

Understanding how to build fluency

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Understanding dyslexia and literacy acquisition' from the Guide: [Dyslexia and learning](#)

Includes:

Teach strategies explicitly

Orthographic mapping

Word recognition

Teach the different syllable types

Fluency and comprehension

Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Dyslexia and learning](#)

Strategy: [Understanding dyslexia and literacy acquisition](#)

Suggestion: [Understanding how to build fluency](#)

Date

29 August 2025

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Teach strategies explicitly



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Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

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Orthographic mapping

Orthographic mapping is the mental process we use to store written words for immediate retrieval. It requires phoneme and letter-sound proficiency.

Students with dyslexia often have difficulty with phonemic awareness and phonic decoding, which affects their ability to read fluently and interferes with their comprehension.

Successful intervention needs to include:

- teaching phonemic awareness (including blending, segmenting, and phoneme manipulation such as deleting, adding, substituting, or reversing phonemes)
- teaching phonic skills and decoding
- providing decodable readers so students can practise reading connected text.

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Word recognition

Fluent readers recognise words almost instantaneously.

With repeated decoding of the same word, the child's brain makes a neural model, called a word form, which allows the word to be read far more quickly. Just seeing the word activates all of the necessary components at once, without any conscious thought on the part of the reader. This process is orthographic mapping.

As more word forms collect, reading fluency and reading skill levels rise dramatically.

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Teach the different syllable types



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Fluency and comprehension

There is a direct link between fluency and reading comprehension.

When students read accurately, they solidify their word recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills. Perhaps most importantly, they are likely to understand what they read – and, as a result, to enjoy reading.

Richard Allington & Rachael Gabriel

Source:

[Every child, every day](#)

<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/every-child-every-day>

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Useful resources



Orthographic mapping: Beyond the alphabetic stage of reading

A simple explanation of orthographic mapping, explaining the skills needed and suggested classroom activities for teaching those skills.

[Download PDF](#)



Building a strong foundation for learning to read

A description of the foundational skills for reading and how to build them.

Publisher: Zaner-Bolser

[Download PDF](#)



Six syllable types

A description of the different syllable types and how to teach them.

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