



Building Blocks of Language

A useful metaphor for learning to read is to imagine the building of a palace. If it is to stand high, it must first have a secure foundation. Each stone from the bottom up must be squarely in place, or the whole mass will come tumbling down.

In reading, our building blocks are the sounds of the letters. In order to build with these blocks we also need some understanding of different syllable types and the rules that help us know how to sound them out.

If we play with each new sound, each new kind of syllable, and each new rule or generalization, one by one as we learn them, we can feel confidence and pride at every step. We can build a castle for our language to be the dwelling place of our thoughts. We can also build a boat for our language to sail through reading with every board tightly caulked and the wind forever at our backs.

