

Phonological Awareness Explained

When children have **phonological awareness**, they know that language is made of words, syllables, and sounds. Phonological awareness skills involve a range of components which are critical for developing good reading skills. **Phonemic awareness**, a subcategory of phonological awareness, is the ability to focus on and manipulate (or “play” with) individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Phonemes are the smallest units of spoken language. Phonemes combine to form syllables and words. For example, the word “cat” has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/.



Phonological Awareness

Words in sentences:

Sentences are made up of words. A word must have at least one letter.

Onset/rime:

Onset is the first sound in a word and rime is the rest of it. Students should be able to identify the onset and rime in a spoken word (dog: the onset is /d/ and the rime is /og/).

Rhyme/ alliteration:

Rhyming words have the same ending syllable (cat, bat, mat). Alliteration occurs when words have the same initial sound (sit, sob, sum).

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Blending:

Combine the sounds in a spoken word (/s/, /t/, /o/, /p/ combine to make the word “stop”).

Segmenting:

Separate the sounds in a spoken word. Stretch out the word “bug” into its 3 sounds: /b/, /u/, /g/.

Syllables:

Words are made up of syllables. Students should be able to identify the syllables in a word (banana has 3 syllables: ba/na/na).

Addition/ substitution/deletion:

The ability to manipulate phonemes. Adding, substituting, or deleting a sound in a spoken word (replace the /m/ in “mat” with a /c/ to make “cat”).