

Learning to Read

It is well known that exposing children to the wonder and richness of story from the earliest age is key to overall language and cognitive development. Multiple studies have demonstrated that when parents or caregivers read “quality” literature to their babies, these children had increased vocabulary and reading skills four years later. In summary, the more that children are read to and read themselves, the longer their attention spans and the better they are able to succeed in school.

As believers, we also understand that the benefits of reading are not limited to success in school. Reading is key to virtue development and character formation; stories teach us about our humanity and our need for a Savior. **It is the vehicle through which we better understand our Savior and consequently live out our faith and fulfill the Great Commission.** With such an important directive, what can we do to help our children develop this vital skill?

One of the best gifts you can provide for your child is the setting aside of time each day to read at home, both individually and together. Have younger students read out loud to you. Follow up with your children about what they are reading. Ask them questions based on themes and reading comprehension questions you have heard about from your child’s teacher. Help them make connections and apply what they are reading to build their character. Have your child narrate the story to someone else. Lastly, be sure that your child is reading quality literature in multiple genres that will help them learn about and understand the world around them. For guidance on where to find quality literature, visit www.classicalreader.com.



Seeking Extra Support

When a child is falling behind their peers in reading (or any academic area), it’s important to come alongside them and let them know they are loved and supported. Once you have taken the steps listed above, here are some next steps your child’s teacher may advise:

Set up an “On-Level” reading program. If your child knows their basic phonograms, but their fluency isn’t where it needs to be, or if they are having problems transferring their fluency skills to non-LOE readers, your teacher may recommend creating an on-level reading program for extra practice at home.



Referral to Academic Support. If your child continues to struggle in the classroom after home support and implementing classroom-level support strategies, the teacher may refer your child to the Academic Support team. A teacher makes a referral to Academic Support by filling out a Student Success Referral form highlighting your child’s specific difficulties. An Academic Support Specialist will observe your child in the classroom, implement assessments, and make recommendations and referrals based on your child’s unique needs. The Academic Support team will work closely with the teacher and parents to determine the next steps.

Learning to read at



EDUCATING TO GLORIFY GOD



Our mission is to glorify God by providing an excellent classical Christian education founded upon a biblical worldview which equips students to live purposefully and intelligently in service to God and others.

Logic of English

At Arma Dei, we use The Logic of English (LOE) curriculum to teach basic English language skills, including reading, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and sentence composition. The curriculum is built around learning a defined set of phonograms, spelling rules, and grammar rules. It is scientifically designed to build skill upon skill until students have all the tools they need to pick up any book and decipher it. With this in mind, we recommend doing the following in order to support the development of your child's reading skills in the most effective way:

Review at home what is being taught in class. Every teacher sends out a weekly newsletter detailing what phonograms, rules, and readers were taught during the week, and highlighting what is coming the next week. You can support your child by reviewing this information with them at home.

Learn LOE yourself. Having a common language between home and school is vital to avoid confusing your child. Accordingly, we recommend that parents learn the curriculum themselves for maximum benefit. If your child is a struggling reader, the following steps will be particularly helpful:

1. Acquire LOE teaching material for home use

- Purchase Basic Phonogram Flashcards and/or other flashcards (spelling, grammar, handwriting, morpheme).
- Download the Logic of English App and/or use the interactive phonogram chart on their website, both of which are free (www.logicofenglish.com).

2. Learn LOE teaching methods:

- Memorize the items in the materials section above.
- View the free training videos in the resources section of the website or (for a fee) complete LOE's new Master Teacher Training. The Spelling List videos under "Free Resource Videos" are particularly helpful.

3. Observe:

- Arrange a time with your child's teacher where you can visit their class and see LOE teaching methods in action.

Help with Comprehension. Helping a child understand what they read is the final step and ultimate goal in the "learning to read" process. Ask your child as many questions as you can to help them summarize, evaluate, analyze, and connect with what they are reading.

1. Summarize/Retell

- Who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Sequence of events: first, then, next, last
- Simple plot: beginning, middle, end

2. Story Structure

- Characters
- Setting
- Problem/Conflict
- Solution
- Main Idea

3. Analysis

- Cause and Effect: What happened and why did it happen?
- Compare/Contrast: Can you describe and compare various characters, settings, conflicts?
- Application: How do you feel about the story? What connection do you have to the story? How can this information be used to honor God and improve the world around you?



Fluency

The first step in the science of reading is being able to sound out the words on the page. Kindergarten students focus on learning the sounds of the letters and reading short and long vowel words. First graders focus on reading more complicated blends and sight words. In second and third grades, students practice these skills to build greater fluency, or speed. The goal is for them to read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support and enhance their comprehension.

Fluency Goals

Arma Dei Academy has adopted the following guidelines for reading fluency. **By the completion of each grade**, students are expected to be able to read at the following fluency rates (words per minute):

First: 75 wpm

Second: 100 wpm

Third: 130 wpm

Fourth: 140-170 wpm

Fifth and up: 195 and up

Oral Reading Skills

Flow: smooth, not choppy

Enunciation: each word is comprehensible

Expression: tone of the passage is reflected in reader's voice (pitch, timing, emotion)

Volume: not too loud or too soft

Emphasis: placed on key words

Posture: steady, with good eye tracking

Punctuation: properly observed to guide the reader in the author's meaning, not overrun or ignored