

# Why is Structured Literacy the Best Approach to Learning to Read?



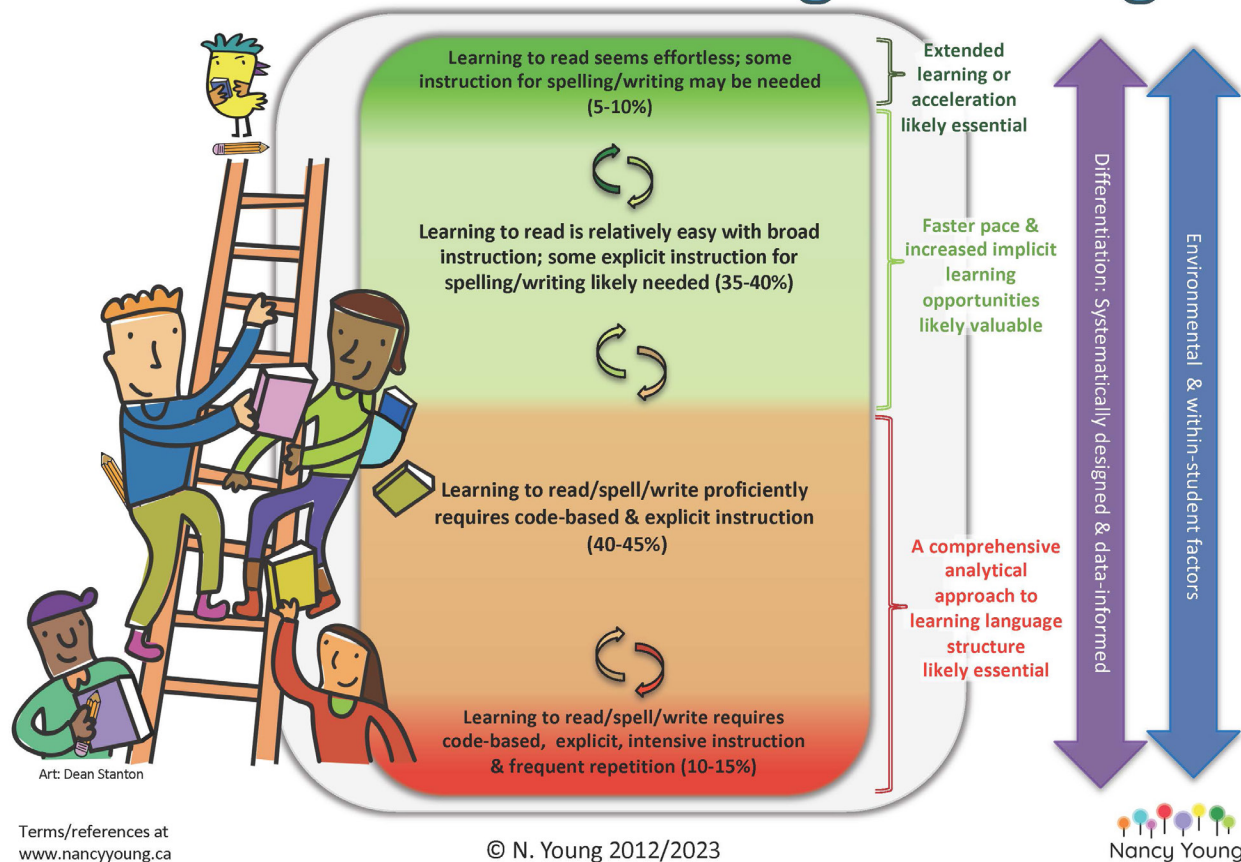
When it comes to ensuring children learn how to read, parents can't act quickly enough. Children who are unable to read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

The good news is that educators, researchers, and advocates have been working for decades to promote instruction based on a large body of evidence behind how the brain learns to read, known as the science of reading.

"Programs that follow a Structured Literacy approach help students develop knowledge of language structure, which in turn supports both reading comprehension and writing." (Dr. Louisa Moats, author of LANGUAGE! Live and LETRS)

The graphic below illustrates what is known about the diverse population of learners and the supports necessary to enable them to become proficient readers.

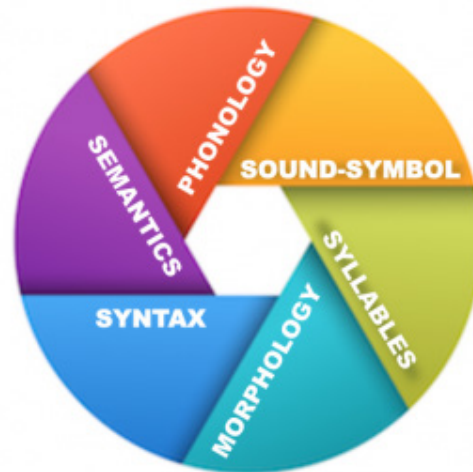
## The Ladder of Reading & Writing



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# Structured Literacy

Explicit teaching of systematic word identification and decoding strategies



## Evidence-based elements

**Source:** ©2016 Cowen for International Dyslexia Association

<https://app.box.com/s/2yqu2ke21mxs0hz9l77owdlorgvtesyq>

Structured Literacy teaches systematic word-identification/decoding strategies. These benefit most students and are vital for those with dyslexia. These specific strategies are explained below:

**Phonology** (Study of sound structure of spoken words) is a key element of Structured Literacy Instruction. **Phonemic awareness** is central to phonology. For example, in the word ship, the sounds /sh/ /i/ /p/ are the three phonemes that make up the written word, ship.

**Sound-Symbol Association (Phonics)** is the ability to associate letter or letter combinations with their sounds in reading. Students must read/say the correct sound when they see the letter in which it is associated. Additionally, students must be able to blend sounds into words for reading.

**Syllable** instruction is breaking down words into parts (syllables) with one vowel sound or pattern. Syllable division rules help readers divide/decode unfamiliar words.

**Morphology** is the set of rules that govern how morphemes (base words, prefixes, roots, and suffixes) can be combined to form words. Learning frequently used morphemes in a systematic manner not only helps spelling but also provides students with strategies for decoding.

**Syntax** is the proper order of words in a sentence or phrase and is a tool used in writing proper grammatical sentences. Some examples of syntax, or grammar, could be; parts of speech, rules for correct word order, sentence lengths, sentence types, and sentence constructions.

**Semantics** is concerned with meaning. Structured Literacy (from the start) includes instruction in the comprehension and appreciation of written language.

International Dyslexia Association: <https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/>

Kansas State Department of Education: [https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20\(A-E\)/Dyslexia/Dyslexia%20Handbook%20041221.pdf?ver=2022-02-08-091553-347](https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(A-E)/Dyslexia/Dyslexia%20Handbook%20041221.pdf?ver=2022-02-08-091553-347)

