

Phonics instruction by itself does not help students acquire all the processes they need to become successful readers.

— NATIONAL READING
PANEL, 2000

Good phonics instruction is one part of a comprehensive reading program. Phonics instruction is only one part of a total reading program. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), “phonics should not become the dominant component in a reading program, neither in the amount of time devoted to it nor in the significance attached.” Reading instruction should include phonics, so that students can learn how to decode, but must also develop the other aspects of reading, such as vocabulary and comprehension.

Explicit Phonics Lesson Sequence

1. Develop Phonemic Awareness	A variety of phonemic awareness activities help students make sense of the alphabetic principle and develop their phonics skills. Letters are incorporated into this explicit instruction.
2. Introduce Sound/Spelling	Phonic elements are explicitly taught in isolation.
3. Blend Words	Blending includes explicit instruction and practice in sounding out and reading words. Routines include sound-by-sound, continuous, spelling-focused, and whole word blending.
4. Build Automatic Word Recognition	Activities to develop automaticity focus on the rapid and effortless decoding and reading of words in isolation.
5. Apply to Decodable Text	Opportunities to practice reading and rereading decodable texts also develop automaticity. Decodable texts contain a high proportion of the words that are made up of previously taught sound/spelling correspondences.
6. Word Work for Decoding and Encoding	A range of activities leads students to practice sound/spelling patterns by building, manipulating, and sorting words. Word-work activities include word sorting, Elkonin boxes with letters, word building, and dictation.