

WHAT IS NEW WITH FHSD PHONEMIC AWARENESS, PHONICS, AND SPELLING?

You may notice that your Kindergartener or 1st through 3rd grader is approaching learning to read, write, and spell through phonemic awareness and phonics. We hope these Frequently Asked Questions about Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Spelling will help you understand how these areas can benefit your child. Should you have additional questions, please contact your child's teacher.

For links to a student and parent practicing at-home activities, check out these videos:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjVnRehRnIE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ds_hE7oDHZhg

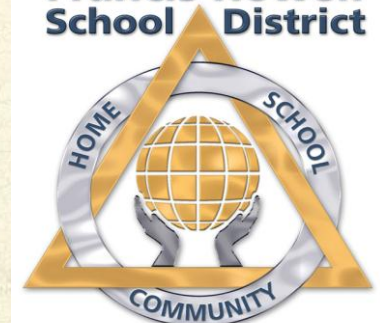
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pg1_E8vKqkI



FHSD PHONEMIC AWARENESS, PHONICS, AND SPELLING



**Francis Howell
School District**



LEARNING TOGETHER

RESEARCH

A recent National Reading Panel report says phonemic awareness and phonics are essential ingredients in beginning reading instruction and found that:

- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction—phonics instruction that is direct and follows a particular sequence—is more effective than no phonics instruction at all or phonics instruction that is not systematic.
- Systematic, explicit phonics instruction is most effective when it begins in kindergarten or first grade.
- Systematic, explicit phonics instruction improves children’s word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension skills.
- Systematic, explicit phonics instruction benefits all children, regardless of their reading readiness or abilities.
- Phonics instruction is only one part of a complete reading program for beginning readers. Effective beginning reading programs should also emphasize phonemic awareness, reading fluency, vocabulary development, and text comprehension.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is phonemic awareness?

Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to focus on and use sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. It teaches children to segment or blend sounds with letters.

What is phonics?

Phonics is the system of relationships between letters and sounds in a language. When your kindergartener learns that the letter B has the sound of /b/, and your second-grader learns about the difference between vowel team “au” and “aw,” they are learning phonics.

Why are phonemic awareness and phonics important?

Learning phonemic awareness and phonics will help your children learn to read and spell. Written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sounds of letters and letter combinations will help your child decode words as he reads.

Why are we using phonics?

Phonics is one component of a balanced reading program. Understanding the rules for phonics will help students when applying

their learning. Since our goal in education is to prepare students for their future, knowing phonics will help your child know which letters to use as he writes words.

How can I help my child become a better speller?

Because we want students to learn the rule(s) and not simply memorize strings of letters, we encourage you to practice with many words that include the sound(s) for that week. Help your child by reviewing words that contain the sound or sounds they are learning. Your child’s teacher will likely send home a longer list than what students will actually be tested over for their understanding. It may be helpful to break the list into parts and practice a few words each night. Some activities we do at school that you could also practice at home include:

- Say the word, clap or tap the syllables, say the sounds in each syllable, and write the word.
- Repeat the word, breaking into syllables, and touch the sound card(s) that fit.
- Reading words – one minute fluency practice
- Reading a decodable passage