

## Background:

- Orthographic learning refers to learning about letters, letter patterns, and written words
- Semantic learning involves learning about the meanings of word
- Aim: To investigate orthographic and semantic learning while reading and find out whether these two kinds of learning are associated with their ability to read words and read for comprehension



## What was done:

139 children (8-9 years) read 12 stories that each contained four repetitions of a made-up word, or nonword (e.g., 'yafe'). After reading, they were questioned on those nonwords:

1. To look at *orthographic learning*: children produced and recognised the spelling of the nonwords
2. To look at *semantic learning*: children produced, recognised and matched the meanings of the nonwords

Children also completed a *word reading* activity where they read as many words as they could in 45 seconds, and a *reading comprehension* activity where they read short texts and answered multiple choice questions.



Picture Source: Nick Youngsen, <http://nyphotographic>

## What was found:

- Learning about orthography influenced word reading, and in turn, reading comprehension
- Semantic learning influenced reading comprehension but not word reading



## What this could mean:

- Children's ability to learn the spelling of words and the meanings of words seems to be related to their progress in reading comprehension, in line with the simple view of reading
- Children's ability to learn the spelling of words seems to be important for progress in word reading, in line with Share's self-teaching hypothesis

**The simple view of reading:** Both word reading processes and language comprehension processes are necessary for skilled reading with comprehension

**The self-teaching hypothesis:** Phonics allows children to teach themselves to read words that they haven't seen before, which in turn improves their word reading skills