

# Glossary of Reading Terms



Education is full of buzzwords or terms that can be hard for parents and students to understand. The Parents' Place of Maryland has created this cheat sheet for you to better understand reading and literacy terms.

<b>Accuracy</b>	The ability to read words correctly.
<b>Alphabetic Principle</b>	The concept that letters and letter combinations represent sounds of spoken language. Parents can help readers learn alphabetic principle using phonics.
<b>Automaticity</b>	The ability to decode printed words correctly and instantly. A skill developed by reading practice.
<b><u>Book Awareness</u></b>	Knowing what books are and how books work. It is knowing that books contain: letters, words, stories. It's learning books have front and back covers, a spine; how to handle them, and the direction to hold them and turn the pages.
<b>Chunking</b>	A decoding strategy for breaking words into manageable parts. For example: <i>yes-ter-day</i> .
<b>Comprehension</b>	The process we use to understand the meaning of what we hear and read. A strong vocabulary, background knowledge and understanding language are keys that help us unlock ideas <i>expressed directly</i> and <i>indirectly</i> .
<b>Consonant Blend</b>	Two or more consecutive consonants that keep their individual sounds. For example: 'bl' in black, 'cr' in crisp, 'spr' in spring, 'st' in fast, and 'nd' in land.
<b>Consonant Diagraph</b>	Two consecutive consonants that represent one phoneme, or sound. For example: /ch/, /sh/, and /th/.
<b>Decoding</b>	Applying knowledge of letter-sound relationships to sound out new words, for example: <i>sssssppooon - spoon!</i>
<b>Developmental Literacy</b>	A teaching method focusing on a child's present level of development. It includes meeting children where they are and enabling them to reach challenging yet achievable goals.
<b>Diagnostic Assessments</b>	Tests used to measure a variety of reading, language or cognitive skills.
<b>Diagraph</b>	Two letters that together make one speech sound (diphthong). Examples: <i>sh, ch, th, ph</i> .
<b>DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)</b>	A set of tests designed to measure reading fluency and early literacy skills of elementary students. <a href="#">Click here</a> to read a Parent Guide to DIBELS Assessment.
<b>Dysgraphia</b>	A learning disability that affects writing abilities. It can manifest itself as difficulties with spelling, poor handwriting and trouble putting thoughts on paper.

<b><u>Dyslexia</u></b>	A language processing issue that can make it difficult for readers to: hear sounds in words; recognize "known" words quickly slowing fluency; figure out unknown words, spell; and comprehend text.
<b>Emergent Reader</b>	A person who has learned the basics - letters and their sounds. <a href="#">Click here</a> to find ways to grow skills.
<b>Explicit</b>	Ideas expressed clearly, directly and fully are explicit.
<b>Fluency</b>	The ability to read text accurately, at a reasonable speed. A fluent reader does not need to stop and decode each word.
<b>Implicit</b>	Ideas expressed indirectly or implied are implicit. Readers use clues from the text and connect the dots to reveal the underlying meaning.
<b>Literacy</b>	Literacy is the ability to understand spoken and written language.
<b>Multi-Sensory</b>	Using some or all five senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch) to make experiences meaningful.
<b>Nonsense Words</b>	A made-up word (with no meaning) that follows regular patterns for reading and spelling words in English. These can also be called pseudo-words.
<b>Phoneme</b>	The smallest unit of sound in a word. Pronouncing the word cat involves blending three phonemes: /k/ /ae/ /t/.
<b>Phonemic Awareness</b>	The ability to recognize, think about, break apart and apply the individual sounds in words.
<b>Phonics</b>	Understanding the relationship between a written letter and the sound or sounds it makes.
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	The ability to hear, identify and apply sounds in words, including rhymes, syllables and the smallest units of sound, phonemes.
<b>Pre-Reader</b>	A beginning reader. A child who is learning that print has meaning, and the relationships between a written letter and the sound/sounds it makes.
<b><u>Print Awareness</u></b>	Knowing that print has meaning and how it works. For example, in English, print reads and is written from left to right. It includes knowing the difference between uppercase and lowercase letters.
<b>Reading Level</b>	A way to measure the reading skills a student already has based on comprehension and fluency. It takes into account skills like: phonemic awareness, decoding, and vocabulary.
<b>Reversals</b>	Reading <i>was</i> for <i>saw</i> or substituting a <i>b</i> for <i>d</i> . Reversals are common for early readers (Kindergarten – 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade).
<b>Rhyming Words</b>	Words that begin differently but have the same ending sound, for example: <i>oat, boat, coat</i> .
<b><u>Scaffolding Instruction</u></b>	Instruction where teachers build on what a child already knows by breaking down complex ideas or skills into smaller chunks that are easier to learn. Scaffolding is temporary support and helps teachers to provide targeted support for tasks that the child may need more help with.
<b>Sight Words</b>	Words we know by seeing them, for example: <i>a, the</i> , or names.
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Word knowledge. Words a reader knows and understands the meaning.
<b>Vowel Diagraph</b>	Vowel diagraphs are two letters that together make one vowel sound. Examples: <i>ai, oo, ow</i> .

## Sources

- [Literacy Terms Defined for Parents \(thisreadingmama.com\)](http://thisreadingmama.com)
- [Reading 101 for Parents: Reading Basics | Reading Rockets](#)
- [Reading 101: A Guide for Parents | NEA](#)
- [Glossary | Reading Rockets](#)
- [Dolch Sight Words List | Sight Words: Teach Your Child to Read](#)
- [What is phonics? Here's a guide to reading terms parents should know \(greenbaypressgazette.com\)](http://greenbaypressgazette.com)
- [What Is Scaffolding Instruction? - Lesson | Study.com](http://Study.com)
- [Reading Levels Explained: A Guide for Parents and Teachers \(weareteachers.com\)](http://weareteachers.com)
- [Reading is Fundamental Literacy Toolkit | Parents' Place of Maryland \(ppmd.org\)](http://ppmd.org)