

PHONICS AND FLUENCY CONTENT GUIDE

Defining and illustrating key components of phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency.

Five Components of Reading	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics/Accuracy	Fluency/Rate	Vocabulary	Comprehension
Definition	Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.	Phonics help readers learn the relationship between letters of a written language and the sounds of spoken language. Accuracy is reading words in the text correctly with no errors. (Part of fluency)	Fluency is the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression. Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. While rate is the speed at which a person reads.	Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or those we recognize while listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.	Comprehension is the cognitive understanding and retention of information that has been read.

Phonological Awareness

Term	Definition	Examples
Phonological Awareness	Awareness of the phonological structure of words in one’s language. Encompasses awareness of individual words, syllables, onset/rime, and awareness of individual phonemes.	All phonological awareness has to do with <i>hearing</i> and <i>saying</i> sounds. Phonological awareness does not depend on ability to connect to written language.
Rhyming	Words that have the same ending sound or rime.	Cat/bat/sat; ball/fall/tall
Onset	In a syllable, the onset is the initial consonant or consonants.	“s” in “sat” “fl” in “flip”
Rime	The vowel and any consonants that follow it.	“at” in “sat” “ip” in “flip”
Syllable	A part of a word composed of common spelling patterns. Scholars need to be able to hear the multiple syllables in a word while still recognizing it as one word.	pub-lic (2 syllables) yes-ter-day (3 syllables)

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic Awareness	The ability to notice, think about, or manipulate the phonemes in a word. It’s the ability to understand that sounds in spoken language work together to make words. This is referred to the highest level of phonological awareness: awareness of the individual phonemes in words.	All phonemic awareness has to do with <i>hearing</i> and <i>saying</i> sounds. Phonemic awareness does not depend on ability to connect to written language.
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Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound within our language system. A phoneme combines with other phonemes to make words.	“s”, “a”, or “t” in “sat”
Phoneme Isolation	Recognizing individual sounds in a word	Recognizing the sound “s” in “sat” as separate from “at”
Phoneme Manipulation	Adding, deleting, substituting sounds in a word.	Ability to change “at” to “hat”, “cup” to “up”, or “back” to “bake”
Phoneme Segmentation	Separating the individual phonemes or sounds of a word into discrete units.	“sand” into its component sounds /sss/, /aaa/, /nnn/, and /d/
Blending	Combining phonemes or parts of a word into a whole word with meaning	/s/ /a/ /n/ /d/ into “sand” or /s//and/ into “sand”
Phonics		
Alphabetic Principle	The concept that letters and letter combinations represent individual phonemes in written words.	The word fan is made of sounds /fff/, /aaa/, and /nnn/
Letter-Sound Correspondence	The matching of an oral sound to its corresponding letter or group of letters	The connection that the written letter “m” makes the /mmm/ sound
Morpheme	The smallest meaningful unit of language	A morpheme could be a word (like I, or is), a root word (like “circ”, or an affix like “pre”)
Grapheme	A letter or letter combination that spells a phoneme. Can be one, two, three, or four letters in English.	e, ei, igh, eigh

Types of Phonemes		
Schwa	The vowel sound sometimes heard in an unstressed syllable and is most often sounded as the short u sound or the short i sound.	Schwa appears in “the”; it also appears when scholars say “buh” instead of /b/.
Continuous Sounds	A sound that can be held for several seconds without distortion	/a/, /e/, /f/, /i/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /o/, /r/, /s/, /u/, /v/, /w/, /y/, /z/
Stop Sounds	A stop sound can only be said for an instant, otherwise its sound will be distorted. Words with beginning stop sounds are more difficult for students to sound out than words beginning in a continuous sound.	/b/, /c/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /j/, /k/, /p/, /q/, /t/, /x/
Long Vowels	Vowels that are pronounced the same as the name of the letters representing them.	/o/ in hope is the long “o” /ai/ in rain is the long “a”

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Short Vowels	The most common pronunciation of a vowel that is not the same as the name of the letter representing it.	/a/ in /cat/
Hard Consonants	Consonants that make a Stop Sound	C in cat
Soft Consonants	Consonants that make a Continuous sound; some consonants make both a hard and a soft sound	C in face
Stops (plosives)	Consonants made by blocking the airflow to the vocal tract	/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/
Fricative	Consonants made by the friction of breath in a narrow opening	/f/, /v/, /th/, /s/, /z/, /sh/, /zh/
Nasal	Consonants made by blocking air in the mouth and releasing sound through the nose	/m/, /n/, /ng/
Glide	Consonants made by directing the air flow in the mouth rather than blocking it, where air has to flow over the tongue; continuous sounds	/wh/, /w/, /y/
Liquid	Consonants made by directing the air flow in the mouth rather than blocking it; continuous sounds	/l/, /r/
Affricate	Consonants that begin by blocking the airflow but ultimately release air	/ch/, /j/
Voiced	Consonants made with vibration in the vocal cords	/b/, /d/, /g/, /m/, /n/, /ng/, /v/, /th*/, /z/, /zh/, /j/, /w/, /l/, /r/
Unvoiced	Consonants made with no vibration in the vocal cords	/p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /th/, /s/, /sh/, /h/, /wh/, /y/
Types of Graphemes		
Useful Letter Sounds	Letters that appear frequently in words. Beginning readers can decode more words when they know several useful letters. Knowing the sounds of /m/, /a/, /t/ and /i/ are more advantageous than the sounds /x/, /q/, /y/, /z/.	/a/ in cat /s/ in sit
Digraph	A group of two consecutive letters whose phonetic value is a single sound. Can be exocentric, where the sound is different than either of the constituent letters, or endocentric, where the sound is the same as one of the letters. A digraph can also correspond to multiple phonemes.	Exocentric digraphs: /ch/, /th/ Endocentric digraphs: /bb/, /ee/ Some digraphs correspond to multiple phonemes. /ch/ says /ch/ in some words like “chicken”, and /k/ in others like “school”. /gh/ says /g/ at the beginning of a word, like “ghost”, or /f/ as in “rough”, but is silent in other words, like “sigh”.
Consonant Digraph	Two consecutive consonants that represent one phoneme or sound.	/ch/, /sh/, /th/, /gh/ as in “rough”

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Irregular Words	Words that contain letters that stray from the most common sound pronunciation; words that do not follow common phonic patterns	Were, was, laugh, been
Sight Words	Words that are recognized immediately. Sometimes sight words are thought to be irregular or high frequency words, but any word that is recognized automatically is a sight word. May be phonetically regular or irregular.	Am, the, a, them, etc.
CV, VC, VCC, CVC, CCVCC (etc.)	Different ways of describing the makeup of vowels and consonants in a regular word.	go, an, apt, bat, speck

Word Parts

Word Parts		
Multisyllabic Words	Words with more than one syllable.	Af/ter; port/a/ble
Compound Words	A word made up of two different words	Shoelace, playground
Structural Analysis	A procedure for teaching students to read words formed with prefixes, suffixes, or other meaningful word parts.	Naturally: the root word nature, suffix -al (meaning like), suffix -ly (in a way that) In a way that's like nature
Affix	A general term that refers to prefixes and suffixes.	un-, dis-, ex-, -able, -less
Prefix	A morpheme that precedes a root and contributes to or modifies the meaning of a word.	pre-, re-, semi-, sub-
Suffix	An affix attached to the end of a base, root, or stem that changes the meaning or grammatical function of the word.	-ity, -ment, -ness, -ship

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Root/Base Word	A bound morpheme that cannot stand alone, but is used to form a family of words with related meanings.	Photo (light), circ (round), biblio(book)
Contraction	A combination of two words with an apostrophe that has the same meaning as those two words, in an abbreviated version	It is → it's Will not → won't

Fluency Terms

Automaticity	The ability to decode or recognize words automatically and without much effort. A reader who can decode with automaticity does not have to stop and sound out a word.	
Prosody	Reading with expression, proper intonation, and phrasing. This helps readers to sound as if they are speaking the part.	
Chunking/ Scooping: Phrasing	The process of dividing a sentence into smaller phrases where pauses might occur naturally.	Jean and I/went to the store/to get pineapples.
Intonation	Changing the pitch (rise and fall) of one's voice.	Did YOU see the MOvie?
Stress	The emphasis placed on a syllable or a word, which helps distinguish parts of speech and meaning.	<i>You</i> dropped the glass! You dropped the <i>glas</i> s! <i>Permit</i> (verb) vs. <i>permit</i> (noun)
Expression	Reading with feeling or in a way that demonstrates understanding of the text.	
Punctuation	Marks within a text that suggest phrasing or expression to the reader.	Period, comma, question mark, exclamation mark, dash