# Reading Instruction: The Big 5 Overview Transcript

[Music Plays]

(Katelyn) Hello and welcome. I'm Katelyn from Katelyn’s learning studio at Teachers Pay Teachers, your go-to stop for elementary essentials.

This video is the first in a series I have on teaching reading.

It introduces the big five areas of reading and just goes over what they are.

In each of my next videos, it goes into detail about those individually and exactly what it looks like in the classroom and how to teach that. And it gives you any materials you need and ideas for strategies.

If you want to check those out I'll put the link in the description below this video.

So when I first started teaching, I felt a little bit like I was thrown into the deep end of a pool. No one really told me what to do and I felt like it was sink or swim. I just had to figure it out on my own. Maybe some of you can relate in your first year of teaching.

But once I found the Big 5, I felt like I had some guidance on my reading instruction. And I knew what direction to even go with my students.

When I started using the Big 5, I saw great gains in my students’ learning and my confidence as a teacher. And I hope that you guys can find some of that too.

So what are the Big 5?

The Big 5 are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

Let's go into detail about each of these five areas a little bit more and find out exactly what they are.

The first area is phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is being able to hear, identify and manipulate sounds in words.

This area focuses on the audio part of reading. It emphasizes that words are broken up into sounds and we put those sounds together to make the words.

Some examples of the skill include rhyming words, breaking words into syllables, identifying beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words and blending sounds together to actually make words.

This goes especially important in the lower grades, like preschool, kindergarten and first grade because students are just starting to make that connection between letters and sounds and become aware that words are made up of sounds.

Studies have shown that that skill is one of the number-one predictors for reading success later on.

So it's very important to make sure that students have a solid foundation in this skill.

The second big five area is phonics. Phonics is the connection between letters and sounds. Phonics is when students start working with printed letters and words they start to recognize letters and the sounds that they make, sounding out words, and recognizing sight words and finding phonics patterns and words that they're reading.

This is also where students start to sound out CVC words or three-letter words and recognize phonics patterns like silent E and digraphs and just build the fluency in being able to read individual words.

Once students gain confidence in proficiency in phonics, they're able to start actually putting this skill to use when they read stories.

So when they have books in front of them they're able to sound out the words and start to experience that thrill of learning.

The third skill is fluency. Fluency includes reading at an appropriate speed, reading words accurately and reading with prosody or expression and intonation in your voice.

Fluency is when the act of reading really starts to click for students. It’s when they can start reading through sentences smoothly and they don't have to labor through sounding out each and every word.

Fluency is not just reading fast. It's reading like we're having a conversation.

So having natural phrases in your reading, reading at a speed that you would normally talk at and reading with expression and emotion.

There are three aspects to fluency. And they are speed, accuracy and prosody.

So with speed it's important for students not to read too fast, because then comprehension is lost and they're not paying attention to what they're reading.

If they start reading too slow, they can lose engagement and get bored and not have fun reading.

The second part of fluency is accuracy. Again, accuracy can really affect comprehension. If students are making mistakes and reading the wrong words all the time, they can lose the main point of the story.

What we're shooting for with accuracy is automaticity, or being able to look at a word and see right away what it is without having to think. So when students are able to automatically read those words accurately, the main point of the passage is more clear to them and they're able to follow it.

The third part of fluency is prosody and this includes reading with emotion and expression and having the correct intonation in their voice. Intonation is when your pitch of your voice goes up and down. And when they read with correct intonation, they're able to match what the text is saying with the pitch of their voice. So if it's a question, your voice goes up when students start to read fluently, a whole door of possibilities is open to them.

Books become more accessible and they're really able to make reading a key part of their education.

The fourth skill is comprehension. Comprehension deals with understanding what you listen to and what you read. The first part of comprehension is listening comprehension and that's when students are able to understand what's going on when something is being said to them or stories being read aloud to them.

This can start out as simple as understanding short sentences following directions and it can grow to thinking about and analyzing stories that a teacher reads out loud to them.

The second part of comprehension is reading comprehension and that's when the students are actually reading the stories themselves.

This is when they get to interact with the text and start working on comprehension skills like predicting, analyzing, summarizing or inferring. And it's when they really start to dig deeper into the meaning of the text.

Comprehension gives value to reading. If students are only going through the words and the text and not thinking about what they're meaning, they miss out on actually learning from what they're reading, which is a really valuable skill going into the real world.

So this is key right here.

It's confident boosting to read fluently but it's actually meaningful to read with comprehension. That's the whole purpose why we read anyways is to get something out of it.

The fifth and last skill is vocabulary. Vocabulary involves understanding, defining and using new words.

Expanding vocabulary really enriches the quality of fluency and comprehension.

So when students are more familiar with a wide variety of words, they're able to recognize them faster and be able to read more fluently.

Also, when students understand the meaning of those words, they're able to comprehend the passage with a deeper, richer understanding.

Also when students are able to use more advanced skills like shades of meaning and idioms, they're able to pick up on humor in reading and find little gems that would have been a little lost to them if they hadn't used those vocabulary skills.

Vocabulary also includes self discovering the meaning of new words. So if they come across the new word and don't know what it means, they're able to use context clues or root words to figure out the meaning of that word. And that's a super valuable skill going into the real world, especially as they go into college when they're reading their textbooks figuring out what a new word is or in the workplace finding that out on their own.

So these are the five most essential skills that students need in order to become proficient readers.

Students don't just learn all of these instantly overnight, though. They need to go through certain steps to make sure that they cover everything in these.

I created a graphic that shows exactly what steps students need to take for each of these five skills to gain proficiency in them.

It's included in the supporting documents so just download this and print it out and hopefully that can be a good guide for you in deciding what to teach and when to teach your students.

If you're interested in finding out exactly how to teach these skills and what it looks like in your classroom, check out the rest of videos in this series where I go over in a lot more depth and give real-life video examples of me teaching on each of these little steps in the Big 5. And it includes all the materials that you need to implement it in your classroom, so you can just watch print and teach the very next day.

Thank you so much for joining me in this video. I hope that it was able to be helpful to you and that now you have a little bit better of an idea of what should guide your reading instruction.

[A blooper is presented.]