

Reading for Meaning

Decoding and **Comprehension** are the main components in the process of reading.



The early reading skill of decoding enables us to match sounds to symbols (**phonics**) and to blend sounds into words (**phonemic awareness**). We also need to develop a bank of **sight words** – words we can't sound out eg “was”.

However unless we understand what we are decoding we are not reading.

When we **comprehend** we are using:

- the sum of our background experiences,
- our understanding of the meaning of words (vocabulary) and,
- our ability to read fluently.

As students develop as readers their fluency improves. **Fluency** depends upon the ability to read words without having to sound out and to recognise sight words. Some students in Years 1-3 have “Sound and Read” charts for homework each week. This is to develop the skills of decoding and fluency. Fluency impacts upon comprehension because readers can focus on the meaning of the ‘whole’ text rather than on decoding individual words.

Important to comprehending is an increasing **vocabulary**. Children build basic vocabulary through oral language and by being exposed to the rich vocabulary of books in which they encounter words that are not used in everyday language.

Things to do:

- Pick up any picture book and discover the creative use of language.
- Have fun with the rhyme and rhythm of the book.
- Talk about the unusual words and what they mean.
- Talk about the characters in the book
- What is the setting?
- What is the story problem?
- How is the problem solved?
- Why did a character act in a certain way?

Most importantly enjoy the experience of reading to and reading with your children.

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