

## **National Reading Panel's Big Five**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The National Reading Panel has found through research that there are five ways to help children become proficient readers. Below are brief descriptions of each of the components and easy ways to help develop these skills at home.

**1. Comprehension:** *“Comprehension is critically important to the development of children’s reading skills and therefore to the ability to obtain an education.”* (NRP report)

### **Ways to Develop Comprehension:**

- Discuss books as you are reading them.
- Compare characters to yourself or others you know.
- Compare books you’ve read together.
- Ask your child to stop you as you are reading if he/she does not understand.
- Think out loud as you are reading.
- Ask your child questions before, during, and after reading.
- Ask your child to make predictions about a book, then check to see if the prediction was accurate.

**2. Vocabulary:** *“Vocabulary (both oral and written) is critically important in oral reading instruction. The larger the reader’s vocabulary (either oral or written), the easier it is to make sense of the text.”* (NRP report)

### **Ways to Develop Vocabulary Skills:**

- Use descriptive words to explain or describe things.
- Think of different ways to say “big” or “nice”.
- Discuss words in books that may not be familiar then use them for a while in everyday language.
- Use a word that your child may not already know, then explain the word and give examples of it.
- Ask your child to stop you while you are reading if he/she does not understand or know what a word means.
- Ask your child to tell oral stories.
- Read poetry and books with vivid, descriptive language.

**3. Fluency:** *“Fluent readers are able to read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency is one of the several critical factors necessary for reading comprehension.”* (NRP report)

### **Ways to Develop Fluency:**

- Ask your child to “read” books to you and then discuss how the reading sounds.
- Read with expression and then discuss how you read the book.
- Read at different paces and then discuss which pace sounded best.

- Use different voices when reading aloud for different characters.
- Read nursery rhymes and discuss how they sound.
- Ask students to identify letters quickly and automatically. This is a precursor to reading isolated words quickly and then reading longer sentences and texts quickly and fluently.

**4. Phonics:** *“Phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that stresses the acquisition of letter/sound relationships and their use in reading and spelling.”* (NRP report)

**Ways to Develop Phonics Skills:**

- Play letter/sound games like Bingo.
- Stretch words out or “tap them out” and say them slowly to hear all the sounds.
- Ask children to “keep a journal” and write what they hear (random letters and squiggles progress to actual letter/ sound correspondences).
- Write words and lists in front of your child.
- Notice and read environmental print, such as cereal boxes, street signs, etc.

**5. Phonemic Awareness:** *“Instruction in phonemic awareness involves teaching children to focus and manipulate phonemes or sounds in spoken syllables and words.”* (NRP report)

**Ways to Develop Phonemic Awareness Skills:**

- Play rhyming games and ask your child to produce rhyming words.
- Listen for words with similar beginning sounds (cat and coat/ nap and night).
- Read nursery rhymes and make up your own version by playing with the rhyming words.
- Make up rhymes for names.
- Clap out syllables in names or common words.
- Blend two syllables together to make a word (base and ball = baseball)

Visit [www.nationalreadingpanel.org](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org) for more information.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at [drossi@griswold.k12.ct.us](mailto:drossi@griswold.k12.ct.us).

Sincerely,  
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