

The 5 Big Ideas of Beginning Reading

Comprehension is the goal of reading. We use the other four big ideas to build up to reading comprehension. This can start with listening comprehension for pre-readers and readers who are still learning how to decode.

Phonemic Awareness



The ability to identify and play with individual sounds in spoken words. Practice blending phonemes prepares students to read words, and practice segmenting phonemes prepares them to spell words.

Phonics



Understanding how letters and groups of letters link to sounds to form letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns. It involves learning letter-sound correspondences and common spelling patterns. Phonics supports decoding and spelling and leads to fluent reading.

Vocabulary



Knowing what words mean and how to say and use them correctly. Many word meanings are learned through reading, but before students can read text on their own, vocabulary can be taught through oral language interactions and reading books aloud.

Fluency



The ability to read words, phrases, sentences, and stories correctly, with enough speed and expression. When decoding skills become automatic, students can more easily focus their attention on understanding words and text. Fluency is the bridge to comprehension.

Reading Comprehension



The ability to understand what you are reading. In addition to vocabulary and fluent reading of text, reading comprehension requires background knowledge, understanding sentence and text structures, monitoring understanding, and connecting ideas.