A Study of the Irregular Words Taught With Their Spelling-Families in Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics

A Study in Common Sense Instruction
and
High-Level Pedagogical Efficiency

Prepared by Donald L. Potter
November 4, 2010
Irregular Words in Each Skill Level of Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics

Level 1: Deck 1: Cards 1 – 36, Lessons 1 – 14, First Reader 1.
Phonics Skills: short ā, single letter consonants, ck, qu
Irregular Words: was,

Phonics Skills: ā, ē, ĭ, ő, ũ, ph, th
Irregular Words: cell, sell, off/of, dog, son, ton, won, bull, pull, full.

Level 3: Deck 3: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 29 – 37; First Reader 3.
Phonics Skills: Consonant digraphs: sh, ch wh; you, I, we, he she, they, are, have were, contractions.
Irregular words: wash, bush, push, what.

Level 4: Deck 4: Cards 1 - 18, Lessons 38 – 39; First Reader 4.
Phonics Skills: Two-Syllable, short vowel words.
Irregular Words: No irregular-words.

Level 5: Deck 5: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 40 – 49, First Reader 5.
Phonics Skills: al, all, Consonant blends: ng, ing, er, Final Consonant Blends
Irregular Words: wand, want.

Phonics Skills: More final consonant blends, 2-Syllable words w/consonant blends; Initial Consonant Blends
Irregular Words: bald, calf, half, talk, walk, halt, malt, salt, watch, once, swan, swamp.

Level 7: Deck 7: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 72 – 86, First Reader 7.
Irregular Words: ache, are, have, said, again, against, height, aunt, wear, ward, warm, warmth, swarm, warn, warp, wart, quart, dwarf, wharf.
**Level 8:** Deck 8: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 87 – 100, *First Reader 8.*

**Phonics Skills:** Long vowel ē spellings. Sentences

**Irregular Words:** knee, kneel, [been], [be, he, me, we, she], [sweat, threat], [sweater, realm, dealt], [bear, pear, tear, wear, swear], [dead, head, lead, read, bread, death, breath, deaf, meant], [steak, break, great], [there, where], were, eye, friend, receive, [money, any, many], busy, key pretty, knife, [isle, aisle], [give, līve].

**Level 9:** Deck 9: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 101 – 117, *First Reader 9.*

**Phonics Skills:** ough, gh=f, Long vowel ō spellings, long and short oo, ow, ou; oy, oi; Long vowel ū spellings.

**Irregular Words:** though, soul, [come, some], [one, once, none, done], gone, [lose, whose], [move, prove], [dove, love, glove, shove]. broad, [source, court, course], owe, know, [dough, though], known, [cost, lost], [two, too, two], [do, who, you, youth], [young], [soup, group], [boor, poor, moor], [door, floor], [flood, blood], touch, wound, [rough, tough, enough], doubt, [four, pour, tour, your, fourth, mourn], youth, sure, sew, through.

**Level 10:** Deck 10: Cards 1 - 18, Lessons 118 – 128, *First Reader 10 & First Reader 11.*

**Phonics Skills:** er/ir/or/ur/ear, -le, ph-f, ci/ti/etc, mb, silent h, wr, st-s/ft-f, ch-k/ps-s, y = ĭ
The 151 Irregular Word Taught in Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics Arranged in Alphabetical Order

ache again against aisle any are aunt
bald be bear bee blood boor bread break breath broad bush busy
calf cell come cost course court
dead deaf dealt death do dog done door doubt dough dove dwarf
enough eye flood floor four fourth friend full.
give glove gone great group
half halt have he head height
isle
key knee kneel knife know known
lead live lose lost love
malt many me meant money moor mourn move
none
of off once one owe
pear poor pour pretty prove pull push quart
read realm receive rough
said salt sell sew she sweat shove some son soul soup source steak sure
swamp swan swarm sweater
talk tear there though threat through ton too touch tough tour two
walk wand want ward warm warmth warn warp wart was wash watch we
wear swear were wharf what where who whose won wound
you young your youth
Words with Untaught Phonics Elements in Each First Reader in Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics System

First Reader 1. Deck 1: Cards 1 – 36, Lessons 1 – 14,  
Phonics Skills: short ā, single letter consonants, ck, qu  
Untaught Words: No untaught words.

First Reader 2. Deck 2: Cards 1 – 36: Lessons 15 – 28,  
Phonics Skills: ā, ē, ĭ, ō, ŭ, ph, th.  
Untaught Words: No untaught words

First Reader 3: Deck 3: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 29 – 37;  
Phonics Skills: Consonant digraphs: sh, ch wh; you, I, we, he she, they, are, have were, contractions.  
Untaught Words: No untaught words.

First Reader 4: Deck 4: Cards 1-18, Lessons 38 – 39.  
Phonics Skills: Two-Syllable, short vowel words.  
Untaught Words: No untaught words.

First Reader 5: Deck 5: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 40 – 49.  
Phonics Skills: al, all, Consonant blends: ng, ing, er, Final Consonant Blends. (“We have inserted some words with vowel sounds and consonant blends that have not been taught but which are easily decoded. These words are added to ease the flow of the narrative.”)  
Untaught Words: to, for, go, no, al-so, so.

Phonics Skills: More final consonant blends, 2-Syllable words w/consonant blends; Initial Consonant Blends  
Untaught Words: orange, colors, be-gan, hurt, their.

First Reader 7: Deck 7: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 72 – 86.  
Untaught Words: chased, our, mirror, maybe, only, friend, white, pizza, cheese, grow, or, forests, almost, because, elsewhere, unrolled, property, family, into, heed, forth, into, more.
**First Reader 8**: Deck 8: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 87 – 100.

**Phonics Skills**: Long vowels ē and į spellings. Sentences.

**Untaught Words**: open, pleased, home, goodbye, smile, no, two, trained, wanted, country, predict, forest, who, people, were, turning, turn, our, burns, revolving, around, going, would, mouse, Rambo, most, some, bathrobe, mother.

**First Reader 9**: Deck 9: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 101 – 117,

**Phonics Skills**: ough, gh=f, Long vowel ō spellings, long and short oo, ow, ou; oy, oi; Long vowel ū spellings.

**Untaught Words**: known, Christmas, parents, repeat, ro-ping, parked, knock, piano, vi-o-lin, canned, chopped, refine.

**First Reader 10**: Deck 10: Cards 1 – 18, Lessons 118 – 128,

**Phonics Skills**: er/ir/or/ur/ear, -le, ph-f, ci/ti/etc, mb, silent h, wr, st-s/ft-f, ch-k/ps-s, y = ĭ.

**Untaught Words**: No untaught words.
Order of Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics Lessons
Correlated with the Blumenfeld First Readers

Prepared by Donald L. Potter
November 5, 2010

Lessons for First Reader 1

1. Short a; consonants m, n, s, t, x
2. Initial consonants S, m, h, s, t
3. Review Sentences
4. Consonants d, D, w
5. Alphabetic word building
6. Short a sentences; punctuation
7. Word building with short a; consonant l
8. Consonants l, b, c, g, f, j, l, n
9. Review of short a words
11. Consonant digraph ck, qu
12. a as a word
13. Sentences
14. Nonsense syllables with short a

Lessons for First Reader 2

15. Short vowels a, e, i, o, u
16. Short e words
17. Short e sentences
18. Nonsense syllables with short e
19. Short i words; f as ph
20. Short i sentences
21. Consonant digraph th
22. Sentences
23. Short o words
24. Short o sentences
25. Plurals s, es, and ‘s
26. Sentences
27. Short u words.
28. Short u sentences
28a. Consonants b and d

Lessons for First Reader 3

29. Consonant digraph sh
30. Consonant digraph ch
31. Consonant digraph wh
32. Review of sh, ch, wh words
33. Sentences
34. Verbs to be and to have (you, I, we, he she, they, are, have were)
35. Sentences with to be and to have
36. Contractions
37. Sentences with contractions
Lessons for First Reader 4

38. Two-syllable, short vowel words
39. Sentences with two-syllable, short-vowel words

Lessons for First Reader 5

40. a as in all; sentences
41. Consonant blend ng, ing words
42. Sentences with ing words
43. Final consonant blends nd, nt
44. Sentences
45. Final syllable er; er words and sentences
46. Final consonant blends nk, nc, nch
47. Sentences
48. Final consonant blends ct, ft, pt, xt; sentences
49. Final consonant blends sk, sp, st sentences

Lessons for First Reader 6

50. Final consonant blends lb, ld, lf, lk
51. Final consonant blends lm, lp, lt
52. Final consonant blend mp
53. Final consonant blend tch; sentences
54. Final consonant blend dge, nge
55. Final consonant blend nce, nse
56. Review of words with final consonant bends
57. Two-syllable words with consonant blends
58. Initial consonant blends bl, br
59. Initial consonant blends cl, cr
60. Initial consonant blends dr, dw
61. Initial consonant blends fl, fr
62. Initial consonant blends gl, gr, gw
63. Initial consonant blends pl, pr
64. Initial consonant blends sl
65. Initial consonant blends shr, sm, sn
66. Initial consonant blends sp, spl, spr
67. Initial consonant blends st str
68. Initial consonant blends sw, sc, sk, ser
69. Initial consonant blends tr, thr, tw
70. Words with consonant bends
71. Sentences
Lessons for First Reader 7

72. Long a
73. Long a as a-e
74. Sentences
75. Long a as ai
76. Sentences
77. Long a as ay and ey
78. Sentences
79. Long a as ei and eigh; sentences
80. Review of words with long a spellings
81. Long a homonyms
82. Two-syllable words with long a syllables
83. Vowel spellings au and aw
84. Sentences with au and aw words
85. a as in ma and car
86. Sentences

Lessons for First Reader 8

87. Long e as ee
88. Sentences
89. Long e as ea
90. Sentences
91. Long e as ee
92. Long e as ie; sentences
93. Long e as y
94. Sentences
95. ies in verbs and plural nouns
96. Review of long e words
97. Sentences
98. Long i as l, y, ie, uy; sentences
99. Long i as i-e; sentences
100. Long i as igh; sentences

Lessons for First Reader 9

101. Spelling forms ough and augh
102. f as gh
103. Long o as o-e
104. Sentences
105. Long o as oa; sentences
106. Long o as ow; sentences
107. Long o as in old; sentences
108. Common irregular words, sentences
109. oo as in good, food
110. Sentences
111. ould sounding as ood in wood; sentences
112. ow and ou as in cow and ouch
113. Sentences
114. oy as in boy; oi as in oil; sentences
115. Long u as u-e; sentences
116. Long u as ue and ui; sentences
117. Long u as ew and eu; sentences
Lessons for First Reader 10

118. er, ir, or, ur, ear; sentences
119. Words ending in le; silent t; sentences
120. f as ph
121. sh as ti, ssi, ci, ce, sci, xi, su, ssu; zh as si, su; ch as tu, ti; sentences
122. n as kn
123. m as mb; t as bt
124. Silent h
125. r as wr
126. s as st; f as ft
128. y as short i
This study was prepared to determine the number of irregular words taught in Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics Primer in their appropriate spelling-families. This is the best way to deal with irregular words because students are able to store and retrieve the spellings and their sounds quickly when they are purposefully stored in closely associated locations in the brain. Also students quickly come to realize that English spelling is systematic with only a relatively few and easily mastered anomalies.

Notice that many words usually taught as sight-words because of supposed phonics irregularities are not include in this list of irregular words because they are properly taught as regular words in Mr. Blumenfeld’s Comprehensive Phonics System.

This is essentially a spelling approach to teaching reading. It was the method of choice for over 200 years, before the locust of look-and-say method swept through the land, devouring literacy among our youth, and turning us into a second rate national in literacy. With wide adoption of Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics, America can quickly regain world dominance in literacy. If the goal is “total linguistic function” (speaking, reading, writing, and spelling), then Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics is the reading method of choice.

The “Untaught Words” in the Blumenfeld First Readers are included as an investigation into the number and type of words that have been inserted into the stories to add the flow of the narrative, and establish their phonetic structures and decoding requirements. It is to be carefully noted that the few “untaught words” simply serve the purpose of moving the narrative along and in no sense contribute to the guessing habit.

Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics can be purchased at

http://chalcedon.edu/store/Education/alpha-phonics-a-primer-for-beginning-readers/

More information on phonics and Mr. Blumenfeld’s contribution to our understanding of the process of acquisition high levels of literacy can be found on my website.

One particular of the spelling approach to teaching reading is the contribution to the early development of reading fluency. Ronald P. Carver discusses this in-depth in his scholarly book, The Cause of High and Low Reading Achievement. The theoretical and practical advantages of this approach are discussed there.

Blumenfeld’s First Readers are available in a handy 6 x 9 book. It is available on Amazon as First Readers Anthology.

www.donpotter.net