

Yo-yo Phonics Stars

Introduction to Synthetic Phonics

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Introduction to Synthetic Phonics

A little reflection before we begin

Place your fingertips on your temples and run them across your forehead till they meet in the centre, then slide them gently down your nose. When you reach your mouth, fan them out. Can you feel it? Can you feel the path your thoughts follow every day? That is what language is; it is the way we share what is in our minds with others. Language, its expression and its understanding are, therefore, extremely important for managing everyday situations. How is language presented to us? We are constantly moving between oral and written language. In our daily life, the ability to connect and interpret both oral and written language is essential.

Spontaneous storytelling

The desire to communicate and understand what others want to tell us is part of human nature. When we speak to our children in another language, in this case English, they have an immediate desire to understand. Our task is to help them understand by using all the resources available to us.

The question: What can we talk about with our children?

Take a moment to think about it. What do they talk to each other about? What do they talk about with their parents, their brothers and sisters, their grandparents? A child's world is fascinating: it is reality seen through the eyes of someone seeing it for the first time; a reality they touch, smell, taste, hear and feel for the first time.

A memory test

Try this little test of your memory and imagination: Do you remember the first time you jumped in a puddle? What did you hear? Did the water splash everywhere? Did you get wet? Did you feel cold? Did you mind? Did you get dirty? What shoes were you wearing? Wellington boots? What colour were they? Were they like your friend's wellies, your sister's wellies, your neighbour's wellies? Did you try jumping in with both feet? On just one foot? Did you bend down to splash with your hand? Did you smell it? Did you notice a leaf floating across the puddle? Where had the water come from? Had it fallen from the sky? Had it rained? Or was it a puddle that had formed around a flowerpot? And why did the water disappear after a while? Who took it away?

We could go on like this for hours, days, even weeks. If only we could be like children and keep asking ourselves questions our whole lives.



The answer

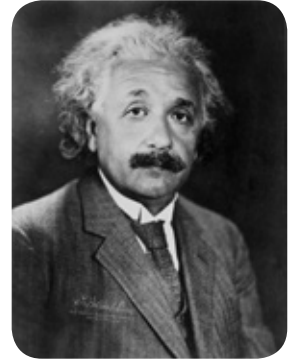
The answer to what can we talk about with our children is right there, in small, everyday occurrences. Following the thread of their questions, we can access a whole host of funny, exciting and crazy stories. And who doesn't like a good story? We are all great storytellers: every time we share something funny, sad or tragic that has happened to us or someone we know.

Children also enjoy these stories, especially if they play a major role in them themselves.

Einstein, a grown-up child

"When I ask myself precisely why it was me who discovered the theory of relativity, I think it must be due to the following circumstance. A normal adult never dwells on problems related to time and space. Everything there was to think about, in their opinion, they *already thought about* when they were young children. I, on the other hand, developed so slowly that I only began to think about time and space when I was an adult. As a result, I got more caught up in the problem than a normal child would have done."

(Albert Einstein, according to *The Act of Creation* by A. Koestler)



A different methodology

Let's go back to the beginning. Put extremely simply, oral language enters through our ears and leaves through our mouths, while written languages enters through our eyes and leaves through the tips of our pencils. These two forms of expression have something in common: in both cases comprehension is fundamental.

But, what exactly is comprehension? Let me provide an example. I can say / write 'child, hair, run, horse, blue, black, white, green, wind, eyes and field'. You all understand those words, but written as just a string of words, they are easily forgotten. However, if I say 'The child with blue eyes and black hair runs like the wind through a green field after a white horse', it is surely much easier to remember the words. Why? Because you are able to visualise what is being said. Language comprehension takes place when we are more or less able to visualise something, and the ability to visualise is closely linked to personal experience.

How can we help our children understand / visualise?

By telling them stories. What kind of stories? Stories that they feature in, stories that contain emotions, tenderness, humour, etc., which is precisely what **Yo-yo Phonics Stars** offers: lots of small stories, anecdotes from daily life that the children can identify with, and with which they can connect emotionally. However, we also need to continue working on the children's ability to understand / visualise language using a wide variety of activities: picture sequences, songs, games, activity sheets with simple instructions, etc.

With **Yo-yo Phonics Stars** you will be working on all the topics relevant to childhood, for example, the body, feelings, hygiene, family, the house, school, colours, numbers, shapes, food, animals, seasons, landscapes, transport, the days of the week, etc. However, the corresponding vocabulary will be introduced through short stories that, together with their respective songs, games and activities, will help you work on vocabulary in context, rather than as isolated words in lists.



This article and others are available online to both teachers and families at recursos.edelvives.es.

They can also be consulted via these QR codes:



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The art of storytelling



Black on white: the written word