



# Phonics Strand

## What is Phonics?

Phonics is a method for teaching word identification strategies based on the relationships between letters and sounds. In Lexia® Core5® Reading, phonics activities include the ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to reading and spelling words. In addition, phonics activities involve pattern recognition of syllable types, rules for syllable division, and simple spelling generalisations that are based on letter-sound correspondence.

## What is the role of Phonics in learning how to read?

Phonics knowledge is important for developing accurate, and ultimately automatic, word identification skills. In learning to read, children initially rely heavily on phonic word attack strategies. They learn that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds. At first, this allows them to decode words and build their knowledge of letter patterns. They begin to remember these letter patterns and eventually recognise most words by sight. This automaticity is essential for developing reading fluency and contributes to efficient and effective reading comprehension. Phonic word attack strategies continue to be important in the later years when students encounter unfamiliar words in text.

## What is the approach to developing Phonics in Lexia Core5 Reading?

Phonics activities in Lexia Core5 Reading begin with building letter-sound correspondence knowledge and progress to include activities that require the application of this knowledge to decoding isolated words as well as decodable phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. The use of decodable text for beginning readers is essential for building the skills necessary to identify unfamiliar words and supports the development of automatic word recognition skills. Students gain an understanding of syllable types, syllable division, and simple spelling rules that are based on letter-sound correspondences as they build their decoding skills.

Initial phonics activities begin with identification of letter symbols and the alphabetic sequence. Students are then introduced to the relationships between sounds and letters for consonants and vowels as they match letters to the sounds in pictured words. This letter-sound knowledge is quickly applied to written words in tasks that require the analysis of initial and final consonants as well as medial vowels. These letter-sound activities reinforce phonemic awareness.

Students then learn to recognise letter patterns as they identify open, closed, and split vowel digraph syllables in one-syllable words. In subsequent activities, they learn to combine syllables to construct and read two-syllable words. They also learn to apply phonic word attack strategies to read decodable phrases and sentences. Activities throughout the phonics strand aim to strengthen phonemic awareness skills as students continually analyse and manipulate the sequence of letters in words.

As students progress through the program, they are introduced to more complex sound and syllable patterns. Ultimately, students learn to identify all six syllable types and the basic rules for syllable division. They are also introduced to the common spelling patterns found in single-syllable words. Throughout the vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency activities at each level of the program, students apply their phonics knowledge to read sentence- and paragraph-level text.