



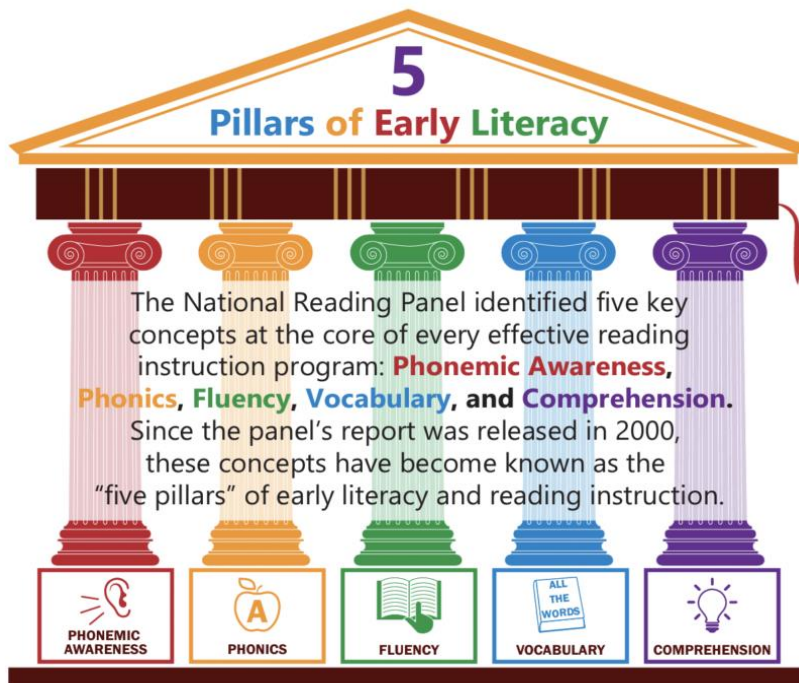
# The Science of Reading

## Fundamentals: 2023/24 In-Service Handout

Science of Reading - it might seem like a complicated idea, but it is really just what it sounds like: tested and reliable research that helps us understand how children learn to read and that helps educators devise methods and instructional approaches that support student reading development.

As you start to learn about the science of reading, it helps to be familiar with a few ideas, including *The Pillars of Reading* and the *Simplified View of Reading*.

### 1. The Pillars of Reading



The five pillars of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension are essential to understanding how children learn to read. And as children learn to read, they need to have instruction in, and opportunities to practice, each of these components.

1 – AZ Dep't. of Education via: The Institute for Multi-Sensory Education: <https://journal.imse.com/the-essential-components-of-literacy-instruction-part-1-of-6/>

Very briefly, **phonemic awareness** is the ability to hear sounds in words; **phonics** is understanding that letters represent individual sounds; **fluency** is the ability to read smoothly, accurately, and with expression; **vocabulary** is the number of words a child knows and understands; and **comprehension** is understanding what has been read!

## 2. The Simplified View of Reading



2 - Gough & Tuner: Simplified view of reading, via Seidenberg Reading: <https://seidenbergreading.net/2023/05/29/decoding-the-simple-view-of-reading-ii/>

The simplified view of reading explains that reading comprehension is the “product” rather than the “sum” of

word recognition (including decoding) skills and language comprehension.

In math terms:  $1 \times 1 = 1$ . But both  $1 \times 0$  **AND**  $0 \times 1$  equal 0: if either of word recognition or language comprehension is lacking, the calculation will not equal reading comprehension. You can take the example even farther: both great word recognition skills combined with poor language comprehension (i.e.  $100 \times 0$ ) and poor word recognition skills with solid language comprehension skills ( $0 \times 100$ ), still equal 0!

## More Takeaways from the In-Service with Heather Willms

### 3. Additive Blending (with Word List)

Additive blending is good decoding practice for students who are starting to learn to blend letters together, but could still use some scaffolding.

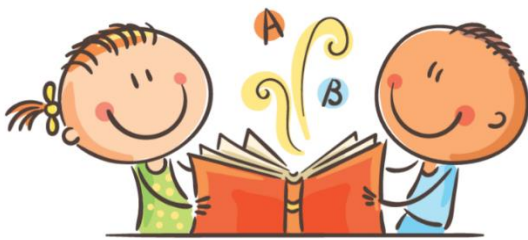
Students start by reading the first letter sound, repeat the first and add a second, repeat the first two and add a third, and so on. Finally, they read the entire word. When practicing this skill it helps to use a whiteboard or scrap paper, marker, and to have a word list of increasing difficulty to draw from.

Heather has created and shared a word list for emergent readers with some two-letter, vowel-consonant (**VC**) words, a variety of three letter, consonant-vowel-consonant (**CVC**) words, as well as four-, five-, and six-letter words along with some digraphs (ch, wh, sh, etc.) to practice.

Watch Heather doing additive blending with a small group of students [by clicking here](#).

You can find Heather's additive blending word list on our website or [by clicking here](#).

## 4. Paragraph Shrinking

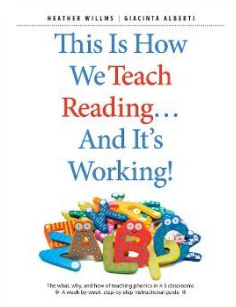


Paragraph shrinking is good comprehension practice for your students. It helps them narrow their focus, name and describe the (most important) “who” or “what”, and say the main idea in 10 words or less.

If you'd like to watch a short video about paragraph shrinking, [you can click here](#).

Heather has shared a helpful handout that you can use when paragraph shrinking with your students. You can find it [by clicking here](#).

## 5. This Is How We Teach Reading... And It's Working



If you're interested, Heather, along with Giacinta Alberti, has written a book called *This Is How We Teach Reading... And It's Working* which “[...] offers a clear and structured method for integrating explicit phonics instruction into K–3 classrooms.” It is available at the Vancouver, North Vancouver, Surrey and Richmond Public Libraries.

She has another book coming out in the fall designed to support students in Grades 4-8 (see photo), called *Bridging the Read Gap*.

If you'd like to preview *This is How We Teach Reading*, you can [follow this link](#) and see the first three chapters. Please note: it can be a little dense and is written for educators, but is still very helpful.

You can also learn more about Heather – and find lots of resources on her website: <https://hwillsreadingcoach.com/>

