

Top 10 Tips for Teaching Basic Reading Skills

Reading is an important skill for all students to learn. It is essentially the basis of nearly all learning, and a basic requirement to progress in life. However, for students just beginning to explore reading, it can be an intimidating process. By building a strong foundation of reading, teachers will be able to help students to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

1. Teach an appreciation of words

Sharing stories is the easiest way to get students interested in reading. Whether it is the magic of a fiction story or interesting new facts, reading opens the door to information.

2. Create language awareness.

Before students can even begin to read, they have to understand how books work. Show them the proper way to hold a book, how the story is read from left to right and top to bottom, and use books with large print to get children accustomed to seeing words. You can also use worksheets or label objects around the classroom and the home.

3. Building blocks of ABCs.

The ABCs are an important part of learning to read. Help children to recognize letters and the sounds that they make through creative methods. Use printable worksheets that combine the letter with words that begin with that letter, such as A is for apple, alligator, and angel. Teach them how the letters can be used to form their name and simple words.

4. Explain phonology.

When we have a conversation, we pay more attention to the meaning of the words than how they sound. However, to learn to read, we must understand the sound. Explain how sentences are made up of words, and how word order matters. For instance, the sentence "Cats eat mice" does not mean the same thing if "cats" and "mice" are switched around. Have students clap out syllables and listen for rhyming words.

5. I nstill phonemic awareness.

Phonemic awareness is the idea that words are composed of sequences of sounds. Focus on how words are pronounced, focusing on the constant sounds, as well as long and short vowel sounds. Have them sound out different words on teacher worksheets and identify the different sounds in simple words.

6. Share the relationship between sounds and letters.

Once students are aware that words are made of sounds, you can introduce how each different letter makes a different sound or sounds. Start with commonly used letters like M or T, which are more distinct to pronounce.

7. Sound out words.

As students learn that different letters make different sounds, they can start to sound out small familiar words. Start at the left of the word, sounding out each letter and gradually blending them together until they can recognize the word.

8. Teach proper spelling.

As students are beginning to recognize that words are made up of letters and letters represent sounds, you can start to teach spelling. Start out with simple words with standard spelling conventions, words that do not have consonant blends, and words that use the most common sound that the letter makes.

9. Encourage proper reading.

Have students read or reread favorite stories in class. Ask questions about books that they have read. Help them to use the context clues of sentences to sound a word out and figure out what it means.

10. Read daily.

By encouraging children to read often, they will develop their own love of books. Get a library card, and teach children how to check out books. Help them find books in topics in which they are interested. Like any other skill, the more students read, the better they will become.