequence of sounds to a word in their vocabulary. If they find a match between the word on the page and a word they have learned through listening and speaking, and it makes sense to them, they will keep reading. If a match is not created, because the word they are reading is not found in their vocabulary, then comprehension is interrupted. This will be the case even if they are able to produce the correct pronunciation through the decoding process.
- It is also critical to develop and deepen the oral vocabulary of beginning readers so that, as they encounter increasingly complex texts, they have a robust vocabulary store to strategically apply for comprehension.
- Key to making decisions about vocabulary instruction is an understanding of the three tiers (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013):
 - **Tier 1:** Basic words used in everyday conversation that do not usually require explicit instruction, for example: ‘think’, ‘around’, ‘eat’, ‘clock’, ‘orange’. The exception is for some EAL/D learners where Tier 1 words need to be taught in context.
 - **Tier 2:** Words that are used more frequently in texts than in spoken language and that usually require explicit teaching. Tier 2 word learning is essential for building formal academic language within all subject areas as they add precision and detail, for example: ‘switch’, ‘struggle’, ‘interesting’, ‘unsure’.
 - **Tier 3:** Words with low frequency of use that is often limited to specific topics and domains. These words usually require explicit teaching within subject areas. Tier 3 words might be content words from science, geography, mathematics or history, for example: ‘circumference’, ‘isosceles’ and ‘integer’.

What does vocabulary look like in a K-2 classroom?

Students

- begin to apply word-learning strategies, such as using context clues and morphology, as part of their everyday reading practice
- draw on home language and literacy experiences when reading
- become ‘word conscious’ whereby they notice words and enjoy learning and talking about them
- incorporate words that have been explicitly taught in their verbal and written work
- listen to and reflect on teacher and peer ‘think alouds’ of the vocabulary in texts. A ‘think aloud’ strategy involves a skilled reader thinking aloud as they read so that others can eavesdrop on their thought processes as they approach unfamiliar vocabulary and comprehend a text.

Teacher

- understands the importance of vocabulary for both learning to read and reading to learn
- understands the importance of selecting Tier 2 vocabulary for explicit instruction. These are words that appear more frequently in text than within oral language, so students are less likely to learn them without instruction
- understands that teaching morphology is a critical component of vocabulary instruction
- considers home language and literacy experiences of all students, including Aboriginal students and those from language backgrounds other than English and EAL/D learners
- plans and creates targeted explicit teaching and learning of vocabulary using Tier 2 words from quality texts such as picture books, poems and information texts
- implements targeted explicit teaching and learning of Tier 2 vocabulary using strategies such as the SEEC model (Quigley, 2018, p.139):
 - a. **Select:** Select words with consideration for difficulty, importance to topic, prior knowledge of students, frequency of appearance in text, interrelationship between words and if academic (Tier 2) or subject specific (Tier 3) vocabulary
 - b. **Explain:** Say the word, write the word, define the word (using a student- friendly definition), give multiple meanings, examples and non-examples and clarify any misunderstandings
 - c. **Explore:** Explore the etymology and morphology of the word, including common word parts, word families, synonyms, antonyms, different meanings and the word in use in various contexts. Teachers might use word clines, word webs and the Frayer model as strategies to explore words
 - d. **Consolidate:** Engage in multiple and frequent opportunities for students to consolidate their understanding of taught vocabulary through activities such as cloze passages, short answer questions, using the word in real contexts and targeted research.
- regularly and repeatedly exposes students to new vocabulary by building vocabulary instruction into everyday routines, using learning activities that promote the use of new vocabulary, and reading aloud from texts, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry
- promotes 'word consciousness' (Quigley, 2018) as part of everyday practice. Word consciousness is where words are noticed, and interest and curiosity are piqued to learn about them
- explicitly teaches word-learning strategies, such as how to use context clues and morphology, to assist with determining the meaning of unknown words
- assesses and monitors vocabulary progress through pre- and post-assessment opportunities such as having the students self-assess their understanding of a word or monitoring student use of words in speaking
- collaborates with literacy experts to refine practices in using evidence-based strategies, to analyse data, and to plan for student improvement.

READING COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is an active process that involves the reader understanding and interpreting what is read. It is heavily dependent on a student's oral language comprehension and their ability to apply their background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, knowledge about texts, understanding of language structures and reasoning skills to a text. To be able to accurately understand written material, students need to be able to first decode what they read and then apply their language comprehension to make connections between what they read and what they already know.

What does reading comprehension look like in a K-2 classroom?

Students

- engage with a range of texts, both fiction and nonfiction, for enjoyment and to build background knowledge
- listen to and reflect on teacher 'think alouds' of texts. A 'think aloud' strategy involves a skilled reader thinking aloud as they read so that others can eavesdrop on their thought processes as they approach and comprehend a text
- engage in high quality conversations about texts
- monitor their understanding as they read or listen to texts and notice and repair any misunderstanding
- begin to identify and explain the structural elements of a range of texts from a variety of genres
- begin to use background knowledge, vocabulary and knowledge of language and text structure to make inferences when being read to or when reading independently
- begin to recognise when writers leave out information and what readers do to make connections and inferences

- identify connectives and cohesive devices, such as pronouns, to track ideas and characters
- construct meaning from texts by thinking logically about what they have read
- discuss the author, audience and purpose of texts.

Teacher

- understands that reading comprehension is dependent on a student's language comprehension skills and fluent decoding and automatic word recognition
- knows that comprehension is dependent on having a high level of background knowledge about the content of the text and so builds background knowledge for students where necessary
- plans for and implements targeted explicit teaching using the gradual release of responsibility model (I do, we do, you do). While students are learning the phonic code, comprehension instruction should be targeted during modelled instruction and shared practice. Explicit teaching practices could include:
 - a) using a 'think aloud' to show how readers question as they read in order to anticipate text development, monitor understanding, apply background and vocabulary knowledge and infer meaning
 - b) repeatedly reading quality texts so that students have deep comprehension and are supported to engage in high quality conversations
 - c) asking literal and inferential questions about texts, including prompting students to support responses with evidence from the text or to justify their thinking with background knowledge
 - d) modelling how to pay attention to text structure and features, such as headings, sub-headings and diagrams, and how these are used by a composer to shape meaning for a particular purpose
 - e) using graphic and semantic organisers to categorise and organise information and ideas
 - f) noticing connectives and cohesive devices, including pronouns and pronoun referencing, in order to track ideas and characters
 - g) modelling how to summarise a text by recognising what information is a supporting fact and what is the main idea
 - h) drawing attention to words or phrases in a text that provide information about who, what, where, when and why, in order to build deep comprehension.
 - i) uses formative assessment information to monitor student progress and differentiate learning collaborates with literacy experts to refine practices in using evidence-based strategies, to analyse data and to plan for student improvement.