

Articles – Read with Phonics

Teaching students to read with phonics is the way to ensure their reading success. This is because phonics sounds are the foundation of our spoken language. And spoken language forms the basis of our written language.

We're often told that English spelling is random or chaotic. This isn't true. There are a few words that are weird. Really weird: colonel, laugh, queue, thorough, yacht. But the spelling of most words makes sense.

Here are the steps students need to take in order to be able to read well:

First, students should be taught the main sound represented by each alphabet letter, so they can read words like these:

ants, box, brand, damp, din, film, fix, got, hand, in, just,
lost, mend, milk, nest, plum, rat, sand, send, sit, stilts,
stun, sun, swam, tin, vest, wet, yam, zip

Then, they should be taught the MORF type spellings:

M – Multiple letter spellings, where a single sound is represented by a team of letters, e.g.:

air: airplane; ar: star; ch: chickens; ee: seeds; ng: sing

O – Old spellings, where a sound is represented by teams of letters in historical words, e.g.: ea: bread; kn: knight; oa: moat

R – Rule spellings, where rules govern how a sound is represented in writing e.g.:

Double letters are only said once: add, egg, ill, off

Letters f, l, s and z usually double at the end of short words: off, scuff drill, ill, less, fizz, buzz

F – Foreign spellings, where we either copy the foreign spelling, or use a particular spelling that shows the word is foreign: eau: plateau; ei: reindeer; elle: Estelle; gh: ghost

By the time students have finished this stage, they can read thousands of words with little or no help.

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