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## Nurturing a lexical legacy: language experience and learning to read words

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Kate Nation is Professor in Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of St John's College, Oxford. Her research is concerned with language processing, especially reading development. She is interested in how children learn to read words and comprehend text, and more generally, the relationship between spoken language and written language. A key aim at present is to specify some of the mechanisms involved in the transition from novice to expert. She also studies language processing in skilled adults, addressing the issue of how skilled behaviour emerges via language learning experience, and reading processes in people with developmental disorders that influence reading and language. For more information visit [www.readoxford.org](http://www.readoxford.org) and follow her on twitter @ReadOxford.

### Abstract

The scientific study of reading has taught us much about the beginnings of reading in childhood. Similarly, there is a large evidence base charting the cognitive processes that characterise skilled word recognition in adults. Less understood is how children develop orthographic expertise. What factors are critical for children to move from novice to expert? This talk will outline the critical role of experience in this transition. Reading experience provides much more than repeated exposure to individual words in isolation. Words are experienced in meaningful language environments that capture events in the world. According to the lexical legacy perspective, outlined in this talk, this type of experience is important for word reading development. At its heart is the idea that reading provides exposure to words in many different contexts, episodes, and experiences which, over time, sum to a rich and nuanced database about their lexical history within an individual's experience. These encounters bring about local variation at the word level: a lexical legacy that is measurable during word reading behaviour, even in skilled adults.