



The Science of Reading

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Dear Families,

This year you will be hearing a lot about the Science of Reading. The Science of Reading refers to research that has been done over the last 20 years by neuroscientists and educational researchers. The research demonstrates one common way that everyone learns to read. Although we all learn to read at our own pace, the way our brains read is the same for all. With the research finally being implemented, you will begin seeing shifts in the instructional strategies that may be different than what you are used to. As educators it is our job to provide your child with the best education possible. To do this, we will begin making the shifts necessary to ensure every child is getting research based instruction to get them reading!

The shifts may be new to you, but are necessary. Please have patience with your teachers, administrators, and selves as we all work to improve how we teach our students to read.

This informational packet outlines some of the terminology and shifts that you will begin seeing.

COMMON TERMS

Phonemes: smallest unit of sound represented by a letter(s). There are 44 phonemes in the English language.

Graphemes: the letter(s) that represent a phoneme. For example p = /p/ sh = /sh/

Phonemic awareness: an awareness of and ability to work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in words. For example, a child needs to know how to take the sounds /m/ /a/ /t/ and blend them together to say 'mat.'

Phonological awareness: the ability to hear, manipulate, and identify any sound heard in spoken language. These pieces of sounds can be rhymes, syllables, or phonemes.

Phonics: the relationships between letters and their sounds. This can be as simple as the letter 'p' representing the /p/ sound, or the letters 'igh' representing the long i sound, like in the word 'light.'

Fluency: the ability to read easily, quickly, accurately, and with expression. The greater a child's fluency is, usually the better their comprehension is.

Vocabulary: Knowledge of words, phrases, and their meanings. Vocabulary knowledge helps children improve their comprehension.
Comprehension - The ability to understand a text, both what is literally stated in the text and by making inferences or thinking critically. Comprehension is the end goal of reading!

Word mapping: the process of breaking down a word into its phonemes and writing the graphemes that represent the phonemes.

Heart words: words that have a tricky part that is memorized 'by heart.'

Decoding is a child's ability to look at the letters & words on a page and turn them into spoken language.

Language Comprehension is a child's ability to understand the meaning of words and speech.

The 109 Power Words

The 109 Power Words have taken the place of what you have known for years as sight words. There are multiple reasons for this shift, the biggest being that students need to learn how to decode words rather than memorize them. If students only memorize 10 words in kindergarten, they will only know 10 words. However, if kindergarten students are taught to decode CVC words such as got, then they are able to read around 100 words or more (the English language has over 105 CVC words alone).

TYPES OF WORDS

Regular words: have completely predictable and easily decodable spellings

- get
- like
- it

Irregular words: contain one or more surprise spellings

- was
- said

Temporarily irregular words: have regular spellings that are more advanced than the child knows at this point in time. *Not technically irregular, just surprising to kids.

- be
- that

HEART PARTS

Parts of words that are 'tricky' and must be memorized by heart until reaching the age where it is appropriate to teach the skill

saidi



109 Power Words by Frequency

1	*the	21	be	41	which	61	into	81	made	101	get
2	*of	22	this	42	their	62	has	82	over	102	through
3	*and	23	from	43	said	63	more	83	did	103	back
4	*a	24	I	44	if	64	her	84	down	104	much
5	*to	25	have	45	do	65	two	85	only	105	before
6	*in	26	or	46	will	66	like	86	way	106	go
7	*is	27	by	47	each	67	him	87	find	107	good
8	*you	28	one	48	about	68	see	88	use	108	new
9	*that	29	had	49	how	69	time	89	may	109	write
10	*it	30	not	50	up	70	could	90	water		
11	*he	31	but	51	out	71	no	91	long		
12	*for	32	what	52	them	72	make	92	little		
13	*was	33	all	53	then	73	than	93	very		
14	on	34	were	54	she	74	first	94	after		
15	are	35	when	55	many	75	been	95	words		
16	as	36	we	56	some	76	its	96	called		
17	with	37	there	57	so	77	who	97	just		
18	his	38	can	58	these	78	now	98	where		
19	they	39	an	59	would	79	people	99	most		
20	at	40	your	60	other	80	my	100	know		

*Asterisk indicates one of 13 words making up 25-50% of all words in children's texts

	Short Vowels (VC, CVC, CCVC, CVCC)
	Short Vowels with Digraphs
	Long Vowels (V, VCe, VV)
	R-Controlled Vowels
	Other Vowel Patterns
	Less-Regular Spellings (Single Syllable)
	Multisyllabic Words





Decodable Books

The Science of Reading has shown educators that children best learn to read when they are given decodable books. You may also hear these called 'phonics books' or 'decodable readers.' These books are written especially for beginning readers. The authors carefully limit the kinds of words that are included in a decodable book. This way, the child can use what they've learned about phonics to successfully read the book. Just because a book is labeled a decodable book does not necessarily mean that your child can read it, however. Teachers choose decodable books that match your child's current level of phonics knowledge. If you need help finding appropriate books for your child to read at home, reach out to your child's teacher (Learning at the Primary Pond).

HOW TO HELP MY CHILD DECODE

Discuss letters from speech to print.

- Instead of saying z says /z/, ask your child what letter represents the /z/ sound.

Segment words to build phonemic awareness

- Say the word cat out loud
- Ask your child to tap each sound /c/ /a/ /t/
- Ask your child how many sounds are in the word (3)
- Use the word cat in a sentence

When you listen to your child read, encourage them to sound out words.

- Don't ask them to use the pictures to guess at words.

When your child asks you how to spell a word, see if they can figure it out by breaking the word up into its individual sounds

- sheep' -> /sh//ē//p/)

More Ways to Help Your Child At Home

Vocabulary

*Talk to your child. Children whose parents talk to them often and for extended periods of time tend to have larger vocabularies.

*Read aloud books to your child that would be too difficult for them to read on their own.

Discuss words they may not know.

*Use high level vocabulary words in your daily interactions

- Instead of saying "it is time to clean up." Say "it is time to tidy up."

Comprehension

Ask your child questions as you read.

- Who are the characters?
- Where is this story taking place?
- What happened at the beginning of the story? Middle? End?
- Was there a problem in the story? If so, how was it solved?

Make connections to the story.

- For example, if you are reading a story about the zoo, talk about a time when you and your family went to the zoo.

Indiana Learning Lab

Sign up for an account in the Indiana Learning Lab [Parent Hub](#)

This site is packed with resources for parents/guardians, as well as educators.

Reading Rockets

Check Out [Reading Rockets](#)

This site has researched based practices around each of the 5 pillars of reading.