

The Fundamentals of Reading Glossary

The Science of Reading relies heavily on years of research that include the importance of word recognition and comprehension. Expand your knowledge of these key terms related to literacy, reading, and linguistics with this glossary.

Alphabetic principle	The understanding that words have letters and letters have sounds.
Background knowledge	The information one already has about a topic that helps them make meaning of their reading.
Decoding	The understanding of how a print and a book works, from reading left to right, to turning pages from front to back.
Fluency	The reading of text accurately, at an appropriate pace, and with proper expression.
Grammar	The system and structure (or, rules) of a language.
Grapheme	A written symbol that represents a sound (k, c, ck, ch).
Lexicon	A dictionary of a language.
Morphemes	The smallest unit that has meaning (or, base words).
Morphology	The study of words and their parts.
Oral language skills	The expression of ideas, knowledge, and feelings, developed through speaking and listening.
Orthography	The written conventions of a language, including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and more.
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound (/k/).
Phonemic awareness	The awareness of individual sounds and the ability to manipulate those sounds.
Phonics	A method for teaching the association of letters and sounds in order to read and spell words.
Phonological awareness	The awareness of sounds that make up a word.
Phonology	The system of sounds within a language.
Print concepts	The understanding of how a print and a book works, from reading left to right, to turning pages from front to back.
Reading comprehension	The ability to read text, process and understand it.
Semantics	The meanings of words and the relationships between words.
Spelling	The knowledge of sounds and letters to write words correctly.
Syntax	The structure of words in a sentence.
Vocabulary	The comprehension of words and their meanings.