



# Rancho Santa Fe Parent Session

Katherine Casey Spengler, Ph.D.

February 10, 2022

**hello**  
my name is

Katherine Casey Spengler, Ph.D.

katherinespengler@gmail.com

858.354.3863

[www.katherinecaseyspengler.com](http://www.katherinecaseyspengler.com)

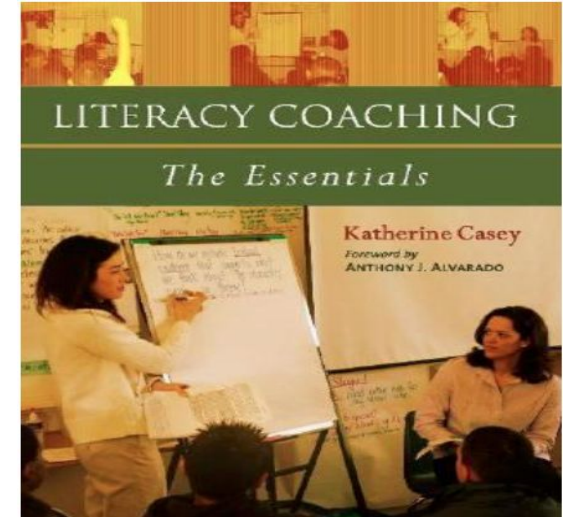


Clinical Reading Therapist  
The Reading Room  
8383 Center Drive, Suite B  
La Mesa, CA 91942

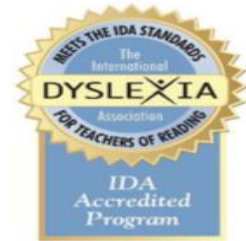


PhD in  
Education

Dissertation:  
*Struggling Readers  
and Dyslexic  
Readers: A  
Comparative  
Study*



Author, 2006



Certified Orton-Gillingham Teacher  
at the Practitioner Level

---

## Goals for today's session



How the brain learns to read



The importance of a multisensory approach to teaching reading



How the acquisition of proficient reading skills is taught at school



How the acquisition of proficient reading skills can be supported at home

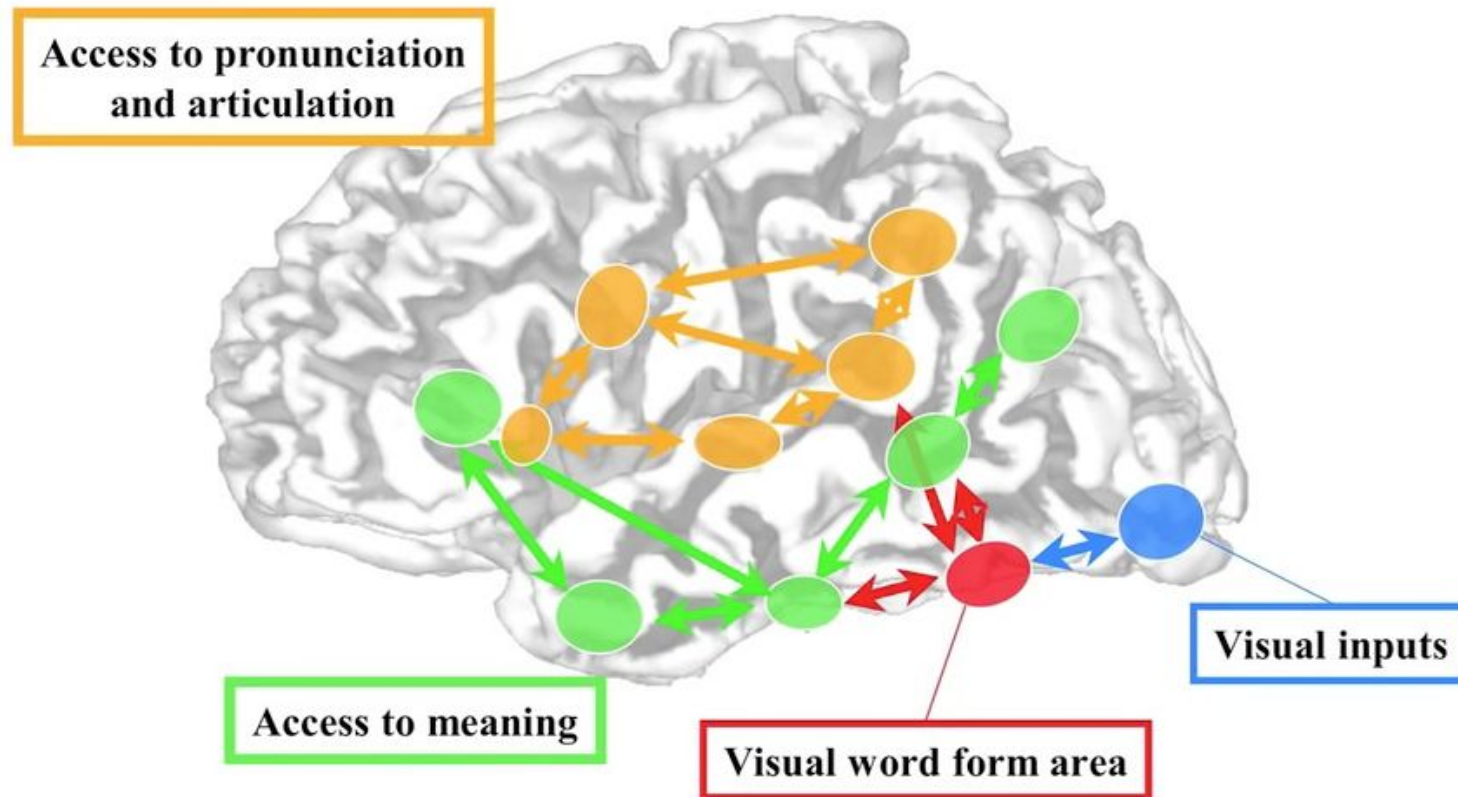
How does the brain  
learn to read?



# The brain architecture for reading

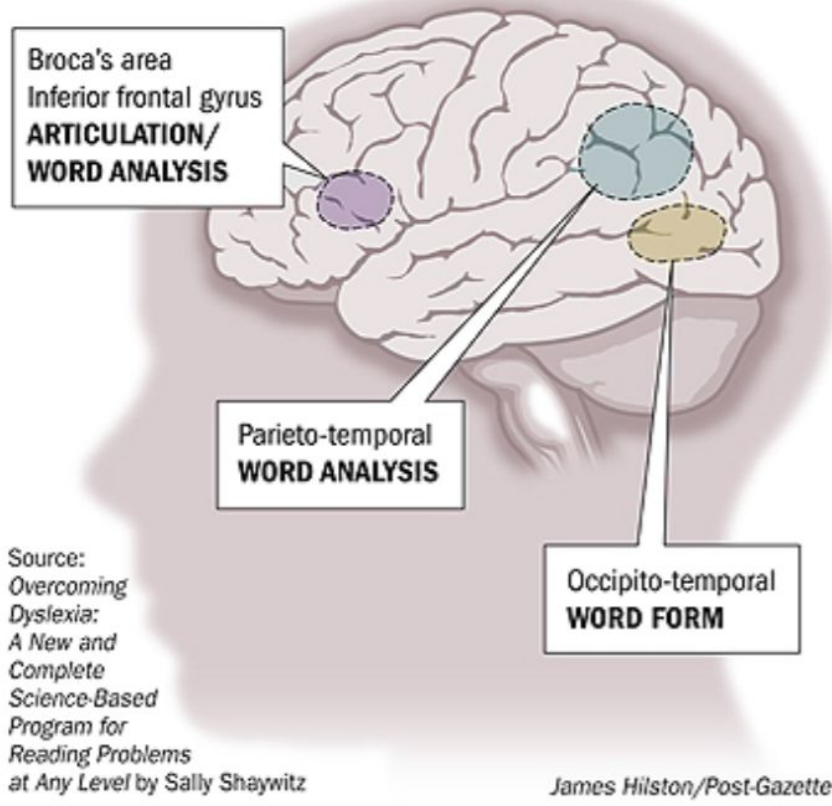
Learning to read consists in:

- creating an **invariant visual representation** of written words
- **connecting it** to brain areas coding for **speech sounds** and **meaning**



## Brain systems for reading

Brain imaging has shown three areas are involved in reading. Broca's area is active when you vocalize words in your mind. The middle "temporal-parietal" area decodes the sounds of letters and words, and is much less active in people with dyslexia; the rearmost area contains the memories of whole words. The better someone reads, the more active it becomes.



# The Simple View of Reading



<b>1</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1</b>
0	X	1	=	0
1	X	0	=	0

(Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990)

# Scarborough's Reading Rope

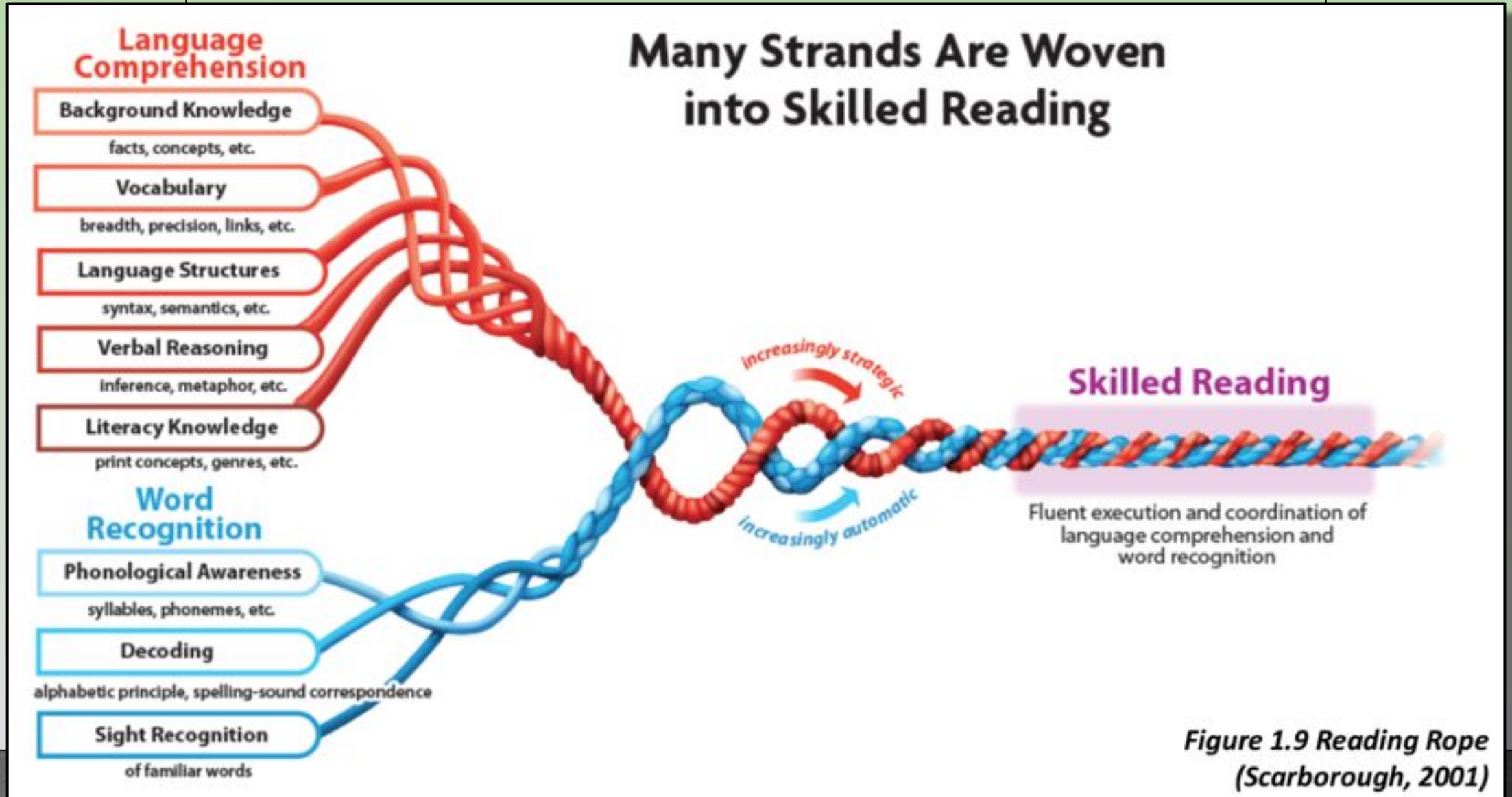
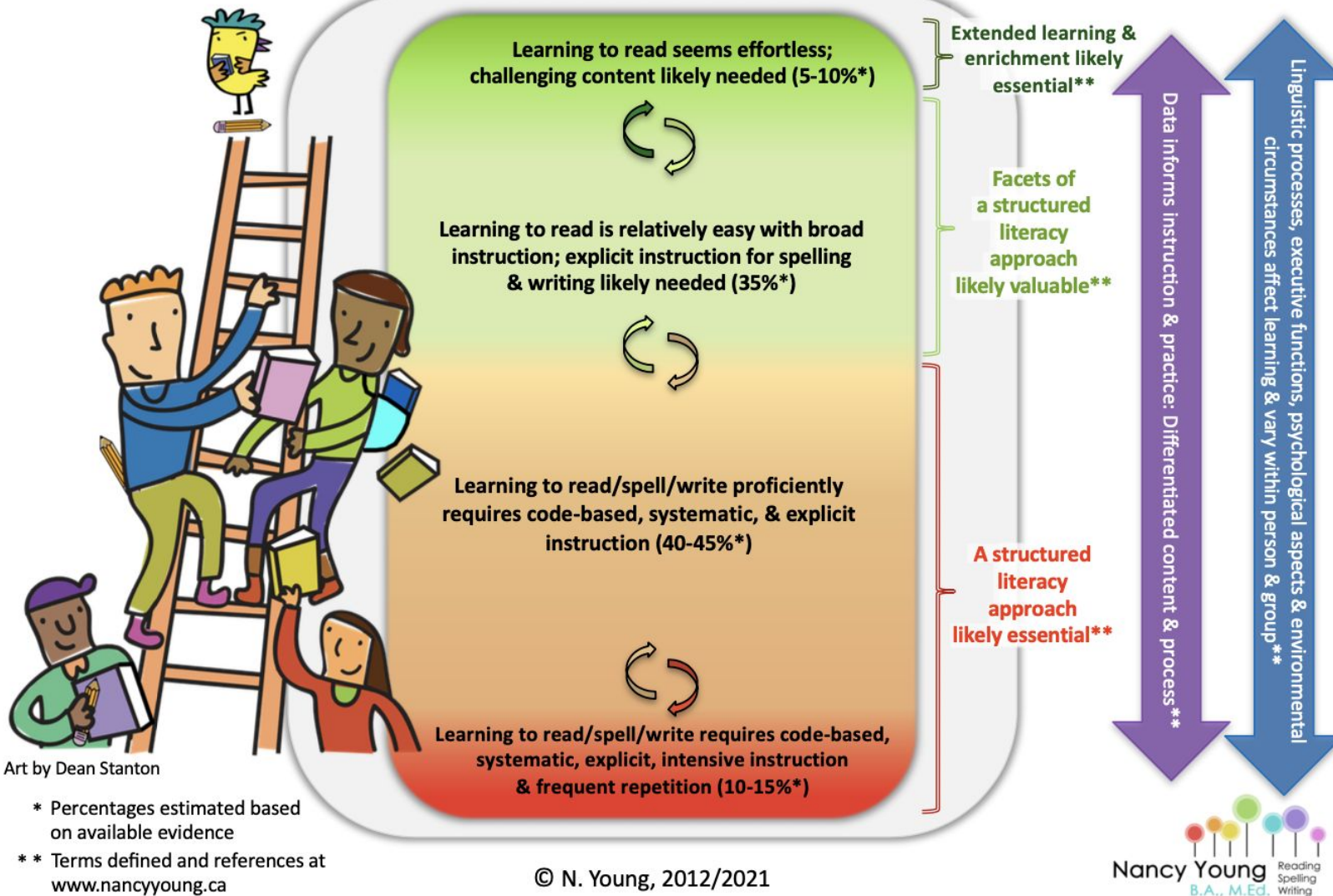


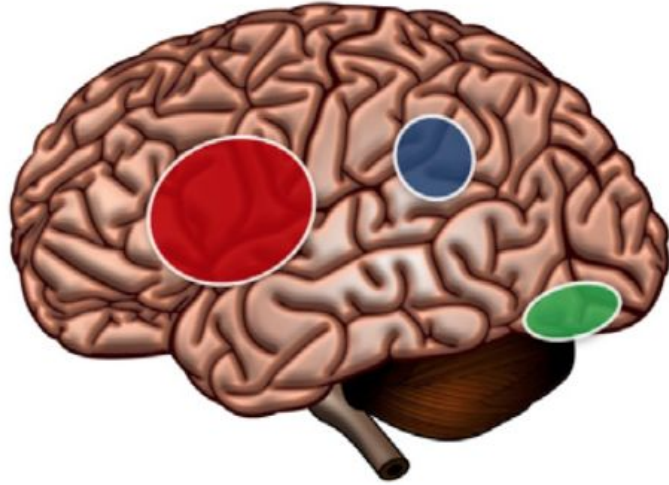
Figure 1.9 Reading Rope  
(Scarborough, 2001)



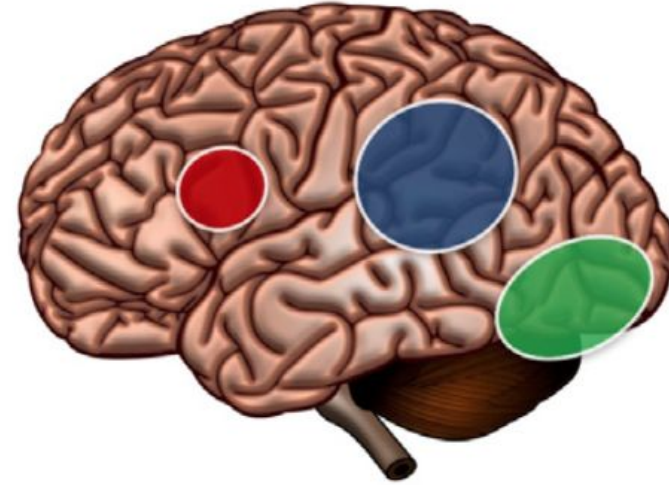
# The Ladder of Reading & Writing



## BRAIN PATTERNS THAT DYSLEXIC STUDENTS MAY SHOW



## BRAIN PATTERNS THAT NON-DYSLEXIC STUDENTS MAY SHOW

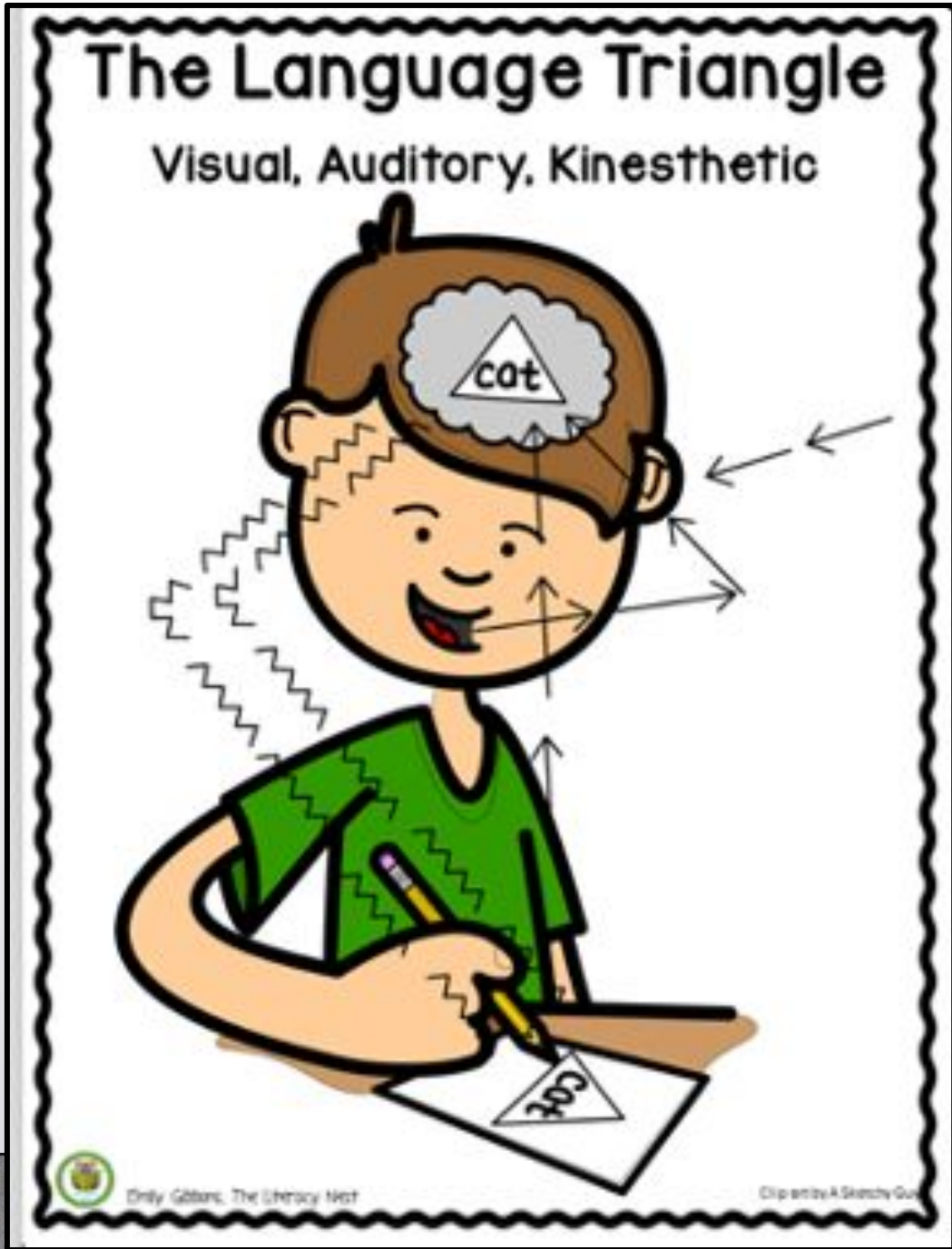


- **LEFT FRONTAL REGION:** Important for compensation
- **LEFT TEMPORO-PARIETAL REGION:** Important for phonological processing and grapheme-phoneme association
- **LEFT OCCIPITO-TEMPORAL REGION:** Important for orthographic processing

**Figure 2.1.** Key brain structures that are often impacted in dyslexia. Developed by and used with permission from Fumiko Hoeft.

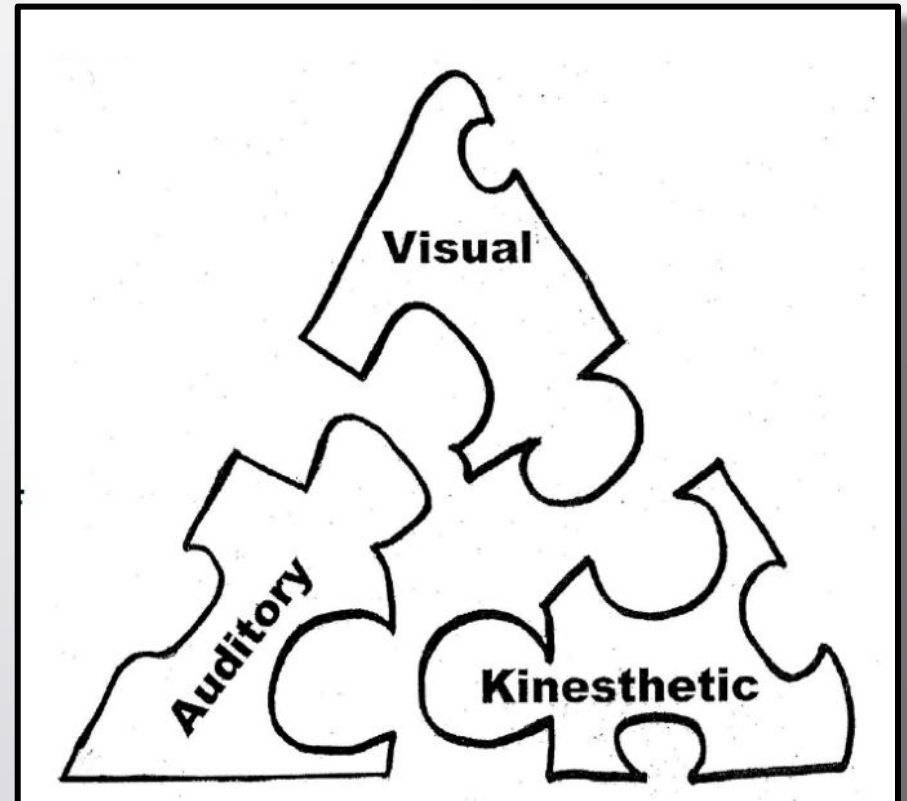


Use a multisensory approach



Visual Auditory Kinesthetic-Tactile  
= VAKT

- **Visual** – the student **looks** at the letters
- **Auditory** – the student **hears** the sounds of the letters
- **Kinesthetic** - The word “kinesthetic” comes from the Greek *kinein* which means to move. It is the sense that detects bodily position, weight, or movement of the muscles, tendons and joints.



# How the Acquisition of Proficient Reading Skills is Taught at School (K-2)





# Whole Class Instruction

- Reading comprehension strategies are taught using Teachers College Reading Units of Study
- Daily phonics instruction is taught aligned to the Foundational Reading standards
- Writing instruction is taught using Teachers College Writing Units of Study
  - Shared writing is used especially in the primary grades
- Handwriting is taught using Handwriting Without Tears



# Small Group Reading Instruction

- Small group reading instruction targets students needs
- Student reading needs are determined using:
  - Teacher observation
  - The CRA
  - iReady Reading
  - Individual student reading conferences



# Small Group Writing Instruction

- Small group instruction focuses on developing sentence writing skills, grammar, and punctuation
- Small group and individual writing conferences target student needs which are determined using:
  - Teacher observation
  - Teachers College's Writing Rubric





# Spelling and Word Study

- Spelling inventories are administered to determine student needs
- Small group instruction is provided to teach spelling

# How the Acquisition of Proficient Reading Can Be Supported at Home

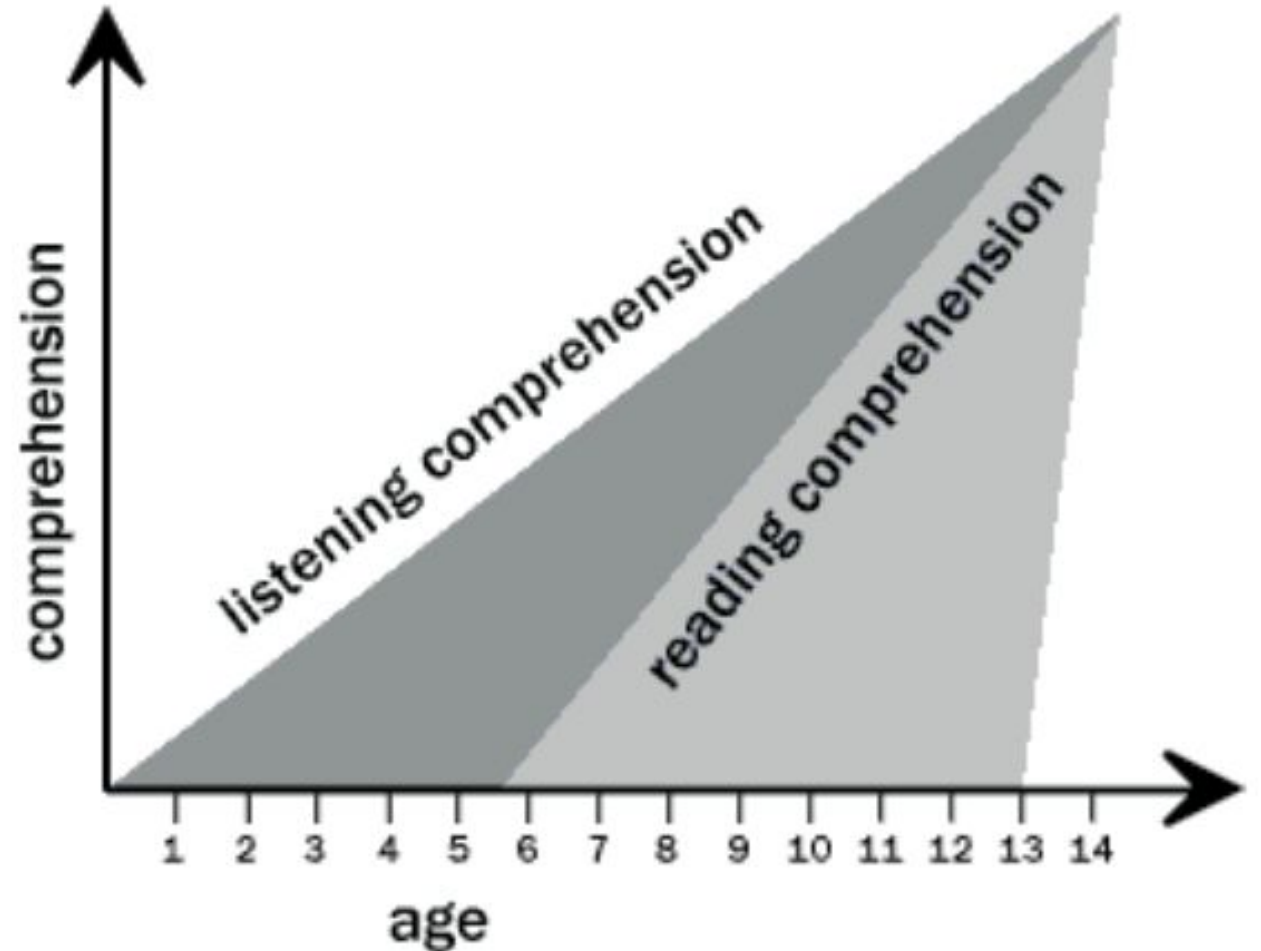


Please read aloud to  
your child(ren), even  
your fifth graders (and  
beyond)!



Listening comprehension is stronger than reading comprehension in elementary age children.

Figure 15: Listening and Reading Comprehension, by Age



Encourage your child to listen to audiobooks and view shows with captions on.

The screenshot shows the City of San Diego Public Library website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the City of San Diego logo, weather information (67°), and a search bar. Below this is a menu with categories like LEISURE, RESIDENT RESOURCES, DOING BUSINESS, LIBRARY, PUBLIC SAFETY, and CITY HALL. The main content area is titled "Public Library" and features a navigation bar with links to Public Library Home, About the Library, Services, eCollection, Programs & Events, Central Library, Library Locations, and Kids & Teens. The "eCollection" section is highlighted, featuring a description: "Borrow free eBooks and eAudiobooks or search our databases for up-to-date popular and scholarly articles on a wide range of subjects. The Library's eCollection never closes and its content can be read or downloaded on your computer\* or portable device.\*\*" Below this are three logos for "cloudLibrary", "rb digital", and "enki", each with a "DOWNLOAD" button and a link to the service. At the bottom, there are three "Assistance" buttons for each service, each with a plus sign.

Click [here](#) for the library

The advertisement for Epic! features a desktop monitor, a tablet, and a smartphone. The desktop monitor displays a grid of colorful book covers. The tablet shows a book cover for "SPEAK DOG" with a dog's face. The smartphone shows a play button icon over a book cover. The text "Read and Learn on Epic! Anytime. Anywhere." is written in orange at the top. Below the devices, a list of features is provided:

- Unlimited access for only \$7.99 per month
- Books, videos, quizzes, Spanish & more
- No ads or in-app purchases
- Cancel anytime

Click [here](#) for Epic

Support your child in  
learning the names of  
the letter of the  
alphabet.



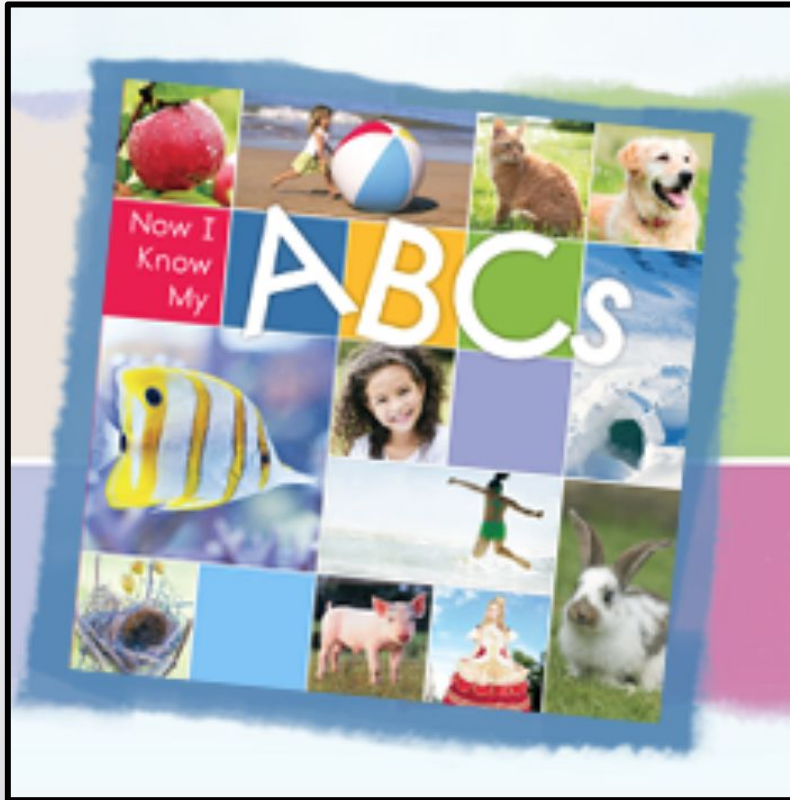
“In English the 26 letters of the alphabet represent approximately 44 sounds that are spelled using 250 combinations of the letters of the alphabet.”

Reed, D.K. (2012) *Why teach spelling?* Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

Welcome to the online resource bank for *Jan Richardson's*  
The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading.  
Please type the last word in the first paragraph of Chapter 7.

Password:

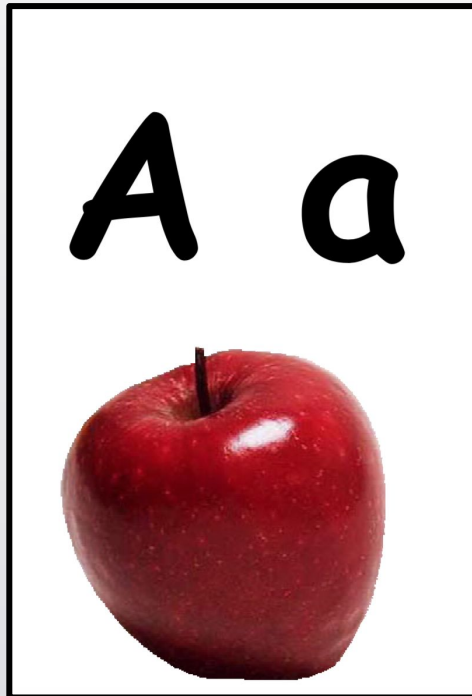
# Tracing the Alphabet Book




- Child says "D-d-dog."
- Use correct letter formation.



Click on the pictures to access the tracing book resources.



Alphabet tracing book

A a 	B b 	C c 	D d 	E e 
F f 	G g 	H h 	I i 	J j 
K k 	L l 	M m 	N n 	O o 
P p 	Q q 	R r 	S s 	T t 
U u 	V v 	W w 	X x 	Y y 
Z z 				

Alphabet linking chart

**GUIDE**

All students benefit from whole-group activities such as read-alouds, shared reading, and shared writing. The specific needs of pre-A students are best addressed with individual and small-group lessons. The two procedures described in this chapter, tracing an alphabet book with a tutor and using the pre-A lesson framework, quickly teach letter names and sounds, phonemic awareness, concepts of print, and oral language. My research has shown that the sooner you begin these lessons, the better chance these students have to catch up with their peers. To achieve the best results, do both procedures every day.

**Tracing an Alphabet Book**

It is important for these children to learn the entire set of letters as soon as possible. Students should trace an alphabet book with a tutor every day. You can use any simple alphabet book, but the process works best if the pictures in the student's ABC book are the same pictures on your classroom alphabet chart or frieze. Each page of the alphabet book should have the uppercase and lowercase letter along with a picture. Do not include the word for the picture, as it can be confusing.

Alphabet tracing book procedures

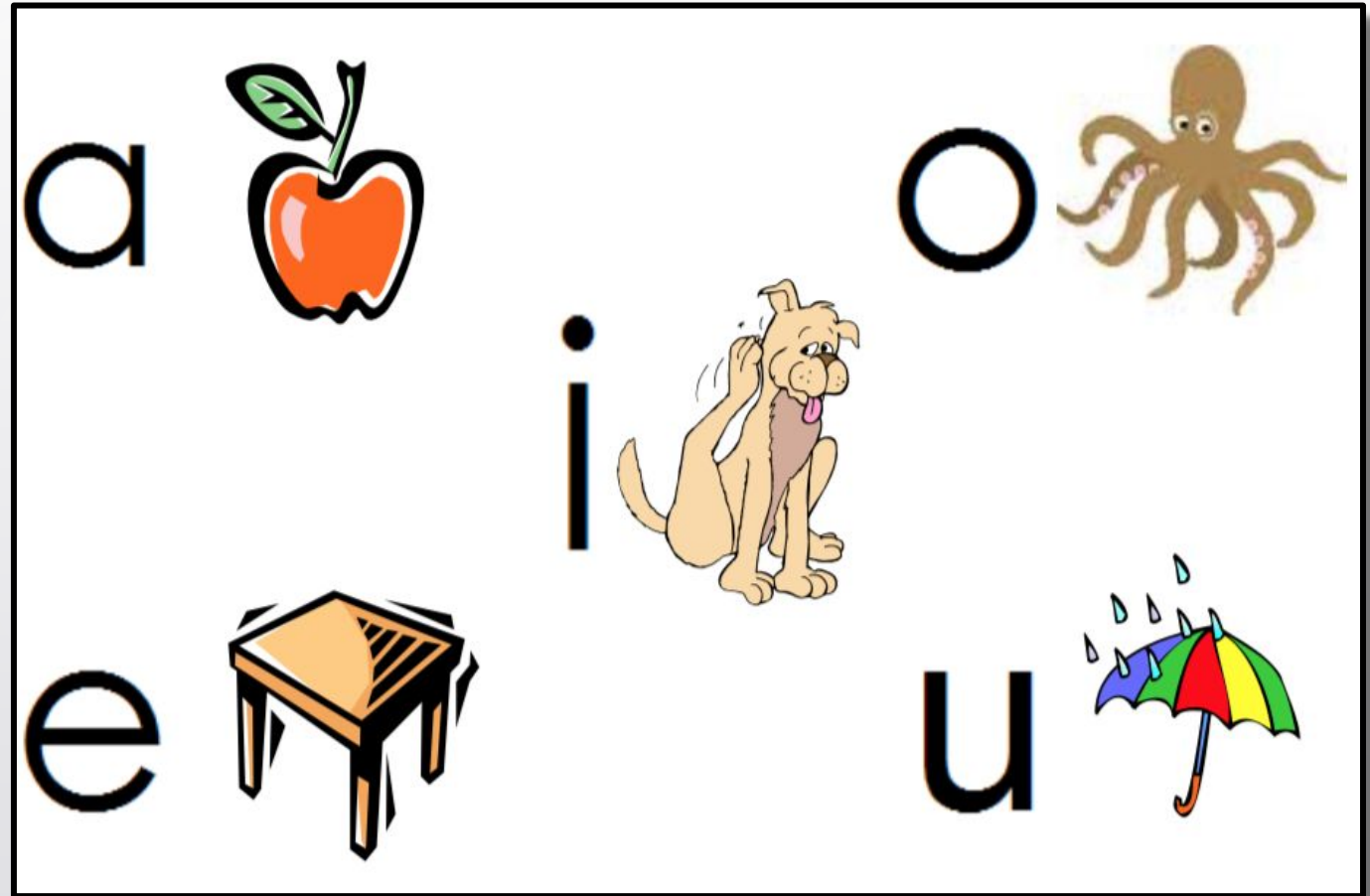
Use gestures that help children remember the sounds of the short vowels.





Short vowels can be tricky to hear.

Click [here](#) for resources to support the use of these visuals/gestures.



Encourage your child to decode, or sound out, words using prompts.



## What is Decoding?

The ability to decode is a key skill when learning to read.

Decoding happens when a person uses letter-sound knowledge to segment an unknown word all the way through by sound to pronounce the written word correctly.

**c - a - t**



**b - oa - t**



**r - ea - d - er**



It is always good to chat about unknown words and explore meaning to build vocabulary and develop comprehension skills.

Tiny Steps Make Big Strides

## If I get stuck!



Look through the whole word.

left to right



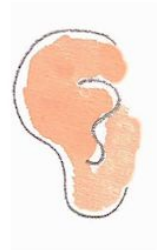
Use a finger to segment the word into sounds, syllables or chunks.



Ask for help if I don't know.



Blend the sounds and link to the letter or letter strings I see.



I can listen to my own voice, slow my thoughts and think...



Does that word make sense?

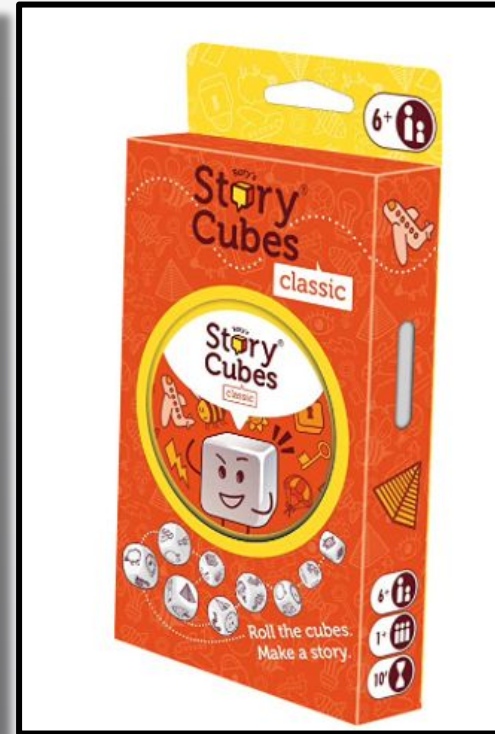


The alphabet is a code.



I am learning how to crack it!

Make language learning playful.



Encourage correct  
letter formation and  
pencil grip.



# Correct letter formation leads to automaticity.

Click on the image below to access the article.



- “Just as effortful word decoding may impair reading comprehension... labored handwriting creates a drain on mental resources needed for higher-level aspects of writing, such as attention to content, elaboration of details, and organization of ideas.”





# Penmanship improves literacy learning.

Click on the image below  
to access the article.

## **The Unexpected Connection Between Handwriting and Learning to Read**

[Expert Corner](#) blog post by [Sheldon H. Horowitz, Ed.D.](#)

Sep 24, 2018

- “Handwriting is a multisensory activity. As you form each letter, your hand shares information with language processing areas in your brain. As your eyes track what you’re writing, you engage these areas. The same goes if you say letter sounds and words when you write.
- Research shows there’s something special about language development and the act of handwriting. In studies, kids who practice handwriting do better at reading and spelling. The reason? Some experts believe that forming letters by hand while learning sounds activates reading circuits in the brain that promote literacy.
- Keyboarding on a computer, by contrast, hasn’t been shown to improve reading.”

## Tripod Grip



1 - Tall Finger (side)

2 - Thumb (pad)

3 - Pointing Finger (tip)

All fingers are slightly bent.

## Trick #1 for Tripod Grip

One helpful way to teach a student to pick up the pencil correctly:

Lay the pencil in front of the student, pencil pointing at him.

Reach down and pinch the pencil between thumb & pointing finger.

Pick the pencil up and flip it back.

Move the third finger under to support.

Say: **“Pinch and flip.”**



## Trick # 2 for Tripod Grip

Pinch pencil at the top end using thumb, pointing finger & middle finger.

Stand pencil on its tip and slide the three fingers down to the end of the painted surface.

Rest your hand on the writing surface.

Say: **“Pinch, slide and rest”**

[magicoflearning.com](http://magicoflearning.com)



Ask your child's teacher for the "verbal pathway" used in your child's class.

RSF uses Handwriting Without Tears. Here is a [link](#) to how Handwriting Without Tears cues children to form lowercase and uppercase letters, numbers, and cursive.



////////////////////////////////////  
Please do not have your child practice letter formation without supervision.



- Responsive App for penmanship practice
- Click [here](#) for a video

Help your child learn  
to read and spell high  
frequency words.





### **High frequency words**

- Only 100 words account for approximately 50% of the words in English print.
- Only 13 words (a, and, for, he, is, in, it, of, that, the, to, was, you) account for 25% of words in print.

### **Irregular words**

- Words that cannot be sounded out accurately using the most common sounds for graphemes.
- Many high frequency words are irregular.

### **Sight vocabulary**

- Words that are recognized instantly.
- The quick and automatic recognition of most common words appearing in text is necessary for fluent reading.

Click [here](#) for the rules of spelling.

Click [here](#) for the six syllable types.





## Irregular Words - What

- **Irregular words in English**
  - Nearly all English words represent every sound in the spoken word, even if they represent some sounds irregularly.
  - Most irregular words have only one irregular letter – sound association.

Examples: *been, from, both*

More than one irregular letter – sound association

*one once sugar bouquet*



Heart Word  
Magic for  
Irregularly  
Spelled High  
Frequency  
Words

The Word "From"

The screenshot shows the 'Heart Word Magic' interface for the word 'from'. At the top, it says 'The Word "From"'. Below that, the word 'from' is displayed in a large, bold font. Underneath the word, there are four colored boxes: a green box under 'f', a dark brown box with a white play button under 'r', a dark red heart under 'o', and a blue box under 'm'. Below these boxes are four white boxes containing the letters 'f', 'r', 'o', and 'm' respectively. In the bottom right corner, there is a small black square icon with a white crosshair. The background of the interface is light blue with faint, repeating text.

# Teaching a New Sight Word



Multisensory  
Steps to  
Teaching a  
Sight Word:

1. What's Missing?
2. Mix & Fix
3. Table Writing
4. Write It (and Retrieve It)

Click [here](#) for additional fun sight word games to play at home.



Let's try it!

1. What's Missing?
2. Mix & Fix
3. Table Writing
4. Write and Retrieve It

Encourage your child to  
use finger spelling to  
help spell decodable  
words



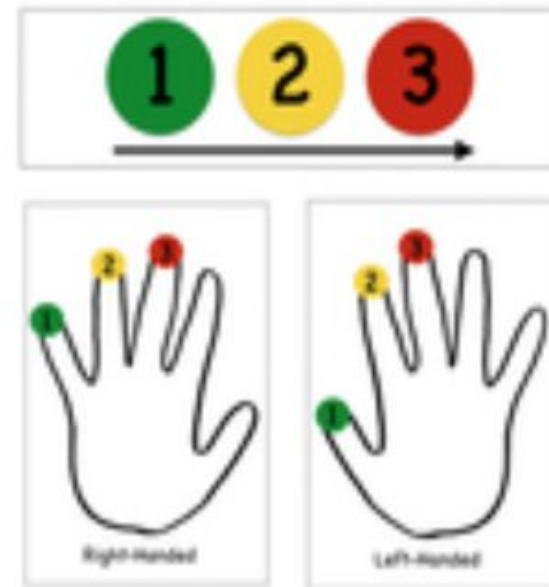
# Finger Spelling

## STEPS:

1. The **teacher says** the word.
2. The **student repeats** the word (student may tap the table with a flat hand).
3. The **student segments** the speech sounds in the word.

The palm of the **nonwriting** hand now rests on the table with the fingers slightly raised. As a sound is produced by the mouth, one finger touches the table. For example, in the word bat, one finger will touch the table (usually the thumb for the first sound) as the (b) is sounded, the next finger will touch the table as the (a) is sounded, and the third finger will touch the table as the (t) is sounded.

4. The **student writes** the word, **repeating the speech sounds** as he writes... /b/ /a/ /t/

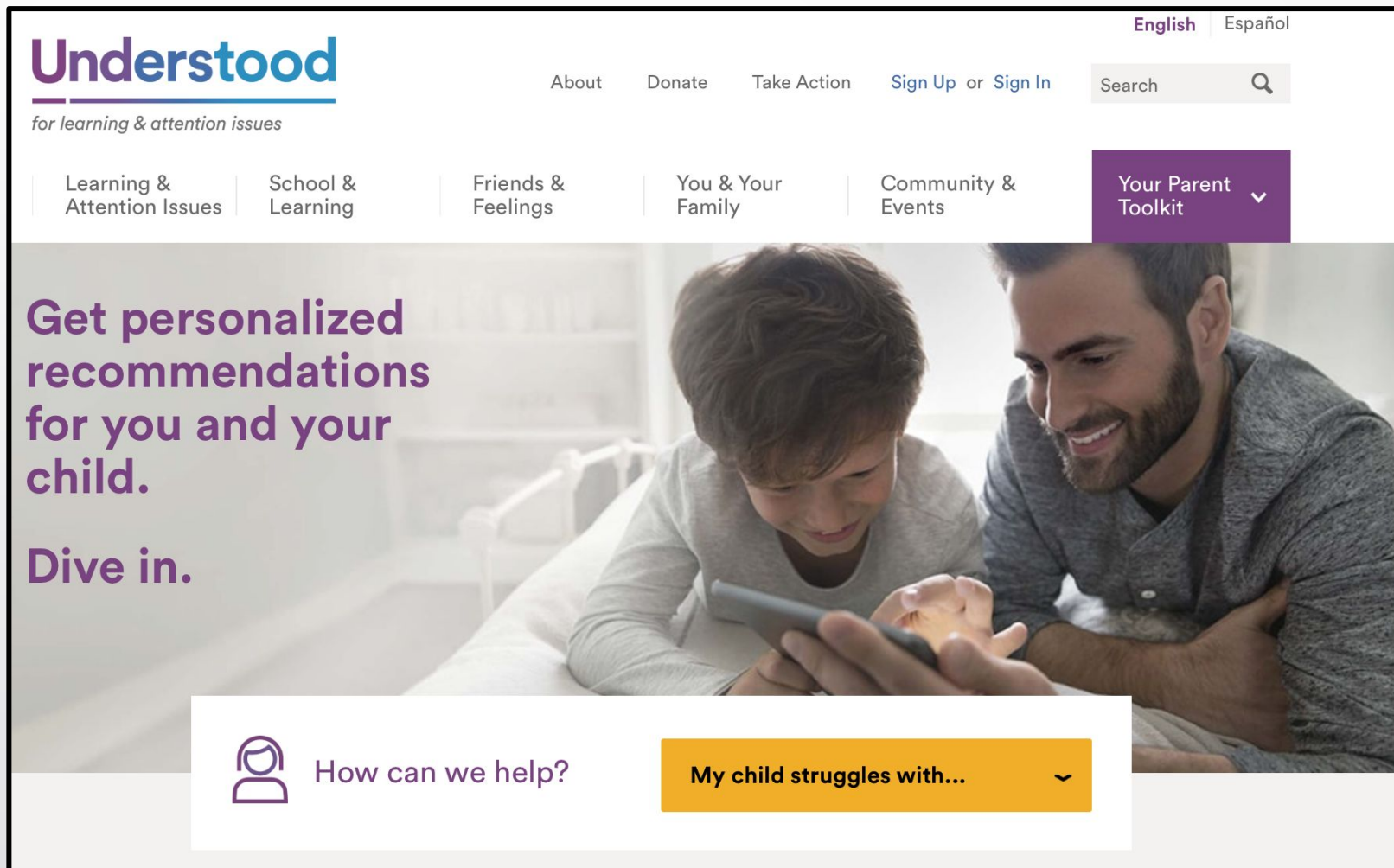


If you are concerned about your child's reading progress, consult your child's teacher.





You may find [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org) to be a helpful website.



The screenshot shows the homepage of Understood.org. At the top left is the logo "Understood" in blue, with the tagline "for learning & attention issues" below it. To the right of the logo are navigation links: "About", "Donate", "Take Action", and "Sign Up or Sign In". Further right is a search bar with the text "Search" and a magnifying glass icon. In the top right corner, there are language options: "English" and "Español". Below the navigation is a horizontal menu with five items: "Learning & Attention Issues", "School & Learning", "Friends & Feelings", "You & Your Family", and "Community & Events". On the far right of this menu is a purple button labeled "Your Parent Toolkit" with a downward arrow. The main content area features a large background image of a man and a young boy looking at a tablet together. Overlaid on the left side of this image is the text "Get personalized recommendations for you and your child." in purple, followed by "Dive in." in a smaller purple font. At the bottom of the page, there is a white box containing a purple person icon, the text "How can we help?", and a yellow button labeled "My child struggles with..." with a downward arrow.





What questions do you  
have?