

**Listening as the Foundation of Reading Comprehension:
The Effects of Text Genre**

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Contemporary models of reading development assume that reading involves decoding and general language comprehension skills. Their theoretical precursor, the unitary process view, postulates a single mechanism or set of skills underlying all language comprehension, regardless of input modality. Empirical evidence has generally supported this perspective by showing a close association between listening and reading comprehension and no effects of presentation mode (oral vs. written language) on a variety of comprehension measures. Nevertheless, most of the research has controlled for notable differences between oral and written language pertaining to vocabulary, syntactic, and semantic complexity as well as communicative function and support. In addition, studies that have examined this relationship with extended text have done so with a particular genre: the narrative text. However, a set of two studies comparing comprehension development and level of oral and printed narrative and expository texts, have provided evidence for divergence both in the prediction patterns and the levels of comprehension skill that could not be fully accounted for by early exposure to oral texts of either kind. These text effects render a “Simple View” of reading a bit more complex, suggesting that the transfer of even well-developed listening skills to reading tasks cannot be taken for granted and that reading comprehension deserves to also be the focus of reading instruction.