



Springfield Public Schools Para Educators' Literacy Session

Empowering ALL Educators to Strengthen Literacy

October 28, 2025

Literacy Department



Laura Mendes,
Director of Literacy

About Me:

- Proud to have served SPS since 1991.
- Love to travel and spend time with my family.
- Passionate about ensuring every child is a reader!

Kate Asher,
Supervisor of Literacy, Elementary &
Early Childhood Education



About Me:

- Dedicated over 20 years (and still counting!) in SPS.
- Family of four, 3 of us work with Springfield Public Schools ♥
- Enjoy spending time outside- hiking, reading, running, travelling, & being at the beach.



Carole Leverock, Elementary
ELA Instructional Leadership
Specialist (ILS) at DeBerry School

About Me:

- Love to travel with my husband and son. Lots of time in Europe in the summers.
- Avid reader. I've been in the same book club for decades.



Lorilee Cabrera-Donovan,
District Elementary
ELA Instructional Leadership
Specialist (ILS)

About Me:

- Love to read and write for pleasure and work.
- Ask me about my amazing family. Lots of adventures with my husband, daughter, and son!



Agenda

4:15-7:15 (break is 7:00-7:15)



Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review, Norms, Objectives



Activator



Part 1: Overview of Literacy and the SPS Context



Part 2: Reading



Connection Activity (Brain break)



Part 3: Writing



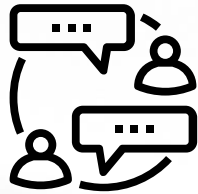
Mutual Agreements



Be fully present and participate



Listen carefully to one another



Share the air & take turns



Be curious, kind, and have an open mind



Our Four District Priorities

“Believe It, Be It”

Improving Student Outcomes through Strategic Planning



Early Literacy Development

All students are proficient readers by Grade 2.



Middle School Transformation

Students demonstrate improved outcomes and increased engagement.



College & Career Readiness

Students graduate with the knowledge and skills for success.



Post-Secondary Success

Students are thriving in college, careers, and vocations.

PreK to Post-Secondary

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District Instructional Prioritization Plan

District Priority:

Educators will teach foundational literacy skills by intentionally planning with evidence-based, High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) to prepare students for mastery of the grade-level standards. Educators across all grades will leverage the embedded instructional approaches within the HQIM and use data to inform targeted small-group instruction for student mastery toward developing grade-level literacy skills. The district and schools will progress monitor with a variety of tools to focus on K-3, grade 6, and grade 9, with an emphasis on exceptional students and multilingual learners.



This or That?



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This or That?

LOBSTER



EGGPLANT PARMESAN



LENTIL BOLOGNESE

(vegan)



STEAK & POTATOES



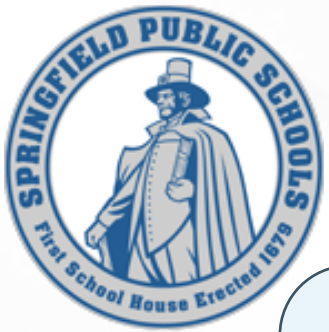
Select your favorite dish of these four choices.



This or That?

Discuss this prompt with one of your foodie partners...

If you were not in education, what would be your chosen profession?



This or That?

POP



HIP HOP/ RAP



Select your
favorite
genre of
music.

ROCK



COUNTRY





This or That?

Discuss this prompt with one of your music genre partners...

What personal activity do you do to bring yourself joy?



Part 1: Overview of Literacy



Definition of Literacy: **International Literacy Association**

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines (from the International Literacy Association).



Springfield Public Schools

Portrait of a Graduate



"I have the academic knowledge and skills to critically understand the world, form opinions, and solve problems."

COMMUNICATE



"I listen to others and convey ideas with respect, openness and clarity."



"I practice resilience, self-awareness, and advocacy to navigate challenges and new situations"



"I can independently navigate the world as an empathetic and respectful adult."



"I will lead with confidence, empathy and kindness in my family, my community, in Springfield, and beyond."



"I can identify and pursue career pathways that empower and sustain me."

The Springfield Public Schools and the Springfield Community will prepare students to:

- Master and apply the academic content knowledge and skills essential for success in college, vocation, or service.
- Think critically, be innovative, and solve real-world problems.
- Understand the impact of systemic racism in America.
- Apply technology and computational skills to advance learning and solve problems.
- Find and analyze all kinds of information and critically evaluate each source.
- Understand themselves as learners and pursue learning throughout life.

- Write and speak with clarity, evidence, and purpose.
- Communicate ideas with confidence that their voice can and should be heard.
- Select an appropriate communication style and platform for the situation and audience.
- Know how to listen to others, ask questions, and seek to understand.
- Practice thoughtful responses to others in all communication.

- Remain focused on goals, using coping strategies and flexibility to overcome obstacles.
- Speak up for themselves and the issues that are important to them.
- Engage in self-reflection to build on strengths and work on weaknesses.
- Evaluate choices and outcomes when making decisions.
- Give, receive, and respond to constructive feedback.

- Understand, respect and communicate with people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- Care for themselves, and navigate the challenges of everyday life.
- Understand financial systems and manage personal finances.
- Nurture healthy and rewarding relationships at home, school and beyond.
- Manage time and resources to achieve goals.
- Identify interests, passions, and purpose, and envision possibilities for the future.
- Prioritize and implement long and short term goals.

- Engage in difficult conversations to address conflict and solve problems.
- Actively oppose bias, discrimination and racism.
- Advocate for themselves and for others.
- Seek opportunities to understand and serve the community.
- Be curious, creative, open-minded and flexible in new situations.
- Lead with empathy and kindness.
- Actively participate in democracy and vote as an informed citizen in local and national elections.

- Make connections between their interests and possible career opportunities.
- Understand and obtain the education and training required to enter and advance in their chosen career.
- Know how to adapt and seek new opportunities as the workplace changes.
- Practice essential workplace habits and attention to detail to produce quality work in any environment.
- Collaborate with others on diverse teams to achieve shared goals.



High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIMs) aligned to the Science of Reading (SOR) and Knowledge Building

SPS provides evidence-based, structured literacy and *knowledge building* instruction that is based on the Science of Reading (SOR) and the Science of Learning (SOL). Literacy instruction occurs during the literacy blocks of reading and writing where oral language, phonological & phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing are the foci. Building knowledge in all subject areas is a goal. Not one HQIM alone provides all that is needed in literacy instruction. The use of high-quality resources in the hands of knowledgeable and skilled educators is critical.



ELA Statement



DIRE & PoG

In Springfield Public Schools, we know that we must:

- provide literacy instruction using high-quality instructional materials that are developmentally appropriate, evidence- and research-based, and that meet students where they are as learners.
- ensure all students experience educational equity that includes instruction with grade-level standards.
- provide resources and experiences that honor our students as individuals and as members of cultural groups who contribute to and bring richness to our schools and our community.
- provide access to diverse and accurate texts and experiences that support our students learning about themselves and others in our diverse community and world.

LEARN



COMMUNICATE



PERSIST



THRIVE



LEAD



WORK

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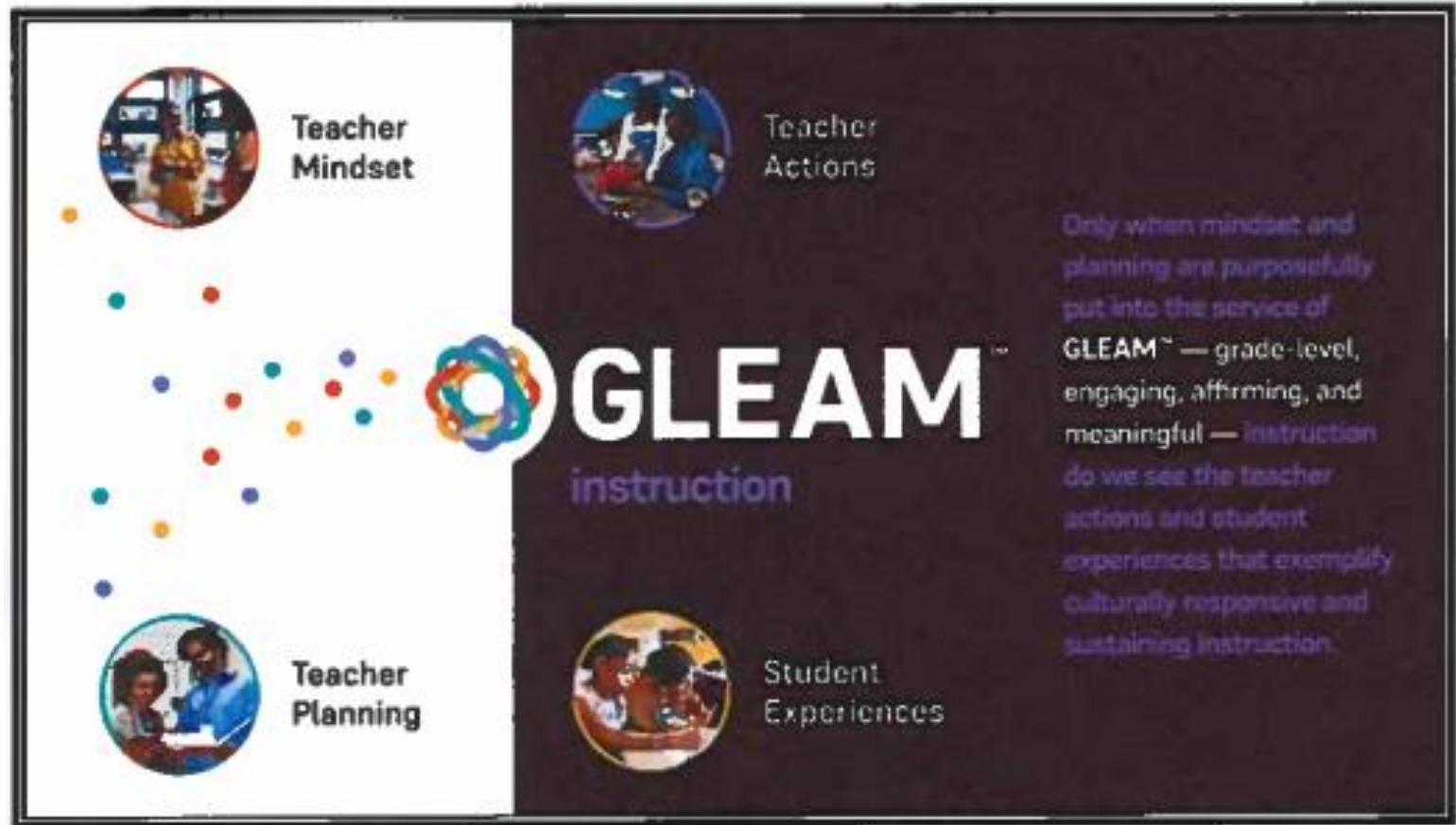


GLEAM Work Makes the Dream Work!

Believe!

Before you can GLEAM, you have to BELIEVE!!

- Essential question: **“Do you believe in the students in front of us?”**
- If we do not believe that our students are capable of engaging with complex tasks or texts, then it doesn't matter what's included in our curriculum, rubric, or strategies toolbox.





Believe!

Literacy Rates



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Literacy Rates



54%

54% of adults between the ages of 16 and 74 years old lack proficiency in literacy.
(Reading below a 6th grade level)



\$2.2 trillion

If all U.S. adults were able to move up to at least Level 3 of literacy proficiency, it would generate an additional \$2.2 trillion in annual income for the country, equal to 10% of the gross domestic product.



125th

The US ranks 125th out of 194 other countries in literacy rate.
(Percentage of the population over 15 who can read and write)



65%

65% of American 4th Graders do not meet NAEP standards.



66%

2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the 4th grade will end up in jail or welfare.



Impact of Lower Literacy Rates

- Students who start kindergarten behind form the largest group of dropouts, and they have less than a 12 percent chance of attending a 4-year university.
 - Limited experiences with books
 - Speech and hearing problems not addressed appropriately
 - Poor phonemic awareness
 - Developmental delays left untreated
- 1 in 4 children in America grow up without learning to read
- Lower literacy is related to poverty, poorer physical and mental health, chronic diseases, and shorter life expectancy.



Who Can Learn to Read?

Believe!



Most students can learn to read ***if*** we teach them with proven, evidence-based approaches.

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A Little Bit about Springfield Public Schools (SPS)



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Literacy Journey in SPS

SPS was a Whole Language/Balanced Literacy district for about 3 to 4 decades.

During these latter years, we did incorporate some elements of explicit-systematic early literacy approaches (e.g., *Reading First*) for phonics and phonemic awareness but was not successful because of the huge emphasis here and across most of the country with Balanced Literacy/guided reading.

Data indicated we weren't serving most kids well with our approaches (think *Sold a Story*, *The Right to Read*).

We started shifting our K-2 reading approaches with the use of materials from the Collaborative Classroom just before COVID hit, as our data indicated changes were NEEDED, and we were learning more about The Science of Reading.



Literacy Journey in SPS continued

As we were making these shifts, that only address one or two components of structured literacy, we were also studying the body of work known as the “Science of Reading (SOR)”.

We continue to message that SOR/Structured Literacy is NOT only phonics and phonemic awareness.

LETRS – more than half of our elementary schools are participating in professional development with the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling



Part 2: Reading



Objective – Reading Session



Para Educators will learn how students learn to read and how they can support that instruction.



Do Kids Naturally Learn to Read?

- The brain is hardwired to learn language. But it is not hardwired to learn to read. Learning to read requires the brain regions to correspond with different cognitive skills.
- Some children learn to read easily no matter what the methods used in school. But that some is a very small number.

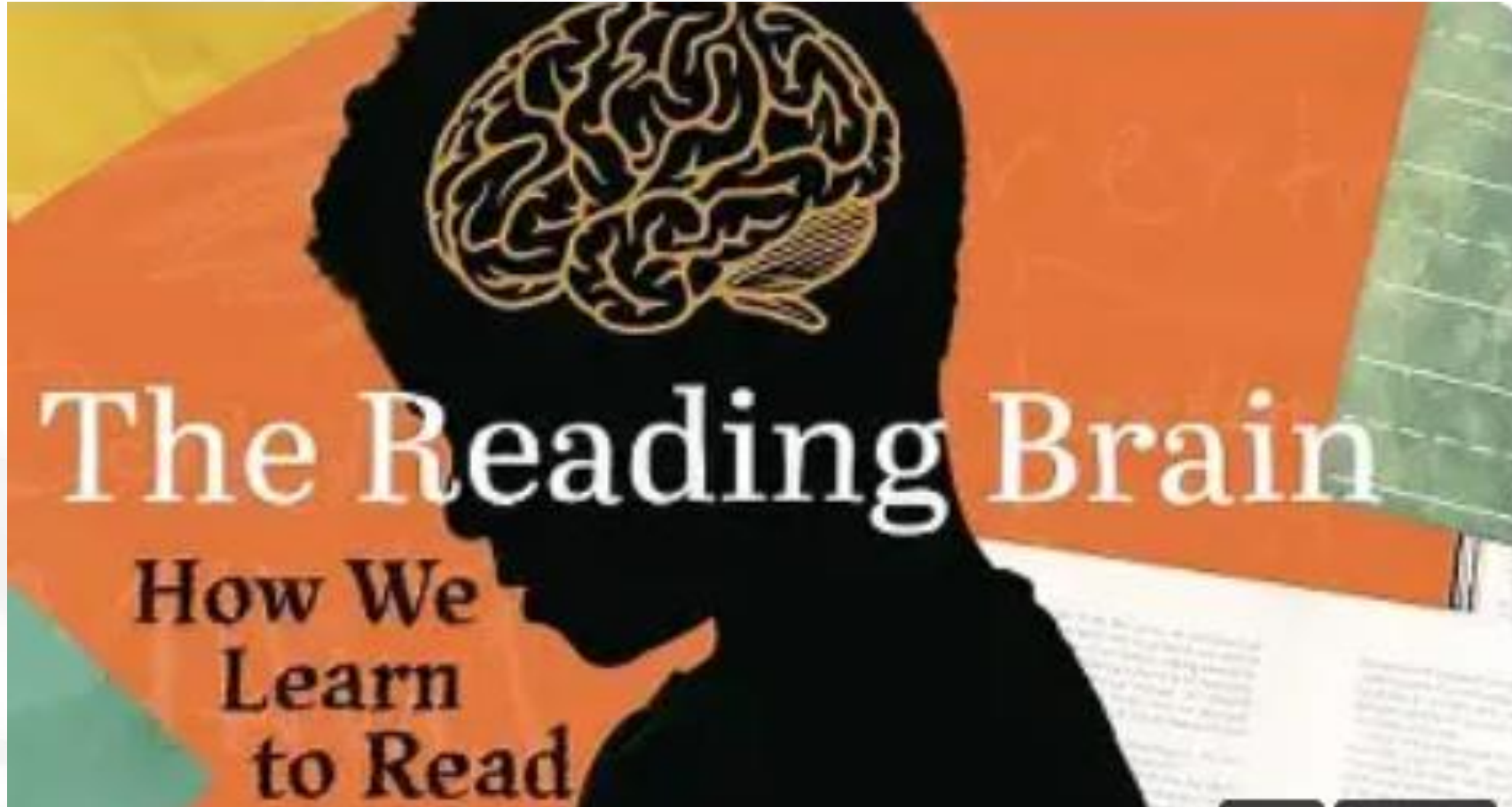
How Do Kids Learn to Read?

- With a structured literacy approach



The Reading Brain. How We Learn to Read. Hill Learning Center

Believe!

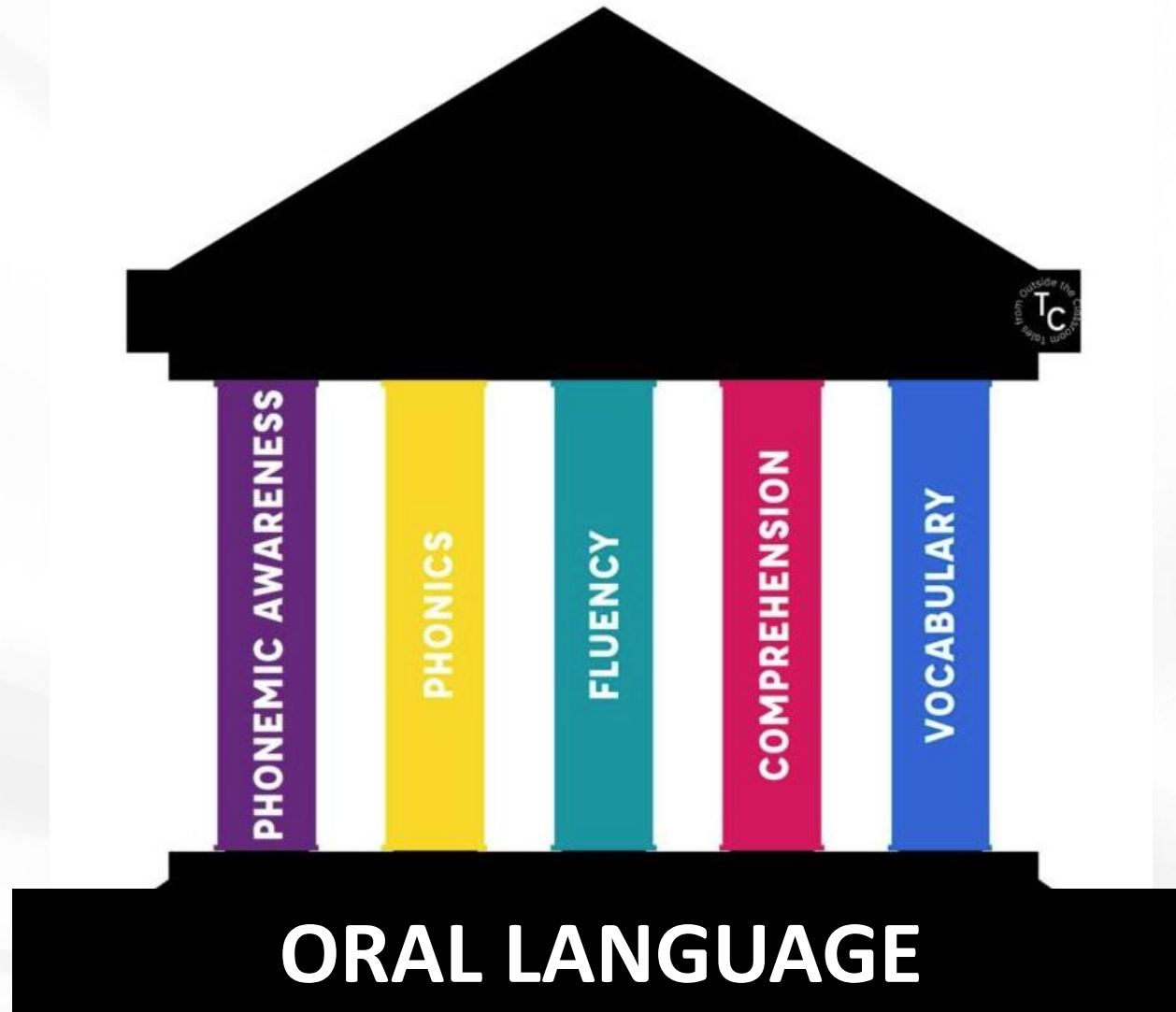


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Five Pillars of Reading

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Five Pillars of Reading



- **Phonemic Awareness** is the ability to recognize and manipulate individual sounds in words, which are called phonemes. Children can demonstrate phonemic awareness by blending, segmenting, and substituting sounds in spoken words.
- **Phonics** is the understanding that letters represent spoken sounds. Once students begin to put those sounds together, they begin decoding words with more ease. Decoding takes much practice.



Five Pillars of Reading, continued



- **Fluency** is the bridge between decoding and comprehension. When a child can read fluently, they no longer focus on decoding words and are able to focus on accurately reading words, reading with a reasonable speed, appropriate expression, and comprehension.
- **Vocabulary** knowledge is crucial to understanding what you're reading. There are many ways in the classroom to develop vocabulary.
- **Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading!** Students need background knowledge, word knowledge skills and vocabulary in order to make sense of what is being decoded.



Oral Language as the Foundation



- **Phonemic Awareness**—Oral language is the bedrock for phonemic awareness because it's through listening and speaking that children first encounter and internalize the sounds of their language
- **Phonics**- Oral language provides the foundation for phonics by developing a child's **phonological/phonemic awareness**, which is the understanding of the sound structure of spoken language. Phonics, in turn, builds on this by connecting those sounds to written letters (graphemes).
- **Fluency**—Children with a rich oral language background develop expressive reading, with more natural rhythm and phrasing.
- **Vocabulary**- Conversations, storytelling, and listening grow a child's vocabulary, which is a strong predictor of reading success.
- **Comprehension**- If a child understands spoken language, they have the cognitive framework to understand written language once they can decode it.



Believe!

The Simple View of Reading



Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990



SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY

(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE

(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING

(inference, metaphor, etc.)

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE

(print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING

(alphabetic principle,
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION

(of familiar words)

THE MANY
STRANDS
WOVEN INTO
SKILLED
READING

INCREASINGLY STRATEGIC

INCREASINGLY AUTOMATIC

**SKILLED
READING**

Fluent execution
and coordination of
word recognition and
text comprehension.

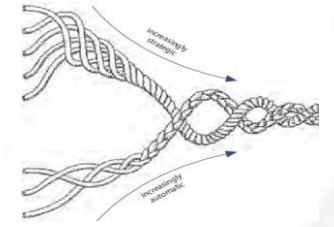
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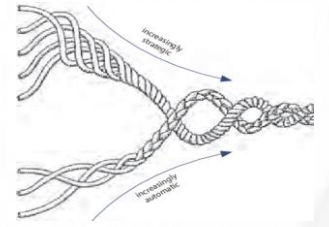
Language Comprehension



- **Language Comprehension (Upper Strands):** These strands become increasingly strategic and focus on making meaning from text.
- **Background Knowledge:** The reader's prior knowledge about topics, concepts, and the world. The more a student knows about a subject, the easier it is to understand text related to that subject.
- **Vocabulary:** An extensive and rich understanding of word meanings, both orally and in print. A strong vocabulary is essential for comprehending the meaning of a text.
- **Language Structures:** Understanding of grammar, syntax (sentence structure), and semantics (how word choice creates meaning). This allows readers to understand how sentences are constructed and how they convey information.
- **Verbal Reasoning:** The ability to analyze text, understand figurative language (like metaphors and idioms), draw inferences, and make conclusions. This involves deeper thinking about the text.
- **Literacy Knowledge:** Knowledge about print concepts, text structures (e.g., narrative, informational), and genres. This helps readers navigate different types of texts and understand their purpose.



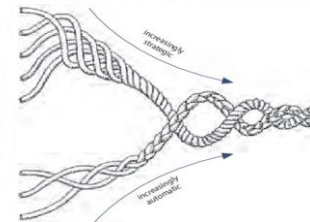
Word Recognition



- **Word Recognition (Lower Strands):** These strands become increasingly automatic with practice and focus on the mechanics of reading words.
- **Phonological Awareness:** The ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds in spoken language. This includes skills like identifying rhymes, counting syllables, and, most importantly, phonemic awareness (the ability to hear, isolate, and manipulate individual sounds, or phonemes, within words).
- **Decoding:** The ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships (phonics) to correctly pronounce written words. This involves understanding the alphabetic principle and systematic phonics instruction.
- **Sight Recognition:** The ability to quickly and automatically recognize familiar words without having to decode them. This process, also known as orthographic mapping, allows words to be stored in long-term memory for instant retrieval, which is crucial for reading fluency.



Interconnectedness



LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

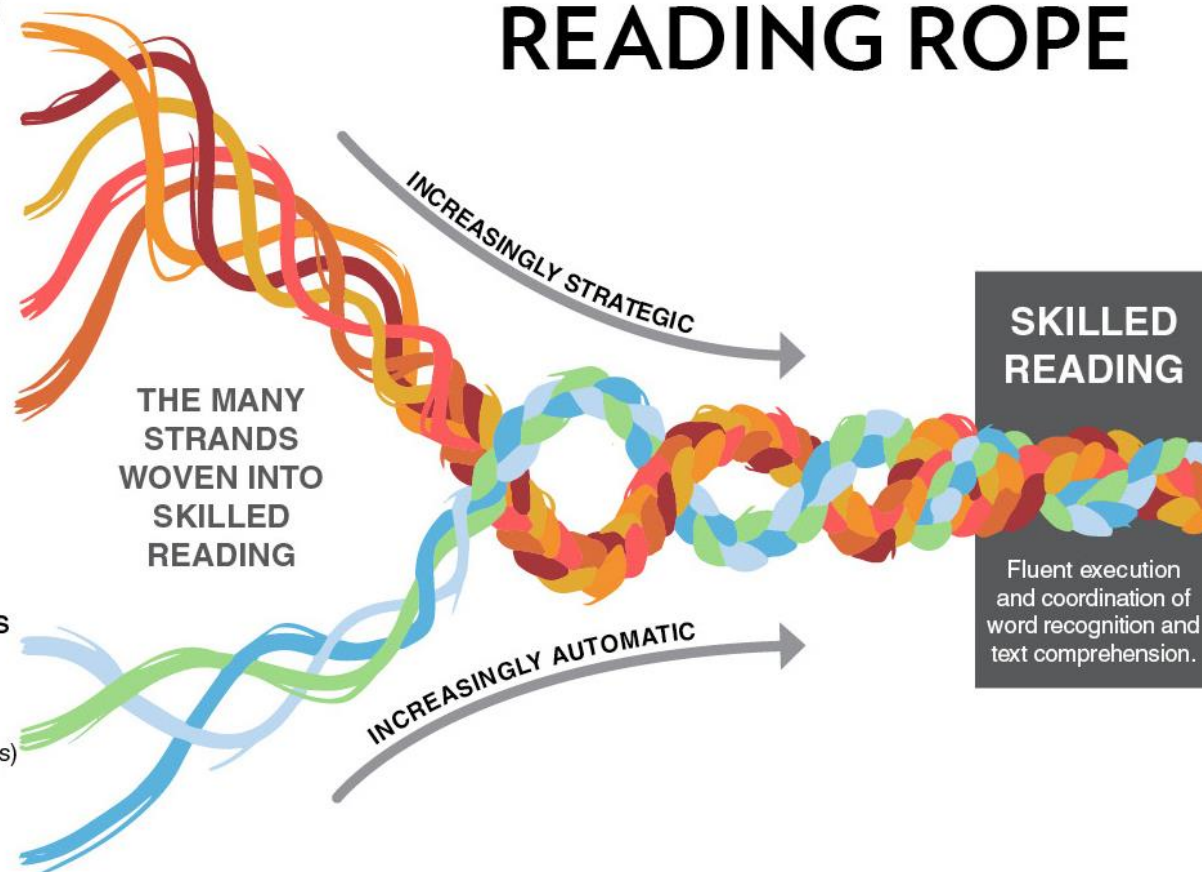
WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING
(alphabetic principle,
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)

SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE



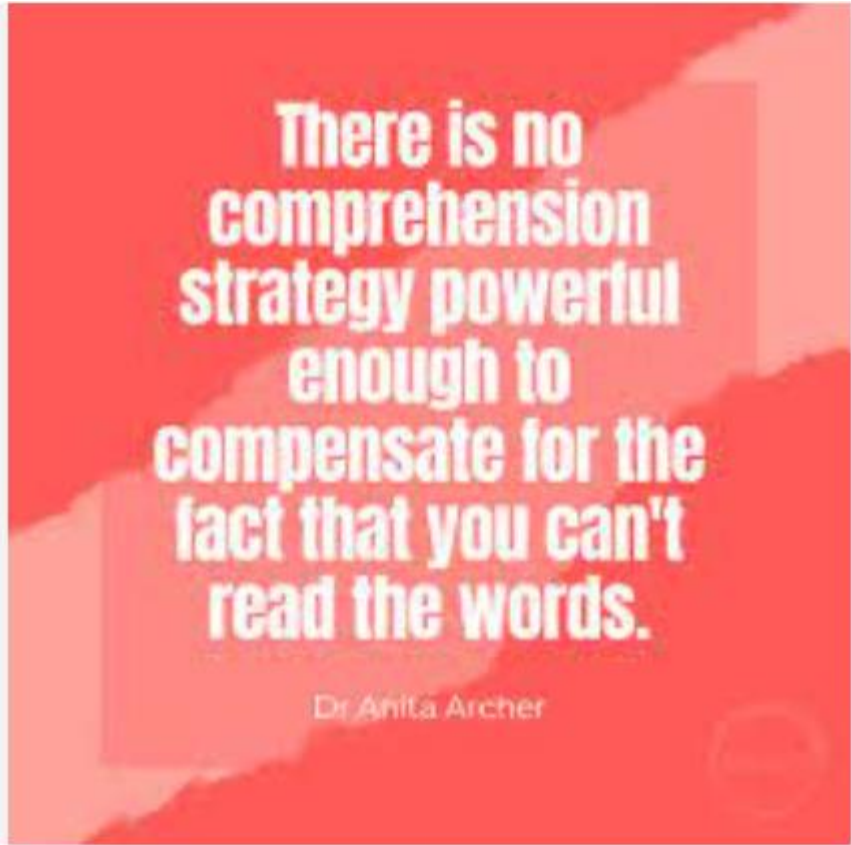
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Graphic modeled after the illustration from the *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, by Susan B. Neuman and David K. Dickinson (2001) who re-envisioned researcher and author Hollis Scarborough's visual metaphor of the Reading Rope.

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Believe!





Articulation

44 Phonemes from Rollins Center for Language

[44 Phonemes – YouTube](#)

Phonogram chart from Logic of English

[Phonogram Chart \(logicofenglish.com\)](http://logicofenglish.com)



More resources

- [Phoneme Articulation from Literacy How](#)
- [Center For the Collaborative Classroom](#)
- [UFLI Blendable Sounds: A Quick Review - YouTube](#)



Spelling Rules from the Logic of English

[Spelling Rules \(logicofenglish.com\)](http://logicofenglish.com)



Logic of English Spelling Rules

Rule 1: C always softens to /s/ when followed by E, I, or Y. Otherwise, C says /k/.

Rule 2: G may soften to /j/ only when followed by E, I, or Y. Otherwise, G says /g/.

Rule 3: English words do not end in I, U, V, or J.

Rule 4: A E O U usually say their long sounds at the end of the syllable.

Rule 5: I and Y may say /i/ or /i/ at the end of a syllable.

Rule 6: When a one-syllable word ends in a single-vowel Y, it always says /i/.

Rule 7: Where I and Y may say long /ē/:

- 7.1: Y says /ē/ only in an unstressed syllable at the end of a multi-syllable word.
- 7.2: I may say /ē/ with a silent final E, at the end of a syllable, and at the end of foreign words.

Rule 8: I and O may say /i/ and /ō/ when followed by two consonants.

Rule 9: AY usually spells the sound /ā/ at the end of a base word.

Rule 10: When a word ends with the phonogram A, it says /ā/. A may also say /ā/ after a W or before an L.

Rule 11: Q always needs a U; therefore, U is not a vowel here.

Rule 12: Silent Final E Rules:

- 12.1: The vowel says its long sound because of the E.
- 12.2: English words do not end in V or U.
- 12.3: The C says /s/ and the G says /j/ because of the E.
- 12.4: Every syllable must have a written vowel.
- 12.5: Add an E to keep singular words that end in the letter S from looking plural.
- 12.6: Add an E to make the word look bigger.
- 12.7: TH says its voiced sound /TH/ because of the E.
- 12.8: Add an E to clarify meaning.
- 12.9: Unseen reason.

Rule 13: Drop the silent final E when adding a vowel suffix only if it is allowed by other spelling rules.

Rule 14: Double the last consonant when adding a vowel suffix to words ending in one vowel followed by one consonant only if the suffix is stressed.

**This is always true for any syllable's words.*

Rule 15: Single-vowel Y changes to I when adding any ending, unless the ending begins with I.

Rule 16: Two I's cannot be next to one another in English words.

Rule 17: Tl, Cl, and Sl are used only at the beginning of any syllable after the first one.

Rule 18: SH spells /sh/ at the beginning of a base word and at the end of the syllable. SH never spells /sh/ at the beginning of any syllable after the first one, except for the ending -ship.

Rule 19: To make a verb past tense, add the ending -ED unless it is an irregular verb.

Rule 20: -ED, past tense ending, forms another syllable when the base word ends in /d/ or /t/. Otherwise, -ED says /d/ or /t/.

Rule 21: To make a noun plural, add the ending -S, unless the word hisses or changes; then add -ES. Some nouns have no change or an irregular spelling.

Rule 22: To make a verb 3rd person singular, add the ending -S, unless the word hisses or changes; then add -ES. Only four verbs are irregular. (has, does, goes, is)

Rule 23: AL- is a prefix written with one L when preceding another syllable.

Rule 24: -FUL is a suffix written with one L when added to another syllable.

Rule 25: DGE is used only after a single vowel which says its short (first) sound.

Rule 26: CK is used only after a single vowel which says its short (first) sound.

Rule 27: TCH is used only after a single vowel which says its short or broad sound.

Rule 28: AUGH, EIGH, IGH, OUGH. Phonograms ending in GH are used only at the end of a base word or before the letter T. The GH is either silent or pronounced /t/.

Rule 29: Z, never S, spells /z/ at the beginning of a base word.

Rule 30: We often double F, L, and S after a single, short or broad vowel at the end of a base word. Occasionally other letters also are doubled.

Rule 31: Schwa Rules

- 31.1: Any vowel may say one of the schwa sounds, /ŭ/ or /i/, in an unstressed syllable or unstressed word.
- 31.2: O may say /ŭ/ in a stressed syllable next to W, TH, M, N, or V.
- 31.3: AR and OR may say their schwa sound, /er/, in an unstressed syllable.



Additional Resources for SOR

- [Reading | APM Reports](#) – Emily Hanford (What the Words Say, At a Loss for Words, Hard Words, Hard to Read, Sold a Story series of 6 episodes and 2 bonus pieces)
- [Science of Reading: The Podcast - Early Literacy Resources | Amplify](#)
- [Voyager Sopris Learning Podcasts](#) (Edview 360 podcast series)
- [Home | MLL \(literacypodcast.com\)](#) – Melissa and Lori Love Literacy podcast)
- [Podcast - Knowledge Matters Campaign](#)





Believe!



Educating To Empower



Believe!



Connection

Educating to Empower



Activator – Would You Rather? Line Dancing

1. Would you rather have the ability to see 10 minutes into the future or 150 years into the future? Why?





Activator – Would You Rather? Line Dancing

2. Would you rather have telekinesis (the ability to move things with your mind) or telepathy (the ability to read minds)? Why?





Activator – Would You Rather? Line Dancing

3. Would you rather team up with Wonder Woman or Captain Marvel? Why?





Activator – Would You Rather? Line Dancing

4. Would you rather be forced to sing along or dance to every single song you hear? Why?





Part 3: Writing



Objective – Writing Session



Para Educators will learn how students learn to write and how they can support that instruction.



Believe!

Reading and writing
cannot be
separated.
Reading is
breathing in;
writing is
breathing out.

-- Pam Allyn



@thinkrsd

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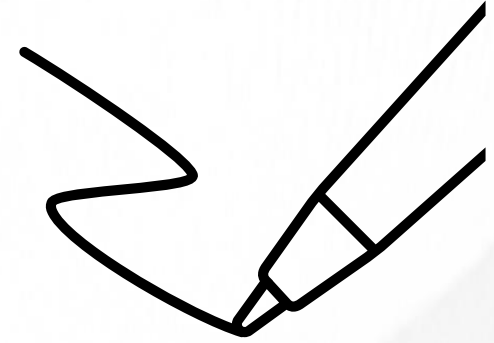


Writing and Reading Benefit Each Other

"...the effort of writing nurtures better command of language. Because writing is slow and deliberate, there is time to consider word choice, try different ways of conveying ideas, and evaluate the impact of words on an audience. We use more complex sentence structures and formal ways of expression in writing than in speaking." (Moats, Tolman, LETRS 2019)



Discussion



- What's the last thing you wrote (before this session)?
- Why did you write it?
- Who was it for?



Purposes for Writing

To entertain, to inform, to persuade, or to ask a question

- Texts
- Memos
- Emails
- Reports for work
- Blog Posts
- Web Pages
- Online Content
- Book
- Article
- Note



Believe!



Educating To Empower



Write A Statement or Question About This Picture



Educating To Empower

Believe!



Write A Statement or Question About This Picture



What were some of our statements/questions?

- Both boys are enjoying each other's company and making plans for the weekend.
- Are they in school or at home?
- I wonder what was said to make him smile.
- The children are siblings, and it's Christmas morning. The whisperer said, "Santa came." And the girl saw presents.
- The child with curly hair is saying something funny to his friend.



Prompt: Write a short story about these two children. Give details about what happened before, during, and after this moment.



What were some of our statements/questions?

- Both boys are enjoying each other's company and making plans for the weekend.
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Inspirational Authors

Believe!

Interviews with Children's Authors and Illustrators | Reading Rockets

Alma Flor Ada | Reading Rockets



Jacqueline Woodson | Reading Rockets



Educating to Empower



Learning to Write:

- Need to learn how to manually form letters that represent language
- Need to learn to control form, size, spacing and directionality
- Need to remember information while making decisions on spelling, word choice,, sentence structure and organization
- Need to plan, goal set, monitor progress towards a goal, and shift attention throughout the task.
- Need to keep writing in the face of distractions and frustration

Taken from LETRS, Vol.2, Moats and Tolman



Believe!

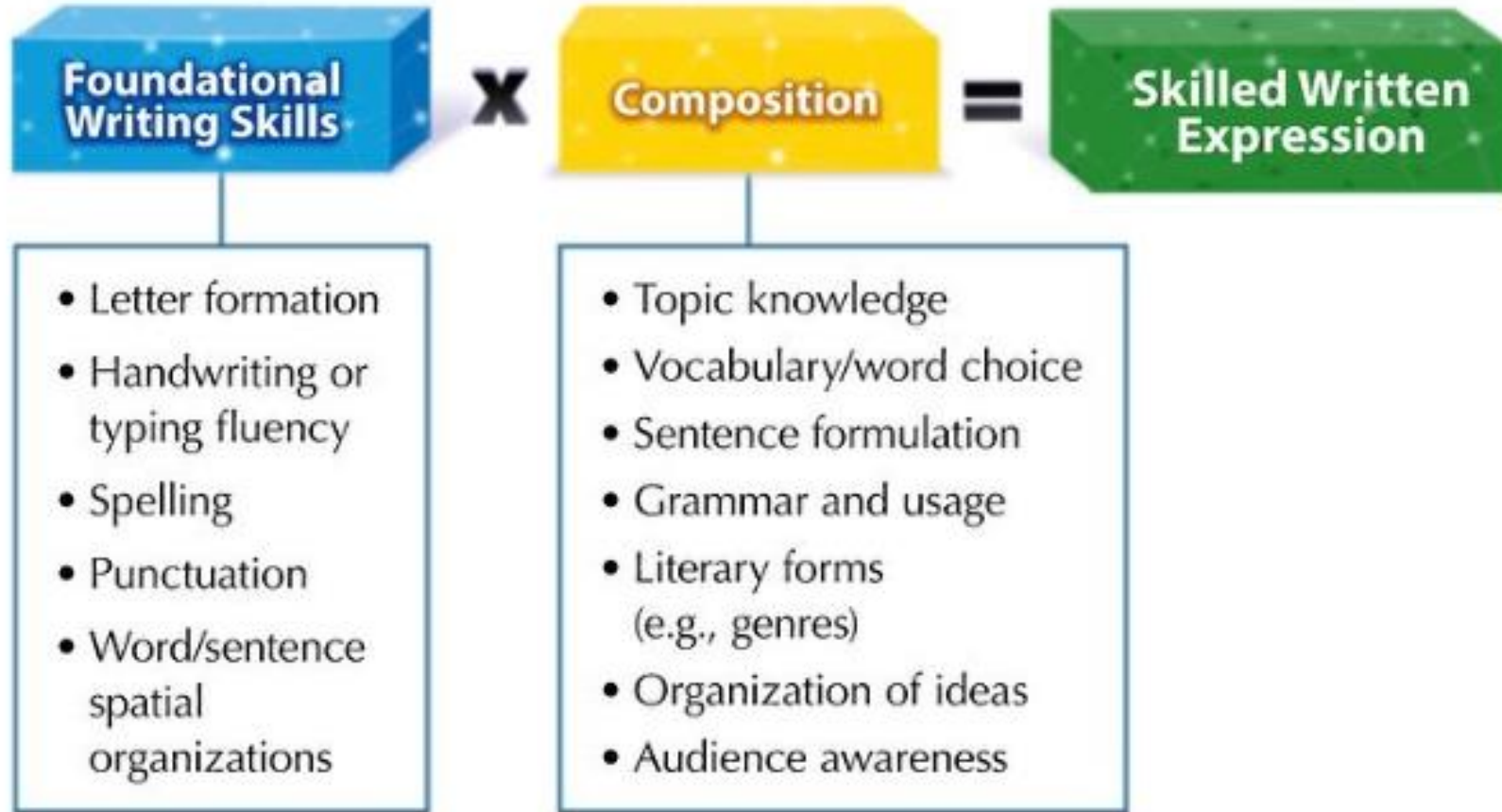
The Simple View of Reading



Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990



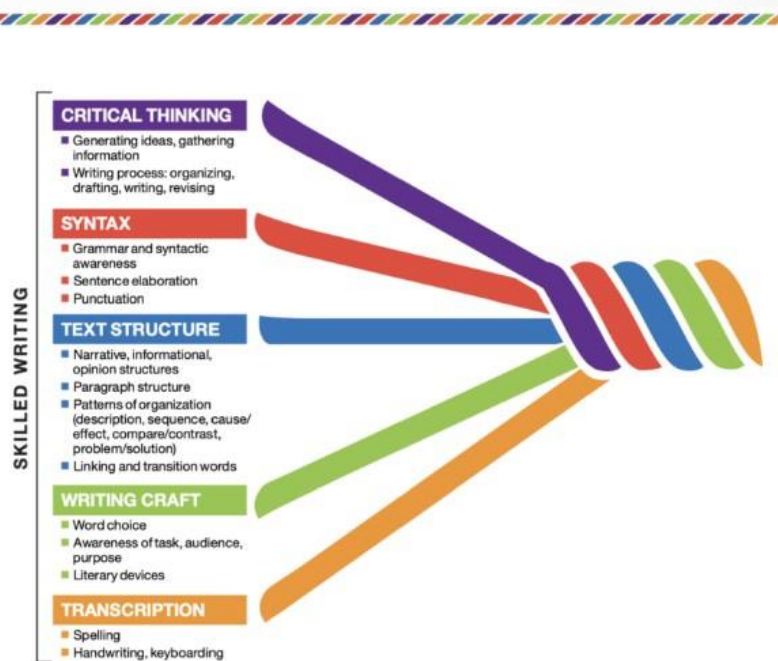
The Simple View of Writing





Review the Writing and the Reading Rope

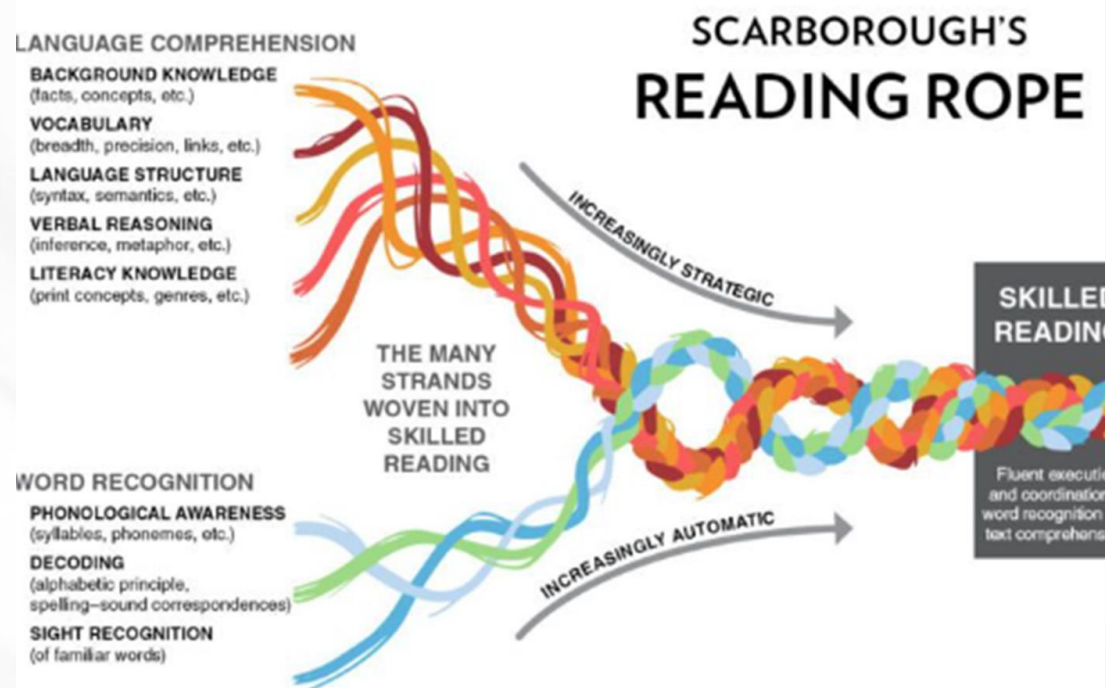
Writing Rope



From *The Writing Rope™: The strands that are woven into skilled writing* [online article].
(<https://284vup1at6d43dyd21n54e-wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Article-The-Strands-That-Are-Woven-Into-Skilled-Writing.pdf>); adapted by permission, © 2019 by Joan Seditz, www.keystolliteracy.com. All rights reserved.
In *The Writing Rope: A Framework for Explicit Writing Instruction in All Subjects*, by Joan Seditz, (2023; Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.)

(page 1 of 1)

Reading Rope



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Graphic modeled after the illustration from the *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, by Susan B. Neuman and I. Dickinson (2001) who re-envisioned researcher and author Hollis Scarborough's visual metaphor of the Reading Rope.

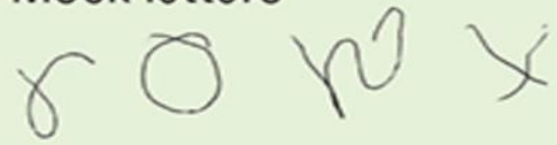
	Writing Standard 1
1	Write opinion pieces that introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
6	Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. - Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly in paragraphs and sections. - Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. - Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons. - Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing). - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
9	Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
10	- Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. - Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns. - Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. - Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

	Writing Standard 2
2	Write informative/explanatory texts that introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
7	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. - Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information in paragraphs and sections, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include text features, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. - Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. - Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. - Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose. - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
11	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
12	- Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include text features, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. - Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic. - Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. - Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

Grade	Writing Standard 3
3	Write narratives in prose or poem form to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, descriptive details, and clear sequences. - Establish a situation and introduce a speaker, narrator, and/or characters; organize an appropriate narrative sequence. - Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences or events or show responses to situations. - Use figurative language to suggest images. - Use temporal words and phrases to signal order where appropriate. - Provide a sense of closure. - For poems, use words and phrases that form patterns of sound (e.g., rhyme, repetition of sounds within words or within lines) to create meaning or effect.
8	Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences. - Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an appropriate narrative sequence. - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. - Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events. - Use precise words and phrases and relevant descriptive details to convey a tone (the writer’s attitude toward the subject: e.g., humorous, serious, or ironic) and to convey experiences or events. - Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.



Stages of Writing: Prealphabetic

Phases	Literacy Development	Writing Development
1	Prealphabetic • Developing letter knowledge and lack of phonemic awareness • Sight words learned by visual cues • Words spelled nonphonetically • Preschool to kindergarten	Prealphabetic • Three unique levels of writing that lack any use of letter-sound connections – Scribbles – Mock letters – Random letter strings • Toddlers and preschoolers (ages 2–5)



Stages of Writing: Semiphonetic

2	Early Alphabetic • Letter-name knowledge and developing phonemic awareness • Sight words learned by partial phoneme-grapheme connections with partial phonetic spellings • Kindergarten to first grade	Semiphonetic • Beginning awareness of the connection between letters and speech sounds • Late preschool to kindergarten . o SLVu
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Stages of Writing: Phonetic

3	Later Alphabetic • Full phonemic awareness and complete phoneme-grapheme correspondences • Spellings are phonetic • First grade to third grade	Phonetic • Writing words using close letter-sound correspondences • Kindergarten to second grade SPAS ROKIT
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Stages of Writing: Conventional

4	Consolidated Alphabetic • Known grapho-syllabic spelling units used to decode unfamiliar words • Grapho-syllabic and grapho-phonemic units used in spelling • Third grade and beyond	Conventional • Orthographically and grammatically correct writing • Third grade and beyond Space rocket
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How to support students with writing



RESEARCH-BASED WRITING PRACTICES AND THE COMMON CORE

Meta-analysis and Meta-synthesis

**K-8: 13
Recommendations**

- Establish instructional routines in a positive classroom environment where students compose together and share work.
- Establish clear goals for students' writing and provide feedback.
- Teach foundational skills: spelling, handwriting, sentences.
- Explicitly teach strategies for planning, drafting, writing, revising; provide good models of written text.
- Use writing as a tool to support learning.

Graham, Harris, Santangelo, 2015



Feedback- “The way teachers provide feedback on students’ writing directly impacts their internal dialogue and self perceptions.” Reading and Writing Haven

- Narrow The Focus- pick one thing to talk about. It’s overwhelming to students if they receive too many suggestions.
- Use a One-To-One Ratio- students will be more receptive to constructive feedback when it's balanced with strengths.
- Be Specific - rather than “good” or “love this!” try, “this sentence has great text evidence to support what you are saying!” or, “this transition is so helpful for readers to follow what you're saying.”
- Instead of pointing out what the writer did wrong, focus on what might confuse readers. For example, “What is the main idea of the paragraph? How could we make that clearer for the reader?”



Conferring - Conferences are the cornerstone of the writing block. They provide an opportunity for the teacher to work one-on-one or in small groups with students to address areas of strength and areas of growth.

Conference Routine

Research



Name



Decide on



Teach

Research

A student may discuss the topic of his or her writing and questions he or she may have.

Use this as an opportunity to learn about the student's writing and make decisions to focus conferences.

Name a Strength

Once the student has discussed his or her writing, provide specific praise for an element of the writing. Naming a strength develops a student's energy for writing.

Decide on a Teaching Point

Choose a teaching point that focuses on improving the writer within the student and not on improving the student's writing. A range of teaching points should be covered over the year.

Teach

Help the student understand how he or she can achieve success. Use a minilesson from the bank of minilessons to provide instruction on the teaching point. One text from the unit's stack serves as an example of what the student's writing should emulate.



Resources for Writing, page 1



From Collaborative Classroom's On-demand webinars:

[Dr. Steve Graham on Writing Instruction | Collaborative Classroom](#)

[The Writing Rope: A Conversation with Joan Sedita On-Demand Webinar | Collaborative Classroom](#)



Resources for Writing, page 2



From Reading Rockets/Webcasts:

[Teaching Writing | Reading Rockets](#) with Steve Graham, Louisa Moats (LETRS), and Susan Neuman

Early Childhood:

[Promoting Preschoolers' Emergent Writing | NAEYC](#)

[How Do I Write...? Scaffolding Preschoolers' Early Writing Skills | Reading Rockets](#)



Reflection

- Jot down what stood out as most important to you over this session. How does it pertain to your role as a para educator? How will what you have learned this evening help you in your role?
- Find a partner you didn't get to share with earlier and discuss your reflections.





Keep in Touch

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