

Q.1 Briefly explain ‘Phonics’ approaches for teaching reading.

Because **phonemic awareness** is a necessary pre-requisite to reading, it is important that it is included in early reading or pre-reading instruction. While there are many ways to teach, the following proven strategies should be considered when teaching phonemic awareness to young children.

Timing and Grouping

Phonemic awareness should be a priority in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and early first grade reading instruction. Studies have found that young children benefit the most from short instructional sessions (up to 30 minutes long) offered in small group settings. Teachers working with small groups should focus on between 2 and 3 phonemic awareness skills at a time to help children solidify these important pre-reading abilities.

Teaching With or Without Letters?

While phonemic awareness is not dependent on print, children seem to benefit the most from instruction presented with written words. At its very core phonemic awareness is a listening and speaking skill rather than a reading skill. Phonemes are, after all, sounds. Still, research shows that teaching phonemic awareness using letters helps children solidify their skills. Print words allow them to see and apply the connection between sound and letters necessary for reading. Adults working with young readers on developing their phonemic awareness should make explicit connections between sounds and letters by not only including print words in instruction but also drawing the children’s attention to sounds by saying and pointing to letters simultaneously.

Individualized Approach to Instruction

Children come to school with different phonemic awareness levels. Some may have a strong understanding of and ability to apply knowledge of how phonemes function in words while others may have little to no phonemic awareness.

Just as with phonics instruction, phonemic awareness instruction should be individualized to meet the specific needs of each child in the classroom.

Because it is the primary pre-requisite for reading and is such a strong indicator of future reading ability, the greatest attention should be paid to those students with little or no phonemic awareness.

Clapping and Tapping

One of the easiest ways to help children realize that words are made up of several sounds and syllables is to allow them to “break up” words by clapping or tapping out their syllables. Tapping can be performed with fingers, hands or an object such as a stick. When first introducing this concept, adults should model clapping or tapping. For example, a teacher can show a child that the word “balloon” has two syllables by clapping twice while reciting the word (/ba/ -clap- /loon/ -clap-). Once children understand the activity they should be encouraged to perform it independently on a regular basis. This kinesthetic connection allows children to become actively engaged with words.

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Keyword Substitution

This activity aids children in developing an understanding of the role that phonemes play in the meaning of words. When a phoneme is changed in a word, more often than not, the meaning changes. Keyword substitution activities use familiar songs as a basis for “playing” with words. Adults can take the lyrics of a familiar song and create new lyrics that substitute words with small phonemic variations. For instance, the chorus of “Pop Goes the Weasel” could be changed to “Hop Goes the Weasel”. After singing the song with the new lyrics adults should discuss how changing a phoneme shifted the meaning of the song.

Picture Flashcards

Picture flashcards are excellent tools for helping children who do not have strong phonics skills work on their phonemic awareness. Adults should create a series of flashcards featuring pictures that are familiar to the child. When using the flashcards the adult should ask the child to name the picture featured on each card. After saying the word the child should be asked to identify the first and second sounds (or phonemes) in the word. This activity helps children realize that words are made up of a series of independent sounds or phonemes.

Home-School Connection

Because phonemic awareness precedes actual text reading, it is most often developed at home. Parents play an important role in their children’s phonemic awareness. Research has shown that children exposed to print-rich environments at home prior to entering school show much higher levels of phonemic awareness. A print-rich environment is one where reading and writing are evident and important. Parents can model phonemic awareness by reading aloud to their children and allowing their children to see them reading in authentic ways. They can also give their children opportunities to practice language by talking, singing, reciting nursery rhymes, playing guessing games and engaging in early writing activities. Almost any activity involving spoken or written language that parents engage in with their children benefits their development of phonemic awareness.

Q.2 How students can be taught phonemic awareness?

One way preschoolers and kindergartners get ready to read is by noticing and playing with the words, rhymes and syllables they hear in everyday speech. This called **phonological awareness**.

Kids also start to tune in to the individual sounds or phonemes in words. This is called phonemic awareness. The more you can build on these early “pre-reading” skills, the more prepared your child will be for the challenge of learning to read.

1. Listen up.

Good phonological awareness starts with kids picking up on sounds, syllables and rhymes in the words they hear. Read aloud to your child frequently. Choose books that rhyme or repeat the same sound. Draw your child’s attention to rhymes: “Fox, socks, box! Those words all rhyme. Do you hear how they almost sound the same?”

It also helps to point out repeated sounds. For example, if you’re reading One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, ask your child to listen to the /fffff/ sound in fish. (Really stretch the sounds out at first.) Outside of story time, try pointing out other words that start with the /fffff/ sound, just like in the book.

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2. Focus on rhyming.

Ask your child to pick out the rhyming words in books by himself. Ask, “Did you hear a word that rhymes with fox?” Teach your child nursery rhymes and practice saying them together. Or say four short words, like log, cat, hog, frog. See if your child can pick out the word that doesn’t rhyme.

3. Follow the beat.

Teach your child about syllables by clapping the “beats” he hears in words. Let’s say you choose the word elephant. Pause as you say each syllable—e-le-phant—and clap out each syllable together. You can also get your child up and moving by having him stomp or jump with each syllable.

4. Get into guesswork.

Guessing games such as “I spy” can be used to work on almost any phonological skill. Want to practice noticing what sounds word begin with? Try “I spy something red that starts with /s/.” Want to work on rhymes? “I’m wearing something warm that rhymes with boat.”

5. Carry a tune.

Singing in general is a great way to get kids rhyming. There are also good songs teachers use to focus on other kinds of phonological and phonemic awareness skills. “Apples and Bananas” is a fun one. You can search online for more songs about phonemic awareness or ask your child’s teacher for recommendations.

6. Connect the sounds.

Sound blending is an important skill for early readers. They need to put sound units—phonemes—together to be able to read a word smoothly. You can help your child start working on this by putting together the sounds he hears. Ask him to connect the beginning sound with the rest of a word. For example, tell him, “Start with /p/ and add /ig/. What do word do you hear if you put them together?”

7. Break apart words.

Have your child work on hearing a word and taking it apart. Start by using compound words such as cowboy, baseball or firefly. Tell him, “Say the word cowboy. Now take away boy. What word is left?” You can also use Lego bricks to make this point. Give your child two attached Lego bricks to represent parts of the word. Then have him physically take the Lego pieces apart as he removes part of the word.

8. Get creative with crafts.

Kids respond to hands-on learning. Try making a collage of items that start with the same sound using pictures from magazines. Sock puppets can be another fun way to work on these skills. Make one that likes to munch on words that start with a certain sound. Let your child have fun “feeding” his puppet different objects or pictures that start with that sound.

9. Search online.

There are many resources and ideas online to work on phonological and phonemic awareness skills. Check out YouTube for teaching videos, Pinterest for phonology games and crafts, or the app store for nursery rhymes, sound games and songs. Whatever you do, keep the activities short and fun. If your child finds one activity too

difficult or boring, try something different. If you find that activities of this type are really hard for him, **talk to your classroom teacher** or your district's early childhood department to see if extra help is available.

Q.3 Discuss synthetic approach for teaching phonics.

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Q.4 Define 'oral fluency'. How oral fluency in reading can be developed?

Literacy skills are one of the most important areas of ability children develop in their first few years at school. They begin by sounding out words and learning to recognize common vocabulary from books and classroom materials. With sight reading and spelling practice comes greater fluency.

Reading speeds up and comprehension of more complex texts becomes possible as vocabulary knowledge grows exponentially. However, not all students find learning to read such an easy process. Struggling readers can quickly fall behind their peers and may develop low self-esteem and a lack of confidence as a result.

Because reading ability impacts performance across all areas of the curriculum, including writing skills, it’s important to provide adequate strategy training as early as possible. Ideally remediation is tailored to the individual student’s needs, particularly when a learning difficulty is involved.

Different learning difficulties impact on fluency in reading but one of the most common conditions is dyslexia. If a student has poor reading skills and a somewhat inconsistent approach to spelling –they recognize or produce a word correctly one day but not the next-- dyslexia may be involved.

There are many types but around 70% of students with dyslexia struggle to split words into their component sounds. It is this lack of phonemic awareness that prevents the accurate sound-letter mapping which is required for spelling and decoding in early reading. A focus on phonics can help students with dyslexia in addition to taking a multi-sensory approach – learn more in our post on Orton-Gillingham based reading instruction.

Some kids have trouble focusing their attention on the books or classroom worksheets they are meant to be reading. For students with attention related learning difficulties, including attention deficit disorder and attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity, the challenge is not so much in sounding out the words but concentrating long enough to process what they are reading.

Sitting still and controlling impulsive tendencies can also be problematic, particularly for students with ADHD. What's crucial is that teachers recognize the root of the problem early on and find strategies to help enhance focus during reading sessions. One idea is choosing a regular time of day when the student is most calm, possibly after an outside exercise break. It's also a good idea to reduce distractions and create a quiet space where they can go to read on their own.

Parents and teachers may observe reading fluency is lacking in individuals with slow processing. This is because the brain requires more time to carry out the complex cognitive processes involved in reading, from word recognition to comprehension.

Patience, time and more time may be the solution here. In some instances, a student can appear to read fluently but not actually understand what he or she is reading. This is often true for students with autism spectrum disorder—learn more in this post on reading comprehension and autism. For information on addressing fluency issues for students with visual impairments, try this post.

Ample exposure to print also gets children ready to learn the alphabet. Silly songs such as "Old McDonald Had a Farm" are used to enhance phonemic awareness and help kids develop their control over stress, rhyme and rhythm in language. Discussing their day and reciting sequences of events is a precursor for understanding how narrative works.

Q.5 Explain components of task-based grammar lesson in your own words.

Lesson Plan strategies for fluency

1. **Record students reading aloud on their own.** If certain sound-letter combinations or words are causing problems, teachers will benefit from listening to the child read out loud. However, this activity can be extremely stressful in front of a classroom of kids, particularly for a student who struggles with fluency. It is best to avoid calling on struggling readers during group reading and instead have them work through a paragraph on their own. Make a recording that can be analysed later on by a teacher or tutor in order to provide targeted help.
2. **Ask kids to use a ruler or finger to follow along.** Decoding is easier when students don't lose their place as they move across a page. It's up to the individual student how they go about this. Some may want to use a pen or pencil, others a piece of paper that they move down to cover the bottom of the page and stay focused

on the sentence in front of them. This is also a good strategy for readers with ADHD because it involves a kinaesthetic element.

3. **Have them read the same thing several times.** When you're trying to improve fluency, it helps to see the same text multiple times. Each reading becomes easier and motivation goes up as students experience enhanced fluency thanks to repeat exposure to words and phrases. It can also help when it comes to developing comprehension skills as readers have more opportunities to notice contextual cues.
4. **Pre-teach vocabulary.** Prime the words a student is going to see in a text and practice reading them in isolation or in phrases. You might do this via an interactive classroom based activity. Get students to use the words and then practice reading them from the board or on a piece of paper. Crossword puzzles can be an effective teaching tool or playing a spelling game. It's much easier to read a word if it is fresh in memory.
5. **Drill sight words.** Some words are more common than others and students who have a hard time with fluency will find it is much easier to read when they are familiar with 90% of the vocabulary in a text. Around 50% of all books and classroom based materials for young readers are composed of words from the Dolch List. Learn more in our post on teaching sight words.
6. **Make use of a variety of books and materials.** If a student has difficulty with reading it can be even more of a struggle to practice with material that is not of interest to them. Sometimes all it takes is getting readers excited about a topic to help them lose themselves in the activity. Try chapter books, comics and poems. Even picture books can work as long as the student doesn't perceive the material as being below their level. Experiment with texts of different lengths starting with shorter material and gradually working up to longer pieces. TOP TIP: Where fluency is concerned the emphasis is on the quality of the student's reading, not the quantity of pages or speed at which they read them.
7. **Try different font and text sizes.** If there's a visual impairment that is causing some of the difficulty, reading larger text or text printed on colour tinted paper can sometimes make things easier. If you're accessing this article on your computer check the top right corner of the screen for an "Accessibility Me" button which will allow you to experiment with different colour, font and size combinations while you finish reading this list. There are specific fonts which are more appropriate for anyone with learning difficulties, including dyslexia, because they help with discerning letters and decoding language.
8. **Create a stress free environment.** When students are enjoying a book, anxiety and stress are reduced and fluency is enhanced. It's also possible to foster a relaxing environment by removing any deadlines, time-limits or assessment related goals and just focusing on classroom reading for reading's sake.
9. **Guide students to help them establish a steady pace.** One of the hallmarks of fluent reading is establishing a consistent rhythm and pace that guides students through a text. This doesn't need to be fast and in the beginning new readers should have the option to start slow and increase their pace as they become more comfortable. Some students will want to have a guide, such as a metronome, which gives

them a rhythm they can match. Others will find this strategy stressful. Playing music in the background might also work – or not!

10. **Introduce a typing course.** If a student continues to struggle with fluency, teachers, tutors and parents may consider introducing an extra-curricular programme designed to enhance literacy skills. A multi-sensory course like Touch-type Read and Spell can be used at home and in school to learn keyboarding and enhance spelling and sight reading at the same time. An audio component accompanies letters on the screen while students type the corresponding keys. Automated feedback and coursework is divided into discrete modules and independent lessons foster self-directed learning and enhance motivation and self-efficacy in new readers.