

Research question:

Does the way that a new word is presented within a story influence children's ability to learn it?

- Listening or reading or both at the same time;
- With or without a definition



What was done?

- Valentini wrote a story containing eight unusual words that children had not seen before.
- The children were split into three groups of equal ability – one group read the story, one heard the story, and one read the story while listening to it.
- Children completed the task twice, one week apart, and were assessed on their comprehension of the story on both occasions.
- After the second exposure to the story, children were tested on their memory for the words.



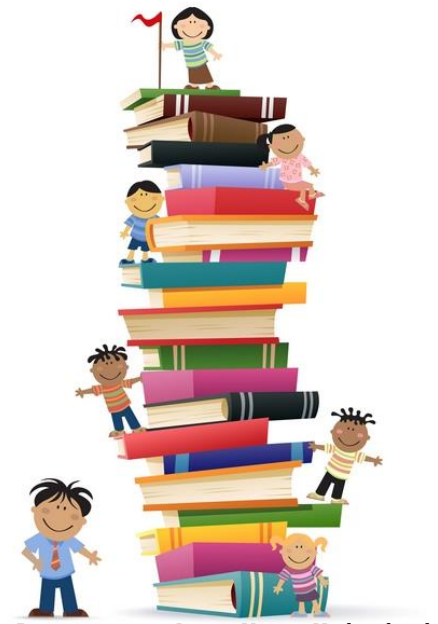
What was found?

- Listening to the story *while reading it* aided comprehension more than just reading it.
- When children both listened to the story and read the story at the same time, they were better able to recognise the new word when written and understand the meaning of the new word.



What this could mean:

- Children can self-teach the pronunciation of words even if they haven't heard them before, but struggle to self-teach spelling patterns unless they see them.
 - This suggests that reading is likely to be more beneficial than listening for a fuller understanding, but dual presentation is optimal.
- When the spoken and written forms of words are presented, children are better able to remember what they mean.
- Children can efficiently infer the meaning of new words from context, but adding a definition can aid their understanding of more specific information.
- For the classroom: this suggests that reading texts aloud while asking children to read along may be the best way to encourage word learning.
 - This strategy can be readily incorporated into classroom teaching with very little cost in terms of time and resources.



Picture source: James Young High School

What did they learn?

Norman words: **furrier, motte, palisade, wain, destrier, hauberk, trencher**