

## National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

How does systematic and explicit phonics instruction affect the reading and spelling of older students?

Systematic phonics instruction by itself may not be enough to significantly improve the overall reading and spelling performance of readers beyond first grade. The effects of phonics instruction on students in second through sixth grades are limited to improving their word reading and oral text reading skills. The effects do not extend to spelling and reading comprehension. For these students, it is important to emphasize reading fluency and comprehension. In addition, these students also require explicit spelling instruction to improve their spelling.

How long should phonics be taught?

Approximately two years of phonics instruction is sufficient for most students. If phonics instruction begins early in kindergarten, it should be completed by the end of first grade. If phonics instruction begins early in first grade, it should be completed by the end of second grade.

[http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/prf\\_k-3/Pages/PRF-teachers-k-3-phonics.aspx](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/prf_k-3/Pages/PRF-teachers-k-3-phonics.aspx)

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