

PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Phonological awareness addresses the sounds of language. It does not teach the symbols that represent the sounds, but rather the sounds alone.

Instruction in phonological awareness includes the following:

Word Awareness

Word awareness is the knowledge that words have meaning. Students with word awareness can discriminate individual words in a passage read to them. Beginning readers must have this skill before they can extract meaning from what they read. For example, a student needs to know that the spoken word *dog* represents a creature that has four legs and barks before he or she can understand what is meant by the printed word *dog*.

Rhyme Awareness

Rhyme awareness is the understanding that certain word endings sound alike, and therefore contain the same sounds, such as the short /a/ and /p/ sounds in *cap* and *map* or the long /i/ and /t/ combination in *flight* and *kite*.

Onset and Rime

Onset is the initial consonant in a one-syllable word. Rime includes the remaining sounds, including the vowel and any sounds that follow. For example, in *kite* the /k/ sound is the onset, and the /ite/ sound is the rime.

Syllable Awareness

This is the recognition that words are divided into parts, each part containing a separate vowel sound. A student with syllable awareness can identify *bat* as one syllable and *batter* as two syllables.

Phonemic Awareness

This is the student's awareness of the smallest units of sound in a word. It also refers to a student's ability to segment, blend, and manipulate these units. A student with phonemic awareness hears three sounds in the *bat*; /b/, /a/, and /t/.

The National Reading Panel's findings focus on the phonemic awareness aspect of phonological awareness. Phonological awareness helps students learn to read and spell. The most effective instruction quickly moves the student from awareness of a particular sound to an association of that sound with a letter symbol. The best results occur when instruction focuses on one or two phonemic manipulations at a time, rather than three or more manipulations.