

literacy terms we all need to know

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Comprehension: a complex process in which a reader interacts with a text in a specific context in order to construct meaning. Specific comprehension strategies should be taught and can be taught even before a student can read. Such strategies include making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, determining importance, and synthesizing.

Decoding: the process of figuring out a new word in a text. Deciphering text into understandable words.

Fluency: the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, and expression while comprehending a given text. Fluency involves the ability to read effortlessly, automatically, and with the correct speed.

Guided Reading: a strategy for teaching reading where a small group of students with similar reading strategies is grouped together and works on strategy-related reading skills using leveled texts.

High Frequency Words: these are the words that appear most often in real reading texts. Thanks to Drs. Dolch and Frye, we have age-level lists of these words beginning from the simplest in Kindergarten through upper grades of school. (Often an overlap with sight words)

Phonological Awareness: the ability to hear, identify and manipulate sound units in words. It is one component of a comprehensive reading program, and it is the precursor to solid literacy development.

Phonemic Awareness: one component of phonological awareness. It is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual *sounds* in spoken words. It is one element of Phonological Awareness. Once children understand that language is made up of words, they can learn that those words are made up of different sounds.

Phonics: an approach to teaching word identification that emphasizes letter-sound correspondences and their applications to reading and spelling, the goal of which is to help children learn and use the alphabetic principle--the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds. Instruction should be systematic and explicit and last for two years. No worksheets!

Sight Words: are words that do not often follow phonics rules so emerging readers should learn them "by sight" in order to read them quickly and correctly. (Often an overlap with high frequency words)

Vocabulary: a term describing the words one must know in order to communicate with others, both orally and through print. Generally, four types of vocabulary exist: listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary.

For more information, see National Institute for Literacy site:
<http://www.nifl.gov/>

National Council of Teachers of English
<http://www.ncte.org/>

Reading A-Z
<http://www.readinga-z.com/>

Other incredible sites that are worth checking out:
Read, Write, Think (NCTE, IRA)
<http://www.readwritethink.org/index.asp>

another resource from <http://www.teachmama.com> to help our little ones learn while they play. . .

