



To: Teachers and Parents

Topic: **Essential skills for reading**

Message Objective(s): **Learners should be able to:**

- ❖ Acquire and use essential skills for reading

Message:

- ✓ Reading is a process that requires a variety of skills that then lead to reading with understanding.
- ✓ Reading must be taught and is not acquired incidentally.
- ✓ Learners need to be exposed to a lot of reading both at home and at school.
- ✓ The knowledge of the skills involved can assist parents and teachers to give the right support.
- ✓ Some of the skills needed for comprehension are:

*decoding, fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction and cohesion,
background knowledge and working memory and attention.*

Skills for reading

1. **Decoding-** learners use this skill to sound out words. Decoding relies on a language skill called **phonemic awareness** where learners hear individual sounds and connect the sounds to letters. Grasping the connection between a letter and the sounds they make is an important step towards sounding out words. **Phonological awareness** at home can be built through activities like word games and exposing the learners to a lot of reading.
2. **Fluency** – speeds up the rate at which learners can read and understand a text. When learners can identify words instantly then they can read quickly without making too many errors. It is important for parents and teachers to help learners to practise reading.
3. **Vocabulary-** having a strong vocabulary is a key component of reading comprehension. Learners can be taught new words, but they typically learn the meaning of words through everyday experience and practise.
Parents and teachers can help build the children’s vocabulary by having frequent conversations on a variety of topics.
4. **Sentence construction and cohesion-** Knowing how ideas link up at the sentence level helps learners to get meaning from passages and entire texts.
5. **Reasoning and background knowledge-** learners need prior knowledge about their environment, situations, and contexts.
This enables them to read between the lines and deduce meaning even when it has not been literally spelt out. Learners can build vocabulary through reading, conversations, TV, social media etc
6. **Working memory and attention** – when learners read, **attention** allows them to take in information from the text. **Working memory** allows learners to hold on to information and use it to gain meaning and build knowledge from what they are reading. Parents can help their



children's attention by reading material that is interesting and motivating. Children's working memory can be encouraged through several everyday activities and games.

Having difficulties in reading does not mean that the child is not clever, but some children need extra support and encouragement to make progress.

All the best and keep safe.

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Reference: EFAL SP GRADE 7,8 AND 9 REVISED ATP TRACKERS
<https://nect.org.za/materials/recovery-atps-trackers>