

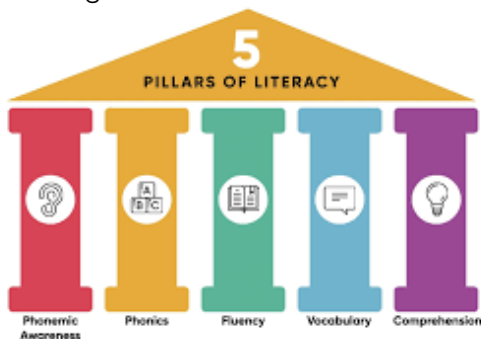
The “**Science of Reading**” is a term that has spread like wildfire across the educational landscape over the past five years. Although the popularity of the term is new, the research behind it goes back many decades.

The [Reading League](#) defines it this way: “**The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.** This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties”. ([Read more about this definition in English and Spanish](#))



One key finding of the science of reading is that **learning to read is not natural or automatic**, it is a learned skill, and as such for most people learning to read well requires **systematic, explicit instruction** ([Teaching Reading IS rocket Science](#) by Louisa Moats).

This instruction (sometimes referred to as “**structured literacy**”) must include **phonics**. “Phonics refers to the relationship between letters and sounds in language. It involves understanding how letters represent sounds and using that knowledge to decode written words during reading and encode words during writing.” ([Lexia blog: A full breakdown of the science of reading components.](#)) However, **the science of reading is NOT solely about phonics and does NOT mean that only phonics should be taught.** In addition to [phonics](#), other key areas for reading instruction are: [phonological awareness](#), [fluency](#), [vocabulary](#), and [reading comprehension](#), sometimes referred to as the [5 pillars of reading instruction](#) and others discuss this as the different strands of the [reading rope](#), coined by Dr. Hollis Scarborough.



Although some of this may sound basic or obvious, not all reading curricula or instruction are aligned to the science of reading; in fact, many popular [curricula have significant gaps](#) in this area. See the [California Reading Curriculum report](#) for information about the curricula in many California districts.

Additional Resources on the Science of Reading

- **Podcast:** [“Sold a Story”](#) (This popular and engaging podcast has been hugely influential with educators and policy-makers, to reevaluate literacy practices in many schools, districts, and states).
- **Parents Guide:** [Reading 101: A Guide for Parents](#)
- **Opinion:** [Science of Reading Gives Kids the Best Chance to Close the Literacy Gap](#)
- **Roundtable:** [Learning to read by third grade requires evidence-based instruction, panel says](#)
- **Blog:** [“The What, Why, and How of the Science of Learning to Read”](#) and [“A Full Breakdown of the Science of Reading Components”](#)
- **Newspaper (NYT):** [“Kids Can’t Read’: The Revolt that is Taking on the Education Establishment”](#)
- **Film:** [The Right to Read](#)
- **Editorial:** [Cut the politics: Phonics is the best way to teach reading](#)

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