

Reading is a COMPLEX Skill

Reading is a complex skill. There are higher and lower level skills. Both are necessary to become a skilled reader.

Higher Level Skills

Language Comprehension:

Vocabulary
Background Knowledge
Structure of Language

Lower Level Skills

Word Recognition :

Phonological Awareness

(The ability to hear, isolate and manipulate sounds in words.)

Decoding (Word Reading) and Encoding (Spelling)

Sight Recognition of High Frequency Words

Skilled Reading =

Fluency

+

Reading
Comprehension



What is Phonics?

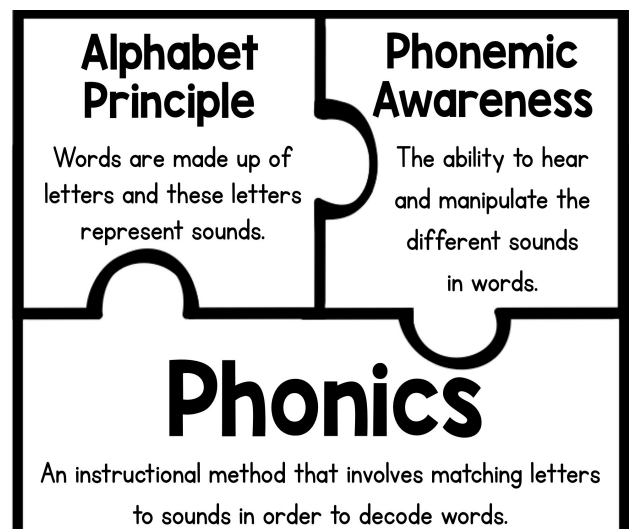
- **Phonics** is a method for teaching reading that helps students learn and understand the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.
- Skilled readers analyze patterns in new words to assist in word recognition as they read. Phonics instruction helps children develop this strategy.
- Learning new phonics skills allows your student to decode more words.
- Providing opportunities to practice phonics skills improves your student's ability to easily decode unknown words.
- 84-87% of English words follow common spelling patterns. Therefore, the majority of words can be decoded if students are given the tools to do so.

What Skills Must be Mastered *Before* Beginning Phonics Instruction?

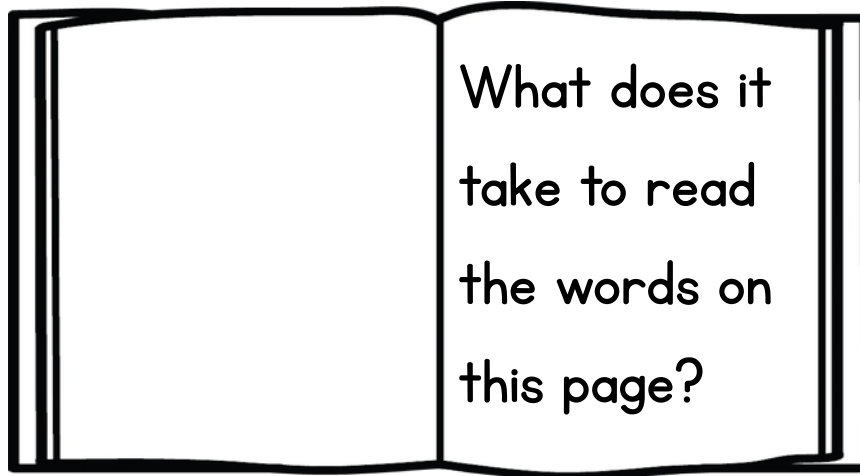
Before your student can begin phonics instruction, they must have alphabet knowledge and phonemic awareness.

- **Alphabet Knowledge:** Identify letters and sounds automatically.
- **Phonemic Awareness:** The understanding that words are made of up of individual sounds. Before implementing phonics instruction, students must be able to orally blend and segment sounds in a word. (For example, teacher says, /p/ /a/ /t/ and student blends to make "pat".)

- See page 163-164 for an assessment.



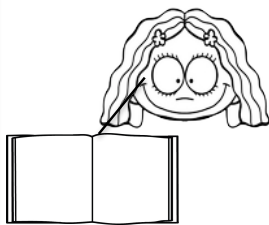
How Does Phonics Help a Reader?



Meaning: When students are using less mental energy decoding, they can focus on comprehension. They are able to make meaning of the text.



Fluency: As word recognition increases and decoding becomes more automatic, reading fluency improves.



Word Recognition: With opportunities to practice decoding words, a reader's word recognition skills improve. More words are recognized automatically.



Decoding: Reader uses phonics skills to decode unknown words by blending sounds together. With practice, they become more proficient with this process. With explicit instruction, they can apply new phonics skills to a variety of words.



Alphabetic Knowledge and Phonemic Awareness: Alphabetic symbols on a page represent speech sounds. Students must first learn these sound-symbol relationships AND develop an awareness of the sounds in words.