

The Reading Rope

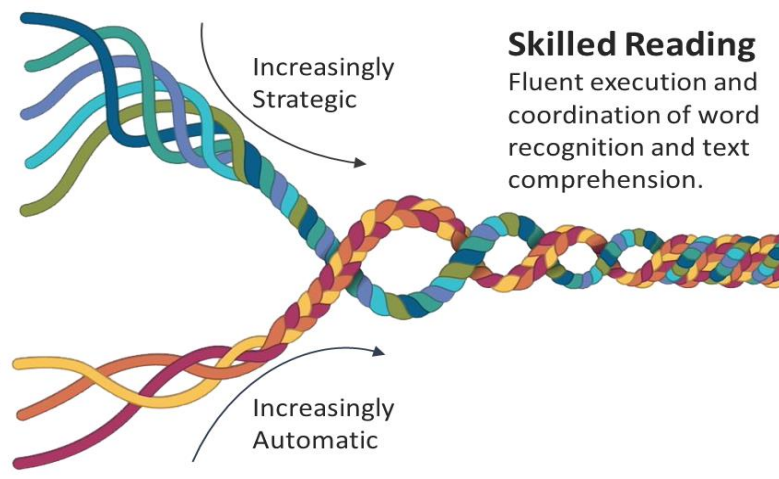
Dr. Hollis Scarborough (2001) compares skilled reading to the many strands of a rope. Each strand represents a separate skill that when combined with the others, creates a strong, proficient reader. When any one strand (skill) is not acquired with fluency, it weakens the strength of the rope. Scarborough's model depicts each skill as a strand woven together to form either language comprehension and word recognition, and then those two woven together to form skilled reading (reading comprehension). Students must receive instruction that supports all of these skills in order to develop into a skilled reader. (Hennessey. Oct. 12, 2020)

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy*. NY: Guilford Press.

Lower Reading Rope – The Word-Recognition Strands:

Phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition of familiar words work together as the reader becomes accurate, fluent, and increasingly automatic with repetition and practice.

Upper Reading Rope – Language Comprehension Strands:

Once readers have mastered word recognition, the dominant factor contributing to proficient reading comprehension is language comprehension ability. This is the ability to simultaneously integrate and organize information from various language systems into a single meaningful representation.

All the strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope are interdependent and develop over time. The lower strands require increasing automaticity; whereas, the upper strands require readers to become increasingly strategic in the use and integration of their ever-growing language abilities.



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Regular reading impacts a child's success at school.
If not addressed early the educational gap widens...

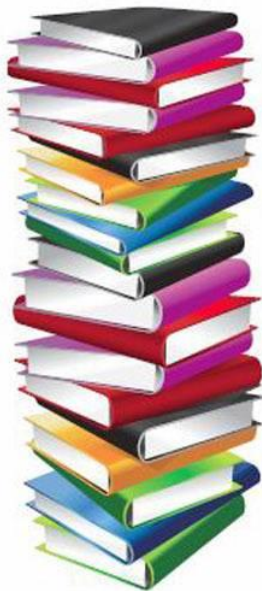
Child A



Reads 20 minutes
per day

3,600 minutes
per school year

1,800,000 words
per school year



Scores in the
90th percentile

Child B



Reads 5 minutes
per day

900 minutes
per school year

282,000 words
per school year



Scores in the
50th percentile

Child C



Reads 1 minute
per day

180 minutes
per school year

8,000 words
per school year



Scores in the
10th percentile

Standardised Test Scores

By the end of grade 6, Child A will have read the equivalent of 60 school days, Child B will have read for 12 school days and Child C will have read for 3 days. Nagy and Herman, 1987.