

TrainUp

Literacy



WITH ALYSSA GANDY



5

Understanding the

PILLARS of READING

A Blueprint of the Reading Process

PILLAR 1 Phonological Awareness InSTRUCTION

• What is it?

- Phonemic awareness (PA) instruction develops one's ability to notice, think about, and identify individual sounds and groups of sounds in spoken words.

• Why is it important?

- It is important because beginning readers need to be able to identify and recognize specific and individual sounds when decoding ("sounding-out" and "blending") new and unfamiliar words.

• Example:

- When changing the word "hit" to "sit," a child recognizes that the beginning sound /h/ changes to the new sound /s/. The child also recognizes that the middle and ending sounds remain the same.

• Practical strategies to use at home or "on the go":

1. Challenge your child to identify and recite rhyming words! See how many they can list.
2. "Clap-out"¹ the syllable sounds in different words, starting with familiar words. Give your child a word to clap-out on their own, and ask them, "How many sounds do you hear?"
3. Ask your child to identify beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words. Make sure they are telling you the sound and NOT just the letter name.

PILLAR 2 Phonics InSTRUCTION

• What is it?

- Phonics instruction develops one's ability to recognize the relationship between written letters and spoken sounds. This is called word recognition. Phonics instruction emphasizes the idea that there are systematic and predictable relationships between letters and sounds which support word recognition.

• Why is it important?

- It is important because young readers must have an alphabetical framework in order to successfully recognize and read words automatically and accurately.

• Example:

- A child recognizes that the letter "m" makes the sound /mmm/ and the letters "ea" sometimes make the long vowel sound /ee/ like in "leaf" or "flea" and other times makes the short vowel sound /e/, like in "head" or "thread."

• Practical strategies to use at home or "on the go":

1. Sort words with similar beginning, middle, or ending sounds. Have your child make a written list of the similar words.
2. Play "Go Fish"² by creating home-made flashcards with 3x5 index cards.
3. Create and complete "Word ladders"² together.

Vocabulary Instruction

• What is it?

- Vocabulary instruction emphasizes the importance of both the meaning and pronunciation of words with which we use to communicate. Vocabulary instruction occurs through indirect, every-day experiences as well as direct, explicit instruction.

• Why is it important?

- It is important to expand a child's vocabulary because young readers use the words they have heard and familiarized to make sense of the words they see in print.

• Example:

- A child comes across the word "hat" in a book that they are reading. After figuring out the sounds represented by /h/ /a/ /t/, the child soon discovers that those three sounds make up a familiar word that they have heard and said many times.

• Practical strategies to use at home or "on the go":

1. Play the game "I am Thinking of a Word." ³
2. Read and create your own ABC books, using words that start with each letter of the alphabet! You can read picture books, or you and your child can create your own!
3. Categorize similar words into groups (fruits, colors, sports, animals).

Fluency Instruction

• What is it?

- Fluency instruction stresses the importance of reading words accurately, smoothly, quickly, and with expression.

• Why is it important?

- It is important because it allows readers to make connections between the text and their own background knowledge, acting as the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (which is the ultimate goal of reading!).

• Example:

- Instead of reading a story in broken-up, word chunks (Brown/ bear/ brown/ bear/ what/ do/ you/ see)?, a child read's the story in meaningful phrases (Brown bear/ Brown bear/ What do you see?!).

• Practical strategies to use at home or on the go:

1. Participate in "echo reading" with your child. First you read a phrase or sentence modeling good fluency, then you ask your child to repeat the same phrase with the same expression and intonation.
2. Recite poetry or songs with your child, modeling fluent reading and speaking.
3. Visualize the story by creating your own pictures. This will help your young reader to see the characters and actions more clearly, reminding them of how the story goes.

PILLAR 5

ComPREhension InSTRUCTION

• What is it?

- Comprehension Instruction focuses on making meaning from words. Comprehension occurs when readers use their background knowledge and experiences to make sense of the text that they are reading.

• Why is it important?

- It is important because it is the center of reading. If a reader can decode and recognize words in a text but cannot understand them, then they aren't truly reading.

• Example:

- A reader who comprehends has a purpose for reading and is able to make a cognitive connection to the text. They can make different types of connections such as a text-to-text connection, text-to-self connection, or a text-to-world connection. When a child can **self-monitor** their reading (that is, they can identify when they do not understand the words, concepts, or ideas that they are reading) then they are engaged in true comprehension.

• Practical Strategies to Use at “home or on the go”:

1. Challenge your child to identify and recite rhyming words! See how many they can list.
2. Clap-out the syllable sounds in different words, starting with familiar names. Give your child a word to clap-out on their own, and ask them, “How many sounds do you hear?”
3. Ask your child to identify beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words. Make sure they are



I hope you enjoyed this “Reading Process Blueprint.” As the title states, this resource is designed to be a brief overview of the reading process.

You can find more literacy resources, tips, support and encouragement by subscribing to my email list and visiting:

TrainUpLiteracy.com



Additional Resources

1. How to “Clap Out” words

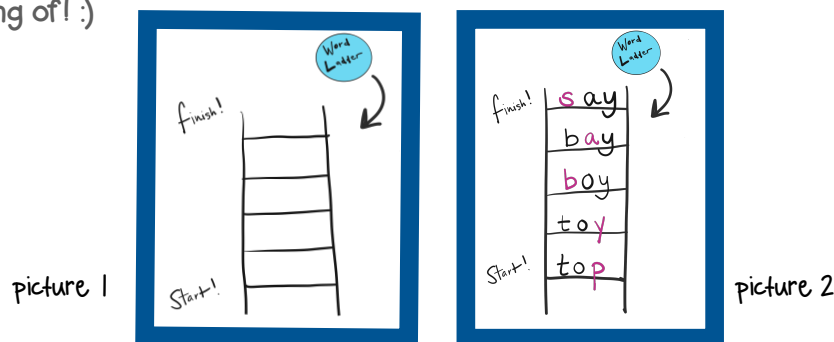
- Choose a word with however many letters/syllables you would like (start with simpler words first!) Model for your child how to clap out the words by clapping your hands together for every sound or syllable (depending on your focus.) For example, when clapping the sounds in word “cap,” you would clap after each sound, /k/ *clap /a/ *clap /p/ *clap. When clapping the syllables in the word “window” you would clap after each syllable -win- *clap -dow- *clap.

2. How to Play Phonics “Go Fish”

- This game can be found in Karen Tankersley’s [Threads of Reading](#). Write sight words (two of each word) on a deck of 3x5 index cards. If you are not sure which words to use, click here for a list of [Dolch Sight Words \(By Grade Level\)](#). Deal 5 or 6 cards to each player. Your child can begin the game by asking if you have the pair to their card by describing the word by its sounds (phonetically). For example, to match a card with the word “bee,” your child might say, “Do you have a card that has a long ‘e’ sound that rhymes with “tree?” If you do not have such a card, then simply reply with “Go Fish” and your child takes a card from the deck. Take turns and play until all of the cards have been paired. :)

3. How to Create and Complete “Word Ladders”

- Word ladders are an amazing tool, I absolutely LOVE using them with my students. They are easy to create and can be completed almost anywhere! To create a word ladder simply sketch a ladder on a piece of paper (see picture 1). Once you have created the ladder, simply choose a starting word and change one letter-sound each time you have your child write a new word (see picture 2)! To use word ladders as a game, simply give your child a “hint” for every new word, and see if they can figure out how to correctly manipulate the letters to create the new word you are thinking of! :)



3. How to Play “I am Thinking of a Word”

- Find a word around the room, and then say, “I’m thinking of a word that starts with a d.” Your child will then guess the word that they think you have in mind. Your child continues to guess until they successfully guess the right word. To play it in a different way, you or your child can write the word on a whiteboard, and then provide the other player with “clues” about the word. You can also play this word in a ‘hangman’ format. Write the correct amount of spaces on a piece of paper or white board, and have your child guess the letters that are in the word. When the child guesses incorrectly, add a characteristic to your “hangman” stick figure!

TERMS and DEFINITIONS

The academic terms and definitions found below were taken and adapted from Tankersley's [Threads of Reading](#) and The National Reading Panel's free downloadable PDF, [Put Reading First](#).

1. **Comprehension:** Understanding what one is reading; the ultimate goal of all reading activity.
2. **Decoding:** The ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound symbol correspondences; also the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out.
3. **Explicit Instruction:** Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher's language is concise, specific, and related to the objective. Another characteristic of explicit instruction is a visible instructional approach which includes a high level of teacher/student interaction. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work.
4. **Fluency:** Ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression while understanding what the text says.
5. **Phonemic Awareness:** The ability to notice, think about, or manipulate the individual phonemes (sounds) in words. It is the ability to understand that sounds in spoken language work together to make words. This term is used to refer to the highest level of phonological awareness: awareness of individual phonemes in words.

Don't hesitate to send me an email at alyssa@trainupliteracy.com
if you have any questions or curiosities!
I would love to hear from you.

Cheers,

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