

Reading Comprehension

Highlights

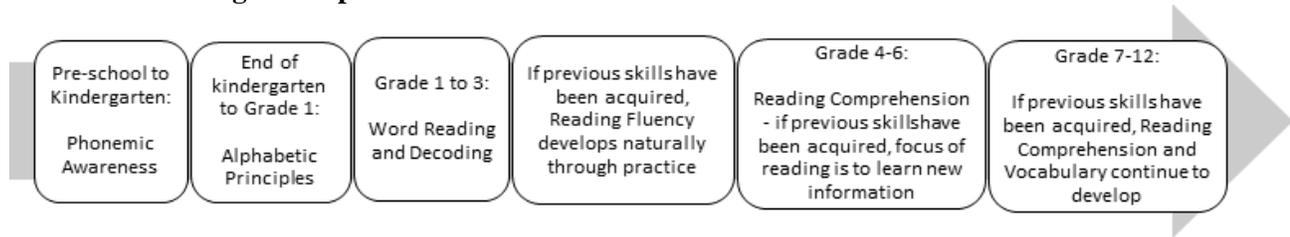
What is this reading skill? Reading comprehension is the ability to understand a passage that has been read. It requires the reader to continuously monitor their understanding while reading.

When should this skill be developed? Around Grade 4

Why is this skill important for reading? This skill is supported by all pre-reading skills, and is the ultimate outcome of a child's reading ability.

How can you practice this skill with your child? Encouraging your child to retell passages/sentences in their own words as well as writing activities on identifying appropriate meaningful words for incomplete sentences.

How Does Reading Develop?



Reading develops in a step-by-step fashion. It begins with Phonemic Awareness, which is the understanding and manipulation of the sounds of the English language (for example, knowing that “dog” has three sounds: ‘d’, ‘o’, ‘g’). The next stage of reading development is Alphabetic Principles (knowing what sound(s) each letter makes). Once a child has a good understanding of sounds and letters, they start to decode unfamiliar words (Decoding refers to the ability to sound out words or non-words) and then recognize familiar words (Word Reading). Reading Fluency is the ability to read passages quickly and accurately, and Reading Comprehension is the ability to understand and remember what has been read. Vocabulary develops naturally as children are exposed to language and reading but can also be explicitly taught if students are falling behind. With the exception of Vocabulary, development of each skill is dependent on the child’s prior skills; for example, a child who does not have a strong understanding of Alphabetic Principles will struggle to decode until earlier skills have fully developed.

Reading Comprehension Overview

Reading comprehension is the final stage of reading development. Understanding what is being read requires good vocabulary knowledge and a solid grasp of fundamental reading skills. When basic reading skills are underdeveloped, reading takes a lot of time and cognitive resources, leaving less energy to remember what is being read. At more complex levels, reading comprehension also involves interpreting the meaning of a text beyond its literal interpretation. Can your child:

- Read a passage and then tell you what it is about?
- Answer literal questions about the content of the material?
- Infer abstract meaning from the text?

Weaknesses in Reading Comprehension may lead to difficulties in understanding the meaning of a text. If a child has challenges with reading comprehension, this may be an indication that vocabulary or an earlier reading skill is underdeveloped.

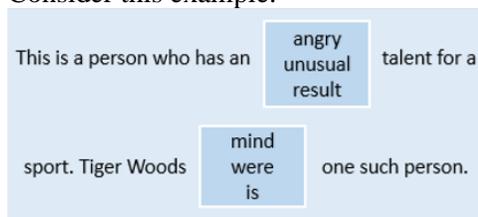
Core Instructional Principles:

Children with weaknesses in Reading Comprehension often struggle with understanding what they are reading and creating interpretations of text. Consistent practice in their oral reading fluency, and ability to identify which words fit in a sentence, are essential in their reading development. The following activities will help your child develop reading comprehension skills:

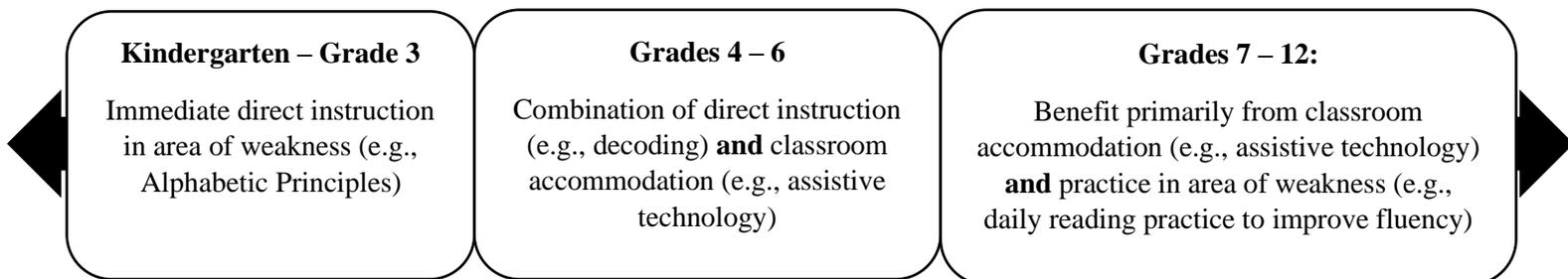
1. **Basic Reading Practice:** Often, a reading passage has multiple components to it that have “separate” meanings. It is important for your child to recognize these different meanings. This can be done by testing

your child’s oral reading fluency, and specifically their ability to retell a story to you after you’ve read it to them first:

- a. Have your child read a short passage out loud (1-2 paragraphs).
 - b. Ask your child to retell as much of the story as they can to you. You can do this by saying the following: “Now tell me as much as you can about the story”
2. **Maze Task:** One aspect of reading comprehension is the ability to identify the words that make up a sentence. This activity allows the child to select the word that they believe best matches with the meaning of a sentence.
- a. Give your child a sentence where a number of key words have been replaced by a box containing the correct word and two distractor words
 - b. Ask your child to circle the correct word that would fit into the sentence
 - c. Example of Instructions: “You are going to read a story with some missing words. For each missing word there will be a box with three words. Circle the word that makes the most sense in the story”
 - d. Consider this example:



Intervention Timeline: Younger students (K-3) are often able to make significant gains in areas of weakness if direct instruction is provided. As students get older, it becomes more difficult to learn key skills, so a combination of instruction and classroom accommodations is important. As students transition to middle and high school, accommodations become essential. However, accommodations are a **supplement** to remediation, not a replacement. Accommodations are used to bypass word-level reading issues; they will not “fix” the problem or make students better at reading, but additional supports will allow them to be more **independent** in reading activities.



Classroom Accommodations:

- Assistive Technology: text-to-speech software
- Instruction: Independent reading practice to improve fluency (when reading is easier, more resources can be devoted to understanding)

External Resources for Parents, Teachers, and Schools

- “Comprehension” at www.readingrockets.org
- “Comprehension Instruction: What Works” at www.readingrockets.org
- “Reading Comprehension Worksheets” at <https://www.k5learning.com/>