

Pelli, D. G., Farell, B. & Moore, D. C. The remarkable inefficiency of word recognition. *Nature* **423**, 752-756 (2003). <http://psych.nyu.edu/pelli/index.html#pelli2003nature.pdf>

**Figure S1. By letter or by word?** In Fig. 1b the faint lettering on a white background is at the limits of what can be rendered reliably on the printed page. If the contrast is too high the whole line will be visible. If too low, nothing will be seen. To accommodate such variations in rendering and the possibility that the reader's contrast sensitivity might be above or below normal, the demonstration is reproduced below at several contrasts, doubling in contrast from line to line. Use the first nonblank line, and ignore the rest. The (just barely visible) letter on the left has the same contrast energy (but  $\sqrt{5}$  the contrast) as the (invisible) middle word. And it has the same contrast (but  $1/5$  the energy) as the word on the right. Note that the letter (left) is much more readable than the word (middle) with equal contrast energy and is equally readable as the word (right) with equal contrast. This is consistent with recognition by parts, and inconsistent with recognition as wholes. The letters are a-z. The words are the 26 most common five-letter words in print<sup>24</sup>.

h	other	
u	great	
y	those	house
o	state	years
z	three	still
b	could	under
v	right	there
p	never	after
s	since	world