

## Mastering Phonics

The alphabet is far more than a melodious tune about “A B C’s.” It is a compilation of many consonants and vowels that combine in myriad ways to produce thousands of words. These serve as the building blocks for everything your child will read in the years to come.

Phonics, which teaches the link between word sound and spelling, is the precursor to fluent reading, and there is no escaping this requirement. Understanding the sound and behavior of letters and words is the key to proper pronunciation and reading. Using a few simple tips, you can give your child a head start in reading.

### Letters

There are many levels to phonics, and it begins with the smallest unit of the English language, the letter. Before you can instruct your child on complex word combinations, you must ensure your child knows the alphabet in its entirety.

Furthermore, your child must understand the various pronunciations of each letter. A common example of this is the long vowel and the short vowel pronunciations. Consonants such as “G” produce different sounds as well. Make sure that your child understands the distinction between vowels and consonants.

### Morphemes (Or Letter Combinations)

Letter combinations entail the next step to mastering phonics. This is one of the most crucial and intricate steps in your child’s journey to literacy. Sounding out single letters is a great first step. But, reading is impossible if one cannot identify and pronounce word combinations.

As you help instruct your child, introduce each letter of the alphabet. Begin with A, and continue with letters B, C, D, and so forth. Proceed with two-letter word combos at first, and then increase to three-letter word combinations. Advance slowly so your child can fully exercise his/her knowledge of each alphabet letter.

### Words

Once your child has mastered the building blocks discussed above, you can introduce longer words. Building upon this foundational knowledge, your child will gradually develop the skills to pronounce new words piece by piece, by recognizing familiar word combos. Try to commit to practicing this exercise with 10 words per day and your child will master several words per week. Repetition is key. Allow your child to repeat and read words until they are pronounced correctly, but remember to keep it fun. Introducing new words and equipping your child with vital phonics skills and familiarity with language as a whole will set your child on the path to becoming a fluent reader and writer.

### Additional Resources

Alphabet Anatomy’s Meet the Capital Letters is a fun and engaging way to introduce your child to the alphabet letters. Your child will learn an effective visual and audio method with which to recall the letters’ sound, shape, and how to write them, thus their anatomy. <http://alphabetanatomy.com/> The letters rock on You Tube! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxxZsC-70jg>