

# What is STRUCTURED LITERACY? A primer by Nancy Young (nancyyoung.ca)

A structured approach to teaching the structure of written text.

**Explicit, systematic & cumulative. Needs-based instruction.**

Encompasses

## Phonology

Awareness of the structures within spoken language underlies reading and spelling mastery, especially the individual speech sounds (phonemes) within words. Explicit instruction/practice using letters (graphemes) strengthens **phonemic awareness**, from identification and segmentation to the higher-level skill of phoneme manipulation.

## Orthography

Reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding) require knowledge of **the written code**. Written symbols (graphemes) which represent the phonemes in spoken words are taught in a sequence (read-aloud materials aligned as needed), addressing features such as allowable grapheme positions, word origin, and the rationale for certain spellings.

## Morphology

As well as learning about phonemes and graphemes, learning about **the units of meaning – morphemes – in words** underlies reading/spelling mastery. This includes understanding words can be made up of just one or combined units of meaning (e.g. adding one or more affixes to a free or bound base), possibly resulting in changed grapheme pronunciation.

## Syntax

Reading and writing proficiently requires knowing that words can be arranged in various ways. Instruction addresses **parts of speech** (e.g. verb, noun, preposition), how written words are organized into **sentences and paragraphs** in different **forms of text**, and the role of **punctuation**. Writing is a vital part of reading instruction, building from the foundational stages.

## Semantics

Instruction focuses on the **many different meanings that words can represent** in various forms of text. As reading and writing skills grow, vocabulary and background knowledge are continually built up. Comprehension (both spoken and written language) is steadily developed and strengthened. A **rich language learning environment** grounds all learning.

PHONICS

Components taught as simultaneously as possible

Sources:

Wolf (2007), Spear-Swerling (2018), Brady (2020).

Links to these resources and additional supporting resources for educators and parents can be found at [www.nancyyoung.ca](http://www.nancyyoung.ca)

Nancy's book *Secret Code Actions™* contains Clues, Alerts and Detective Enrichment relating to the above skills PLUS creative actions and games offer ways to enhance any program of instruction by weaving in specific movements for code-based concepts during lessons and/or practice sessions. Children need to move more; moving while learning can make code mastery more engaging and fun for all ages and stages. A win-win!

Find out more, and see specific examples, at [www.SecretCodeActions.com](http://www.SecretCodeActions.com)

