Ways to Support Developing Literacy at Home

PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Phonics/Morphology

Phonics is a method for teaching reading and writing which connects sounds (phonemes) with letters or groups of letters (graphemes). It helps students decode words by breaking them down into smaller parts. Decoding means using this knowledge to sound- out and read words on a page.

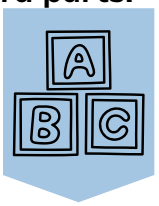
- There are 26 letters in the alphabet, but 44 sounds of speech (QR code).
- Students typically learn phonics in this continuum:
  CVC → Digraphs → Blends → CVCe → Vowel Teams → R-Controlled
- Students apply these learned phonics patterns to help them read and spell multi-syllable words.

To hear the 44 phonemes:

SCAN ME!

Morphology is studying word parts such as prefixes, suffixes, and Latin and Greek roots. Students can better decode unfamiliar words and gain a deeper understanding of language in different subjects when they understand the meaning of these word parts.

- By helping students become aware of morphemes in words, teachers can help students decode and spell words they might be unfamiliar with.
- Textbooks contain many vocabulary words composed of multiple morphemes. Strong morphological awareness skills can help students make sense of these words.



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read smoothly at an appropriate rate with proper expression.

<u>Practice reading aloud:</u>

- Help your child keep their place by tracking words with a finger or bookmark.
- Remind them to pause at punctuation.
- If they get stuck on a word, help them sound it out and reread the sentence from the beginning to build confidence and understanding.
- **Reread favorite stories:** Reading the same story more than once helps words become familiar and makes reading smoother and more expressive.
- **Timed reading:** Have your child read a short passage for one minute. Then reread the same passage to see how much they improve.
- **Echo reading:** You read a sentence or paragraph first, then your child reads the same part.
- **Read for 20 minutes each day:** Choose books your child enjoys—fun reading builds stronger readers!



Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand and make sense of what is being read, remembering details, and connecting ideas to experiences shows a child's level of comprehension.

Strong readers think actively as they read. They use their experiences and knowledge of the world, vocabulary bank, and understanding of language structure to understand the text.

<u>Ask questions like:</u>

- What is the theme or central idea of a story?
- Why did the author write this? What was the author's purpose?
- Can you cite the text evidence to support your thoughts?
- What perspective is the author writing from? How do you know?
- Interpret information conveyed through text features (graphs/charts/images).
- Describe how and when characters, the setting, conflict, and resolution change.



Ways to Support Developing Literacy at Home

PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Vocabulary

Vocabulary development is the process of learning new words and their meanings. The more words children know, the easier it is for them to understand what they read.

- Speak with your child using more advanced vocabulary and share the meaning of new words.
- **Play Games:** Games like Scrabble, Blurt, Scattegories, Mad Libs, Guess Who, Taboo, and Blurt encourage vocabulary building skills.
  - Brainstorm Synonyms & Antonyms for common words (small, tiny)& (little, huge)
  - Classify new words (adore=verb/feeling, blouse=clothing/noun)
  - Do word comparisons (it is like____, but different because_____)
  - Talk about real-life examples of new words
  - Draw pictures to represent the meaning of new words
  - Act out new words
- Read 20 minutes a day with your child



Writing & Encoding

Developing good writing skills strengthens a child's comprehension, communication, vocabulary, and spelling.

<u>Reinforce the writing process:</u>

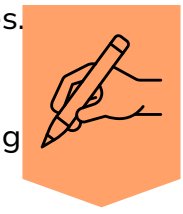
- Plan – brainstorm/share ideas
- Draft – get ideas down on paper
- Revise – make ideas clearer and stronger
- Edit – fix spelling, punctuation, and grammar

<u>Reinforce paragraph structure:</u>

- Topic sentence – tells what the paragraph is about
- Details – facts, examples, or reasons that support the topic (3-5 sentences)
- Closing sentence – wraps up the idea
  - **Focus on one idea:** Encourage students to stick to one main idea per paragraph.
  - **Add details:** Ask questions like Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

<u>Reinforce essay structure:</u>

- Introductory parargraph – introduces the topic and main idea
- Body paragraphs – each paragraph explains one idea with details (3-5 sentences)
- Conclusion – restates the main idea and wraps up the writing
  - **Give positive feedback:** Praise effort and ideas *before* correcting mistakes.
  - **Encourage rereading:** Have students reread their writing aloud to check if it makes sense.
- Edit – use correct punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar in writing for all purposes



Structured Literacy is a teaching approach grounded in the Science of Reading. It includes direct, systematic, and explicit instruction in the key areas of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics/morphology, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
This method of teaching supports all learners!