

How do pupils learn to read?

Reading ability can pose a barrier to many pupils in accessing the curriculum. Therefore, in order to support all pupils to succeed, you should develop their ability to read so they can meaningfully engage with the curriculum.

Disciplinary literacy recognises that reading skills are both general and subject specific (EEF, 2019). For example, the requirement to decode words is a general skill, whereas the requirement to consider the author and their context when the text was written is subject specific. In biology, a pupil may read an informational text about photosynthesis and assume that is it an authoritative account, suppressing thoughts about the author, whereas, in the English classroom, a pupil could read with an active awareness of the author.

Therefore, you should support pupils to develop their reading ability regardless of the phase or subject you teach. In order to do this successfully, you need to have a foundational understanding of how pupils learn to read.

The Simple View of Reading

The Simple View of Reading identifies two main elements that are required when reading:

- **Word recognition** - pupils being able to read or accurately decode words
- **Language comprehension** - pupils' level of understanding of the text



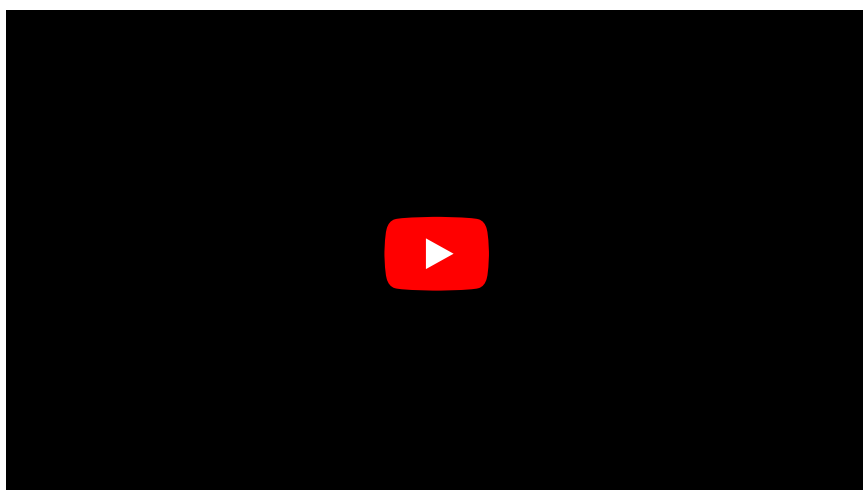
Open image in new tab: ['The Simple View of Reading'](#)

'The Simple View of Reading' Adapted from [Preparing for Literacy Guidance Report](#) (EEF, 2018)

As the graph illustrates, pupils with good decoding and good language comprehension are typically good readers. Therefore, a balanced approach to reading, which develops both word recognition and language comprehension, is essential for pupils to be able to read.

Of course, reading is much more complex than simply decoding and comprehending; these two elements are made up of multiple strands. Listen to Ruth Everett, an English and Literacy consultant, talk in more detail about the Simple View of Reading and how it can help you develop your pupils' literacy. When watching the video, consider the following questions and record your responses in the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook):

- Which components enable word recognition?
- Which components enable language comprehension?
- How can the Simple View of Reading help you to support pupils who are struggling?



Direct Link: [How pupils learn to read - Ruth Everett, Driver Youth Trust](#)

Transcript: [How pupils learn to read - Ruth Everett, Driver Youth Trust](#)

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