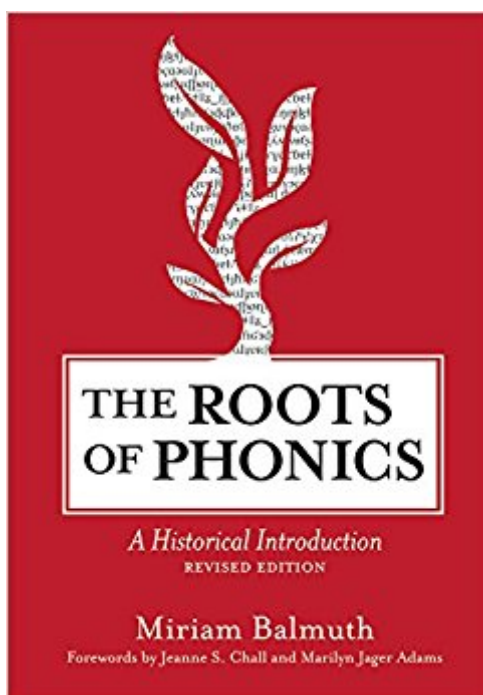


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# The Roots Of Phonics: A Historical Introduction, Revised Edition



## Synopsis

To teach phonics effectively to children learning to read, education professionals need a deep understanding of the nuances and complexities of the English language. That's why this highly influential classic is more important than ever. A book that shaped the work of the most respected and prominent literacy experts, *The Roots of Phonics* is finally back in print to enlighten a new generation of professionals—many of whom have not had phonics instruction themselves. Through this clear and concise history of how modern English phonics developed, readers will trace the evolution of familiar language concepts: the alphabet, syllables, vowels and consonants, spelling, pronunciation, punctuation marks, and more. As readers uncover the "big picture" of phonics and the forces that shaped it, they'll learn fascinating facts such as why our alphabet has 26 letters, what sparked the phonics vs. whole language debate, how Spanish, French, Dutch, Native American, and other languages influenced the development of American English, what phonemes, graphemes, and morphemes are, and how they relate to each other, how the invention of movable type affected writing and spelling, why British spellings faded from American English, how different pronunciations take hold in different regions of the country. More than a history lesson, this landmark book strengthens readers' understanding of the English language and illuminates the long-time importance of phonics in education—critical insights they'll use as they help children learn to read. A must for the library of every education professional, SLP, and researcher who works to promote children's literacy.

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Brookes Publishing; Revised edition (March 4, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1598570366

ISBN-13: 978-1598570366

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.7 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #289,204 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #106 in [Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Phonetics & Phonics](#) #1173 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Linguistics](#) #74667 in [Books > Textbooks](#)

## Customer Reviews

A splendid read and a meticulously researched book. . . offers rich and unique insights on the role phonics plays in different writing systems and its impact on how reading development and instruction are conceptualized. Should be required reading for all engaged in fostering literacy. --G Reid Lyon, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Education Policy and Leadership, Southern Methodist University

I always keep this book within easy reach because I can rely on its accuracy, thoroughness, and detailed documentation of historical sources. Balmuth's scholarship is impeccable. --Louisa Moats, Ed.D., author of *Speech to Print*

The original *Roots of Phonics* was a major resource for my own dissertation. Thankfully, the book is back in print for linguists, teachers and all persons interested in the history of written language and its importance to reading instruction. --Marcia Henry, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, San Jose State University

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Miriam Balmuth is Professor Emeritus of Hunter College of the City University of New York. Dr. Balmuth received a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from New York University and an M.S. in Elementary Education with a specialization in developmental and remedial reading at The City College of New York. Formerly Professor of Education, she helped develop and then headed the M.S. program in Reaching Teacher Education at Hunter College. She has been a classroom teacher and a reading clinician. Marilyn Jager Adams, Ph.D., is a cognitive and developmental psychologist who has devoted her career to research and applied work in the area of cognition and education. Dr. Adams's scholarly contributions include the book *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print* (MIT Press, 1994). Among honors, she has received the American

Educational Research Association's Sylvia Scribner Award and The International Dyslexia Association's Samuel Torrey Orton Award. Dr. Adams chaired the planning committee for the National Academy of Sciences (1998) report Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children and has served since 1992 on the planning or steering committees for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading. She also developed a vocabulary assessment for the 2014 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) and was on the development team for the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy. Dr. Adams has authored a number of empirically validated classroom resources, including Odyssey: A Curriculum for Thinking (Charlesbridge Publishing, 1986), which was originally developed for barrio students in Venezuela; Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum (Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1998) on language and literacy basics for emergent readers and students with special needs; Open Court's 1995 edition of Collection for Young Scholars, a program for reading, writing, and literacy development for elementary school students; and Scholastic's System 44 (2009) and iRead (2013), technology-based programs for building literacy foundations. She has also served on the advisory board for several of the Public Broadcasting System's educational programs including Sesame Street and Between the Lions, for which she was Senior Literacy Advisor. Dr. Adams spent most of her career with the think tank Bolt Beranek & Newman (BBN Technologies-"Where Wizards Stay up Late") in Cambridge, Massachusetts. From 2000 to 2007, she was Chief Scientist at Soliloquy Learning, which she cofounded with the goal of harnessing automatic speech recognition for helping students learn to read and read to learn. She is currently a visiting scholar in the Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences Department at Brown University. She has two children: John, who is working toward a Ph.D. in social psychology, and Jocie, who is striving to be a musician. Her husband, Milton, is a rocket scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Charles Stark Draper Labs.

Language is an intriguing history all its own. Now in a newly revised edition, "The Roots of Phonics: A Historical Introduction" takes a look at the development of language throughout human history. English is a fascinating language, drawing heavily from neighboring languages such as Spanish, French, and the Native American tongues. Discussing the roots of our alphabet, the revolution of moving type and grammar, "The Roots of Phonics" is simply a must read to anyone who has wondered why they're saying the words they're saying.

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