

What is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological Awareness refers to the ability to process sounds and sound patterns in spoken language, and is an essential precursor to the development of literacy skills. It includes auditory discrimination, word retrieval, and the ability to recognise syllables, rhymes and sounds.



What is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic Awareness refers to the ability to identify and process individual sounds in words. It includes onset-rime identification, initial and final sound segmenting, as well as blending, segmenting and deleting/manipulating sounds. Phonemic skills are first learnt through oral language, and are later applied to written language (PP/Yr 1).



What is Synthetic Phonics?

Synthetic Phonics is an evidence-based approach, aimed at teaching letter-sound correspondence in a specific order. Programmes introduce commonly used consonants and short vowels first, followed by long vowels, digraphs (2 letters, 1 sound), adjacent consonants and r-controlled vowel sounds (such as /er/ and /or/). Children learn one way of writing down (spelling) each of the sounds and are then gradually introduced to spelling alternatives for each of the sounds. Sometimes they are still learning about the more complex spelling patterns in upper primary or even secondary school.

Phonics at Rosalie

During **Kindy**, the focus is on phonological awareness. Students are taught to attend to language, specifically through listening when being spoken or read to. At this stage, learning is **ORAL**.

Students are taught to:

- Clap the beats in words (syllables)
- Recognise and generate rhyming words
- Identify sounds in spoken words
- Match and generate words with the same beginning or final sound

During **Pre Primary**, existing knowledge is consolidated, built upon and extended. The focus moves onto phonemic awareness, through a synthetic phonics approach. At this stage, learning begins to focus on written symbols.

Students are taught to

- Link graphemes (written letters) with phonemes (auditory sounds), through evidence-based, synthetic phonics
- Blend sounds to read words containing learnt sounds
- Read targeted decodable readers which contain already learnt sounds
- Segment sounds and apply grapheme knowledge to represent sounds to write simple, predictable words
- Extend knowledge to write short sentences, with some help



Reading at Rosalie

Initially we teach in the order of s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d. From this point forward, stories in our focus series are available for students to read independently, because all words contained within the books, are made up of the learnt sounds. So there is a *purpose* for learning the sounds. This sense of *purpose* is key to engaging children in learning their sounds.



One of the most important principles of Synthetic Phonics is that a child should never be asked to read something that is too difficult for them, or that they do not have the skills to read, which is why we provide specific decodable readers.

Why is there a problem with more advanced reading material?

If a child is asked to read something containing words that are too difficult for them, they start to simply guess the words. They use the pictures on the page or the first one or two letters and this becomes their only reading strategy. It might work for the first year or two but it is not an effective reading strategy in the long term. It can become very frustrating, and the child begins to believe that reading is too difficult for them. So just read favourites TO your child - they'll love it!

Strong fluent readers are proficient at quickly decoding words. They do not rely on pictures, context or guessing as their primary strategy.

How Can Families Help?

Parents are a child's first teachers, so you play a vital role in helping your child develop literacy skills. There are many different ways that you can help your child, including:

- Have conversations with your child which involve listening and responding appropriately to each other (stay 'on-topic')
- Attend to environmental sounds - listen for and distinguish between different sounds, including cars, trucks, trains, dogs, birds, adults, children, trees in the wind, etc
- Talk about words, especially if they're fun to say or 'play' with
- Share poems, chants and songs, and talk about rhyming or alliteration
- Share or create joint poems, chants or songs Read to your child - always! This is one of the most important things families can do
- Talk about what you are reading, noticing any rhyming or alliteration (both are present in many children's books)
- Look at the pictures in books and discuss how they show what's happening in the story, while the words tell what's happening - they work together to make the story
- Re-read favourite books over and over
- When your child begins learning to match letters and sounds, read decodable readers with them, and re-read them until your child can read them fluently (without pausing to think about the word)



Learning to Read @ Rosalie

Tips to help parents raise enthusiastic and capable readers.


Rosalie
PRIMARY SCHOOL