Key Reading Terms

Phonics Instruction
Teaches children the relationship between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language.

These programs follow the direct teaching of a set of letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence. Direct Instruction is a hallmark of this kind of program with a belief that all concepts must be explicitly taught, nothing is left to guess work.

Research has shown that a systematic program that follows the direct teaching of letter/sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence that is explicitly taught is the most effective way to learn how to read.

CVC Word
A word that has a consonant-vowel-consonant.

Base Word or Root Word
The main part of a word in which a prefix and/or suffix may be added (e.g. **write**, **re**write, writ**ing**).

Blend
Two consonant sounds commonly found together in words, with the consonants retaining their separate sounds (e.g. **fr**og or la**st**).

Digraph
Two consonants represent one single speech sound (**ch**op, wi**sh**, **th**at, **wh**en, ba**ck**).

Syllable
A word or a part of a word with a talking vowel. There are six syllable types: 1. Closed Syllable (e.g. c**a**t), 2. Vowel-Consonant-e (e.g. m**ake**), 3. Open Syllable (e.g. g**o**), 4. Vowel Team (e.g. r**ai**n, m**ee**t, c**oi**n), 5. R-Controlled (e.g. b**ar**n, c**or**n), 6. Consonant-le (e.g. ta**ble**)

Consonants
These are letters that represent certain speech sounds. They are made when our vocal tract is partially open or closed. They are all the letters of the English alphabet except a, e, i, o, and u.

Vowels
They are what give the rhythm to the English language. When we say a vowel, our mouth opens in a way that consonants do not. Vowels play an essential role in reading and are challenging for early readers because a variety of letter combinations can make up additional vowel sounds (e.g. ea says /ē/ such as heat and ay says /ā/ such as day).

Decoding
This is the process that occurs in reading. It is segmenting the sounds represented by the letters in a word and then blending the sounds to make a meaningful word.

Sight Words/Trick Words/Dolch Words
Words that do not follow the rules and are pronounced differently (e.g. was, said), OR are words that have spelling patterns that students have not learned yet (e.g. me, for).

Fluency
The ability to read accurately, quickly and with expression.

Encoding
This is the process that occurs in spelling. It is segmenting the sounds of a word, translating each phoneme into its corresponding letter and then spelling the word.

Sentence
A sentence is about somebody or something doing something.

Example 1: Alex (somebody) sat (doing something) in a chair.

Example 2: The dish (something) fell (doing something) off the table.