

Read

by Rodney Martin

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The old Germanic word *rēdan* 'to advise or explain' became *rædan* and later *reden* in Old English. In only two languages the word *reden* came to mean 'to understand writing'—English read and Icelandic *rādha*. A related word is *riddle*.

“Riddle-me, riddle-me, ree, there’s something I can see...” To young children, reading is a riddle or code to be cracked. Often, the first word they learn is the most important in their lives – their name.

Often parents associate learning to read with knowing shapes and sounds of letters. *Hweover, a radeer can raed wrdos eevn wehn the mdilde lterets are meixd up.* This proves that you use more than phonics to understand text. We read whole words and use grammar and meaning to understand text.

Modern teaching uses a combination of three main approaches in teaching children to read:

- Sounds and shapes of letters and words (She cannot **reach/beach/peach** the shelf.)
- Grammar or word order (The **bad big/big bad** wolf chased the little pig.)
- The sense of meaning (The fox **jumped/juggled** into its hole.)

But skill is not what reading is all about. Some call this ‘barking at print’. Reading’s real purpose is understanding (comprehension) and satisfaction (entertainment, information).

Schools also teach children to read between the lines, to use their imagination, to have an opinion about what they are reading and to understand how pictures have meaning.

If the learning experience is not enjoyable, children can feel that reading is more suffering than pleasure. You are the greatest influence in your child having a passion for reading.

“If you’re bored, read a book.”

“Why don’t you and Dad read?”

Monkey see; monkey do. Are there books beside DVDs and games in your home? Is reading an activity shared at bedtime with you? Do your children enjoy e-books?

Passion is emotion. Use your powerful influence on your child’s emotions and values by sharing books with them daily.