

Parents'

Guide to

Reading





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# Introduction

Helping your child with their education at home is hard. Very hard. As parents, we're often left wondering how to help and even worry that our own understanding of literacy and education isn't strong enough to help our children.

## But that doesn't have to be the case.

We've put together this pack to help you understand more about literacy and reading and the things we can do at home to help.

It's not simple — there are some difficult concepts approached. But with focus and time, we can all begin to understand more about how our children learn to read and develop literacy, and hopefully improve our own literacy in the process.

We passionately believe in immersive development of children's brains. We know that youngsters learn when they're living life, when they're engaged, when they're curious — and when they're happy and supported.

This pack will give you the opportunity to develop your own understanding of literacy learning, with countless practical activities and handy tips along the way.

But this is only the start. There are so many ways you can get involved and a variety of tools to help you develop reading and literacy at home.

## Accessing teacher training - How do teachers teach?

As parents, we often wonder how our children are taught to read in school. What techniques do teachers use? How do teachers help our children with vocabulary development and comprehension? What training do teachers receive to teach our children? How can we use these techniques ourselves to connect literacy in school and at home?

**Now you can find out.**



Free  
courses

Along with this pack, you can ask your school for **FREE** access to three literacy teaching courses. These courses are:

- Explicit Vocabulary Instruction
- Effective Strategies for Learners with Dyslexia
- Phonics at Secondary

Each course will take you through three crucial areas of literacy instruction, giving you the exact same training your child's teacher receives.

By studying these courses, not only will you develop and improve your own understanding of reading and literacy, but you'll also begin to connect the dots between literacy at home and in school.

To gain free access to these three vital literacy courses, ask your child's school for **free access** or attend an upcoming parents' evening.

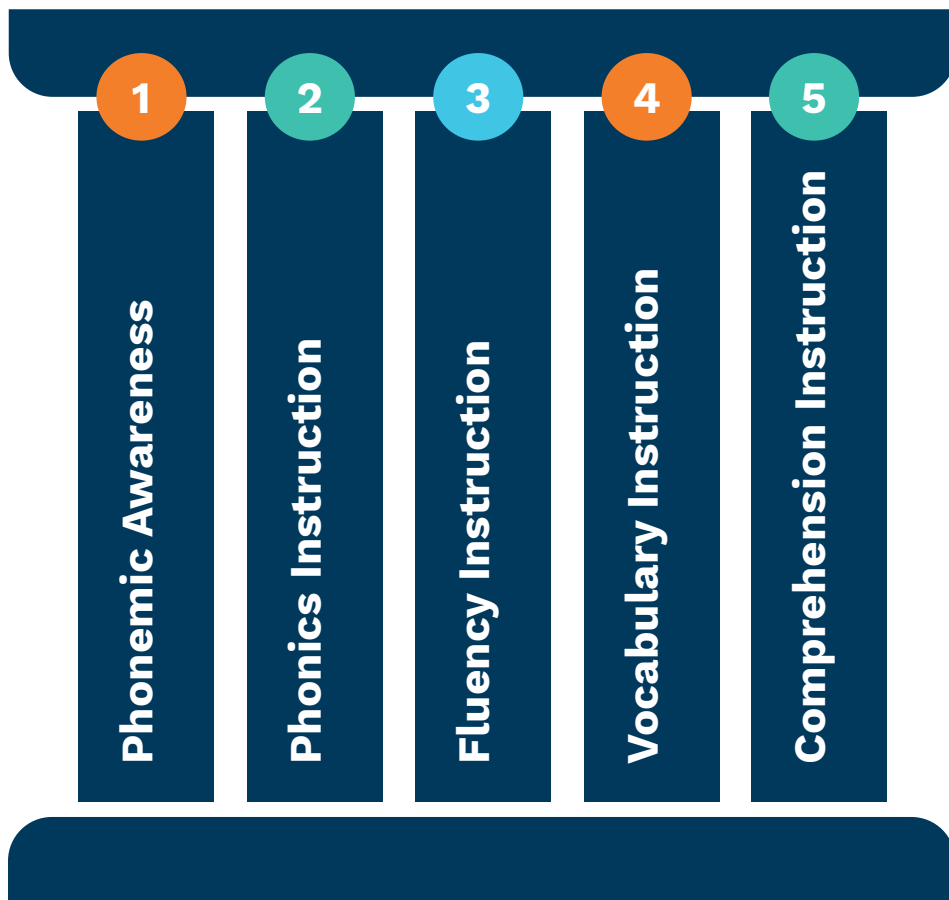
# 1

## Section 1

# How do people learn to read?

“The 5 Pillars of Reading” is an easy-to-follow guide that explains how all people learn to read. Throughout this booklet, we will explore the five pillars of reading and how we can support our children to develop their reading skills at home.

### The 5 Pillars of Reading





## Pillar 1

# Phonemic Awareness

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound – like /m/ in the word mat.

We initially learn to read through our ears, rather than our eyes. We have to hear and be surrounded by the sounds of the language we speak before we are presented with the letter forms.



*Read out loud to your child.*

## Top tips to develop phonemic awareness at home:

**Read out loud** to your child

**Read poems and rhyming books** to help your child hear the sounds and patterns in our language

**Use letter sounds** — not letter names — when spelling things out loud

**Practice** using pure letter sounds

**Play a game** that involves deleting phonemes in words, like this:

Adult: Can you say snail? s/n/ai/l

Child: Snail — s/n/ai/l

Adult: Can you take away the //n/?

Child: S/ai/l — sail

**Ask**, “What sounds can you hear in...?” and have your child tell you the sounds, like this:

Adult: What sounds can you hear in bat?

Child: Bat – b/a/t

## Pillar 2

# Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction usually starts in school, and it's the instructional step that teaches children to match the sound to the way it is written down. This is called phoneme to grapheme correspondence.

There are roughly 44 sounds (phonemes) in the English Language, which are represented by 26 letters (graphemes).



*Don't worry about the language and vocabulary of phonics. Use the glossary in this pack to help you.*

## Top tips to develop phonics at home:



Make it fun!



### Make it fun

- Don't stress about phonics and put too much pressure on yourself and your child

### Fast, focused, repetitive

- Break activities into small chunks of no more than 10 minutes
- Repeat the same activities until your child is confident. This is called over learning
- Use stopwatches and timers to add fun and challenge into the activities

### Find the sound

- Adult says a phoneme
- Child has to find an item in the home or outside that begins with that sound

### Make a book

- Make one page for each sound
- Have your child cut pictures from magazines and newspapers and glue them to the correct page. For example, a picture of a tomato would go on the "t" page

### Sound Sorting

- Put together a random collection of items – e.g., sock, peg, spoon, cup
- Ask your child to sort the items into groups of matching sounds





**On the beach, use your fingers to draw a grapheme in the sand**

#### **Draw a sound**

- On the beach, use your fingers to draw a grapheme in the sand
- In the woods, collect sticks to arrange in the shape of a grapheme
- In the park or yard, run around in the shape of the letters
- Anywhere, draw the letters in the air

#### **Manipulate the sounds**

- Ask your child to say simple words such as “mat”
- Child repeats the word
- Ask your child to say “mat” without the “m”
- Child’s response should be “at”
- Ask your child to say the word “mat” again
- Then ask your child to say ‘mat’ without “t”
- Child response should be “ma”
- Use lots of three letter words before moving on to words containing initial and end blends

#### **Find the grapheme**

- Write graphemes on pieces of paper and place around the room/house/yard/park
- Call out the phoneme and see how quickly they can find the correct grapheme

#### **Read aloud to your child and revisit familiar stories time and time again**

- Choose lots of books that contain great rhythm and rhyming throughout
- Read and re-read this type of book; get them to fill in the missing words when you pause

#### **Use letter sounds — not letter names**

- As soon as letters and letter shapes are introduced again, emphasize the importance of using letter sounds not letter names



Email: [steve.ruder@lexonik.com](mailto:steve.ruder@lexonik.com)  
Visit [www.lexonik.com](http://www.lexonik.com)

[lexonik.com](http://lexonik.com)