

**Brief comments on Hard Words (*Why aren't kids being taught to read?*)**

***S. Krashen. Sept 16, 2018***

**Hard Words (<https://tinyurl.com/ybgv4742>) champions systematic intensive phonics, teaching all the rules of phonics in a strict order to all children.**

**Here are objections to their conclusions.**

**(1) Researchers admit we have not discovered all the rules.**

**(2) Even among those rules that have been described, some are extremely complex.**

**(3) Many children learn to read with little or even no phonics instruction.**

**(4) Studies show that intensive phonics produces strong results only on tests in which children pronounce words out of context. Systematic intensive phonics has little or no impact on tests in which children have to understand what they read.**

**(6) The best predictor of performance on tests in which children have to understand what they read is real reading, especially self-selected reading.**

**(7) “Basic phonics” can be helpful: teaching straight-forward rules that children can learn and can actually apply to texts to make them more comprehensible. Our ability to use complex rules is acquired as a result of reading.**

**(8) I know of no scholars or teachers who support “zero phonics.”**

**Supporting bibliography is available for free download at [sdkrashen.com](http://sdkrashen.com), section on phonics and phonemic awareness. Many of these points have been presented by Frank Smith and Kenneth Goodman.**

**Hard Words strongly supports the report of the National Reading Panel. For another point of view, please see papers in the Phi Delta Kappan by Garan, by Krashen, and by Yatvin. I will supply references if requested.**