

A phonemic approach is the key to learning to read and write

PHONICS AUTHORITY AND CO-AUTHOR OF SOUND WAVES, BARBARA MURRAY, EXPLAINS WHY TEACHERS NEED TO DEVELOP IN THEIR STUDENTS AN AWARENESS OF THE 43 SOUNDS (PHONEMES) USED IN AUSTRALIAN SPOKEN ENGLISH.

The Australian National Curriculum strongly recommends that all Australian primary schools include phonemic awareness and synthetic phonics in their literacy program.

In spite of this, recently published research reported that new teachers, fresh out of university, have never learned these skills themselves, let alone been instructed on how to teach them to their students in the classroom.

Phonemic Awareness, combined with Synthetic Phonics, is currently scientifically proven to be an extremely effective way for children to read and write proficiently.

There are only so many words our brains can commit to memory. Imagine learning to read and write unfamiliar characters, such as those used to represent Russian or Chinese in written form. If we understand the structure of the language and the



The *Sound Stories* set of books are designed to assist teachers in teaching students about the 43 sounds used in Australian spoken English.

recurring patterns, we have a much better chance of success.

Phonemic Awareness means 'being aware' of all 43 sounds (phonemes), that we use every day and knowing how to identify them in the words that make up Australian spoken English.

This is the first, vital step in learning to read and write. It is an oral step. Once students can identify the beginning, medial and final sounds in simple two and three sound words orally, they are ready for Synthetic Phonics.

Synthetic Phonics teaches students how to break (segment) words into the individual sounds. It then teaches students how to use the alphabet letters to represent those sounds in written form when reading and writing.

To help teachers in the classroom, I have developed a set of four books that provide a 'sound story' for each of the 43 sounds (phonemes). The creative stories are accompanied by delightful, engaging illustrations that will entice children to observe, imagine, predict, draw conclusions and create a possible storyline as part of an open

discussion, before the story is read to them.

The four books in the set are:

- Book 1: An Introduction to Consonant Sounds, Part 1. The Bolton Boys' Balloon Adventure and other stories.
- Book 2: An Introduction to Consonant Sounds, Part 2. Robbie Robot to the Rescue and other stories.
- Book 3: An Introduction to Vowel Sounds, Part 1. Anna Ant's Antics and other stories.
- Book 4: An Introduction to Vowel Sounds, Part 2. Bertie Bird and the Earthworm and other stories.

With every set of books purchased, schools receive a colourful box for easy storage and can request a free digital version of the book (e.g. PDF) for teachers to show in class on a digital whiteboard. **EM**



Barbara Murray is the co-author of award-winning *Sound Waves* phonemic reading and spelling resources, which are used throughout Australia's primary schools. The boxed set of *Sound Stories* was introduced in 2019.

Buyer's Guide

Barbara Murray

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