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## Session 2: Background: What Is Decoding?

### Session Summary

**D**ecoding is the process of translating print into speech by rapidly matching graphemes (a letter or sequence of letters) to phonemes (sounds), syllables, and morphemes (meaningful parts of words). It is a tool that enables students to become proficient readers who recognize words effortlessly and rapidly. Because English is an alphabetic language, teaching students to decode words is a crucial element of an effective reading program. Automatic recognition of individual words leads to the fluent readings of strings of words, which in turn leads to full comprehension—the goal of reading instruction.

### Session Objectives

At the end of this session, teachers will be able to:

- define phonological awareness, decoding, and automaticity, and understand the relationship of each to overall reading proficiency.
- explain how Chall's Stages of Reading Development relates to phonics instruction and the middle-grade reader.
- explain the origins of English spelling patterns.

