

1. Many words in the English language are not spelled regularly. Present a case for beginning formal reading instruction with the regular phonics of English spelling. Why is this not the contradiction it appears to be?
2. Create a list of 10 decodable words that could ideally be taught using a phonics method. Make another list of 10 irregular words that might be introduced by asking students to pay careful attention to their visual peculiarities. What would you tell students about the differences between these two types of words? How might you teach the irregular words as sight words?
3. Simulate a discussion you might lead with a first- through third-grade Spanish-speaking English learner who is literate in Spanish about the similarities and differences between the (1) alphabetic principle and (2) phonics in English and Spanish based on the suggestions provided in the section “Strategies for English Learners.”

4. Why might a beginning reader naturally confuse the letters p, b, q, and d? What other activities might have been undertaken before the task of reading in order to address this issue? How would you explain this letter confusion to parents who are convinced their child has a more serious problem, such as dyslexia?

5. Explain in your own words why an increase in fluency—speed, accuracy, and prosody—might be related to an increase in reading comprehension.