

HOW WE TEACH READING AT TRUEDELL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Thursday, November 6, 2025



At Truedell Public School, we are deeply committed to delivering on the promise of education and equipping every child with the ability to read - and read well! Learning to read is such an essential skill to not only find success in school and to thrive in society, but to also experience the joy that reading brings to life.

We want every child to be successful in reading. We are learning more about what research says about how children learn to read, how to make sure every student learns to read, and what to do when a child encounters difficulty in learning to read. The research that we're learning about and implementing is called the Science of Reading.

When We Know Better, We Do Better!

In June 2023, the new Ontario Language Curriculum for Grades 1-8 was released. This document outlines what teachers who teach in English classrooms, or who teach English in French Immersion classrooms need to focus on when teaching Language. This new curriculum meets the needs outlined in the **Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Right to Read Inquiry Report"**.

This new curriculum is based on solid research, evidence, and what we know about how humans learn to read. Decades of research have determined that reading occurs in a specific way in the brain for all people. It does not occur naturally the way that speech does; the process must be taught. It is a process of building neuro-pathways in the brain that link sounds of speech to written symbols or letters. This is very different from how we've taught reading in Ontario for the last 20+ years.

*"The 2023 Ontario Language Curriculum is grounded in the belief that **all** students can succeed when they develop knowledge and skills in language and literacy."*

Strong foundational knowledge and skills in both oral and written language are necessary to support more complex skills such as critical thinking and problem solving."

2023 Ontario Language Curriculum



Ontario Ministry of Education:
A Guide for Caregivers



OHRC: Right to Read Report

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A New Path at Truedell Public School

If your family has been a part of Truedell Public School for some time, you'll have noticed some changes in how we teach reading over the past couple of years. If you're new to reading at Truedell Public School, jump on board, it's going to be a fantastic journey! It's an exciting time to be in education as we align our instruction with the **Science of Reading!**

In the past, educators may have...	Now, educators know that...
...believed that exposure to words would develop reading skills.	...learning to decode requires explicit, systematic instruction from an early age.
...promoted memorization of word lists.	...many high-frequency words can be decoded after explicit instruction.
...had students practice reading using predictable levelled readers, which encouraged students to guess.	...levels are inconsistent. The words that students must decode in order to read at any given 'level' do not match up with the order that letter-sound correspondences are taught. We now have better measures to determine students' strengths and weaknesses when it comes to the many skills that students need to consolidate to be a skilled reader.
...built guided reading groups based on a 'level', which was based on a 'Benchmark Assessment System' result.	...using research-based Universal Screening and other diagnostic assessment data will better help to inform small group intervention with more targeted precision. We will no longer be using "levels" in this decision making or when communicating about reading progress.
...encouraged students to guess at words using the pictures, first letter of the word, or context.	...explicitly teaching students to use their sound-letter / syllable / morphological understanding to help them break up words. Decodable texts are now being used to support students as they practice their decoding skills.
...created weekly spelling lists based on a list of words.	...spelling check-ins should be based on code that students are learning. There is not a focus on memorization, but on regular practice in both reading and spelling.
...considered many different ways to teach a child to read.	...almost all students learn to read in the same way - through explicit and systematic instruction.

Thanks to Lori McCaw and the ALCDSB Literacy Team for their collaboration on this chart.



How Can You Support?

Focus on “The Big 6”

There are 6 essential skills to becoming a skilled reader & speller:

Oral Language

Oral Language involves speaking and listening. A child's early language skills form the bedrock for learning to read and write print.

How can you support at home?

- read stories and sing songs together
- talk to your child and ask questions
- name and explain new experiences, vocabulary, and concepts



Source: [Basics of Oral Language \(Reading Rockets\)](#)

Phonemic Awareness

The ability to hear the individual sounds in words (i.e., ‘cat’ has 3 sounds = /c/, /a/, /t/; ‘toy’ has 2 sounds = /t/, /oy/).

How can you support at home?

- stretch out a word into its individual sounds and have your child tell you the word (blending)
- say a word, but have your child break it into its individual sounds (segmenting)
- have your child identify the beginning, middle, or end sound in a short word (isolation)
- tell your child to change a sound in a word (i.e., Change the /t/ in toy to a /b/ → boy) [manipulation]

Phonics & Decoding

The connection between the sounds (phonemes) and the letter symbols (graphemes) and using that knowledge to decode (read) and encode (spell/write).

How can you support at home?

- practice decodable passages/texts that may come home from school (reading multiple times is good!)
- practice letters and sounds
- give your child a sound / word and have them print the corresponding letter / letters.



SCAN ME

Video: 44 Phonemes

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, at a good pace, and with expression. Reading fluency acts as a bridge between word recognition (phonics & decoding) and reading comprehension.

How can you support at home?

- read to your child (for as long as they will let you!), modeling good pace, intonation, and expression
- listen to audiobooks or podcasts together (and talk about them!)
- discuss vocabulary and new words when reading together

Vocabulary & Morphology

Vocabulary: Words a child knows, understands, and uses.

Morphology: The understanding that words are made up of morphemes, including bases, prefixes, and suffixes. (i.e. rereading = 3 morphemes <re>, <read>, <ing>).

How can you support at home?

- do not shy away from ‘big words’ when speaking/reading with your child; make sure they understand what they mean
- point out different parts of words (i.e. prefixes)
- encourage your child to read on a regular basis...everything counts (including comic books!)

Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the reason for reading, and we need all of the previous skills to be able to fully understand and make sense of what we read. Skilled readers have fluent foundational skills so they can think critically about what they read.

How can you support at home?

- talk about what you've read / your child has read, asking questions about the text
- draw pictures about what has been read
- help your child make connections with what is read and other texts / experiences / world events
- have your child retell / summarize what was read

