**Five Components of Literacy**

**Reading Components**

Reading is one of the most important skills children can learn. There are five essential components of reading:

1. **Phonics**. This is mapping the sounds in words to written letters. This is an early reading skill children develop. It allows them to understand the link between letters and sounds. Lack of instruction in phonics leads to difficulties in reading. Children have to grasp the fact that printed text represents the sounds of spoken words. There are a lot of ways to help a child develop this ability.
2. **Phonemic Awareness.** You develop phonemic awareness by learning about sounds, syllables and words. Words are made up of units of sound known as phonemes. The word “crab” is made up for four individual units of sound: c/r/a/b. The word “shop” has three phonemes: sh/o/p. The ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual units of sound is phonemic awareness. It is a fundamental skill in learning how to read. English consists of about 41 phonemes.
3. **Vocabulary**. The more words we know the better one becomes at reading and understanding what we are reading. Reading a wide variety of books will allow a child to grow their vocabulary. The more words they learn, their vocabulary will grow and enable them to learn.
4. **Fluency**. Fluency lets readers span the gap between recognizing a word and knowing what it means. Fluent readers do not need to concentrate on decoding the words on a page. They can focus on the meaning of the words and enjoy what they are reading. Fluency comes as a child develops the first 3 components listed above.
5. **Reading Comprehension**. Great readers can become immersed in the stories they read. They can visualize the characters, hear the dialogue and imagine details that are not necessarily on the page. They can identify with the characters. In nonfiction, they can gain new information and link what they read with other sources of information and there learn new ideas and concepts.

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