

How to Teach Your Preschool Child to Read at Home: A Primer

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How to Teach Your Preschool Child to Read at Home: A Primer

Teaching your preschool child to read at home is not a difficult task, but it does require three basic elements: time, patience, and organization. Learning how to read consists of your child learning to master the sound-symbol system of which our written language is composed. It therefore takes time to achieve such mastery. How much time? How long would it take you as an adult to master the Morse code or Pittman shorthand? It would depend on how readily you picked it up. You might find it easy; others might find it tough going. Similarly, your child's mastering the sound-symbol system depends on how quickly he learns and how well you impart the information to him. Therefore, do not set any particular time limit. *Take as much time as is needed* until he masters what has to be mastered. That's where patience comes in. What you will be teaching your child will be the foundation of a lifetime of reading and learning. Therefore, the foundation must be a good one, a solid one. Some children require more time than others during this foundation-building period. The situation is comparable to that of laying the foundation for a skyscraper. For example, the Back Bay area of Boston is composed of soft landfill, and when the John Hancock Tower, the tallest building in Boston, was being erected there, it required two years to lay the foundation. For months, hundreds of steel piles were driven deep down to bedrock, and then tons of concrete were poured before the foundation was ready to support the sixty-five-story structure. On the other hand, on Manhattan Island, which is virtually one big solid rock, it takes half as much time to lay the foundation for a comparable skyscraper. In both cases, regardless of the land conditions, the foundations are built according to what they must support in the future, and not according to any other criterion. Thus, if because of soft landfill it takes two years to lay an adequate foundation, it must take two years. There can be no possible shortcut if the structure, which is to be built on that foundation, is to be secure.

The ability to read is the foundation on which a lifetime of educational and intellectual achievement is built. Therefore, the foundation must be a solid one, based on thorough understanding. Some children, for a variety of reasons, learn more quickly than others. Some learn very slowly. But all of them, regardless of how long it may take, can master the sound-symbol system, which is the foundation of reading ability. Take as much time as you need to lay the foundation. Once the foundation is solid, the structure that rises on it will be equally secure and solid.

The first step in teaching your child to read is to teach him the alphabet. By teaching him the alphabet, we mean teaching him to recognize all twenty-six letters by name and to be able to print them and write them when asked to do so. Once he has learned to identify the letters of the alphabet by name and can write them down, then he is ready to learn their sound values. He does not have to know the alphabet letter-perfect before you start teaching him the sounds, for the simple reason that he will be learning the letters better as he uses them. Therefore, as soon as he has a fairly good acquaintance with all of the letters, you can proceed into the sound teaching phase.

How old should your child be when you teach him the alphabet? Old enough to understand what you are doing. As soon as your child has developed a sufficient speaking skill he should be ready to learn how to read. A child's school vocabulary indicates to what extent he has picked up the spoken language used around him. Deaf children can be taught to read without having heard a word of the spoken language. Thus, if your child can jabber away intelligibly, he has already expanded the use of his mind considerably and is ready to learn to read.

Before teaching your child the alphabet, tell him that a knowledge of the alphabet is necessary in order that he may learn to read. Tell him that it is the first step. Thus he will understand that learning to read is a process that takes time. A child who has learned to speak several thousand words all by himself is quite an intelligent human being, and you should acknowledge this intelligence by explaining to your child in terms he can understand how he is going to be taught to read. Children at the preschool age are forever asking questions. They are very inquisitive, and there is no reason not to give as understandable an answer as you know to any question your child may ask.

Since your child is constantly surrounded by alphabet letters—on cereal boxes, television, billboards, in reading materials at home—he will be curious about them. Tell him that once he knows the letters by name, he and they will be life-long friends, for he will be using them all of his life. So we introduce him to the alphabet in alphabetical order. There is no good reason to do it in any other way, since he will have to know them alphabetically in order to be able to use a dictionary or a phone book some day.

You introduce each letter by name. You point to the letter and tell the child, "This letter's name is *ay*." Then you point to *B* and tell him, "This letter's name is *bee*." Teach him several letters at a time. The reason why I write the names of the letters out is to remind you of the important distinction between the letter names and the letter sounds. For example, the letter *A* has four sounds, and the *ay* sound is only one of them. That sound also happens to be the name of the letter. The sound of the letter *B* is not *bee* but *buh*. Notice how impossible it is to give the sound of a consonant without adding a vowel element. In your own mind, however, the distinction between the letter sound and the letter name should be quite clear. The name is important, because the names are a means of identifying the letters, just as the names of individuals are used for that purpose. However, many people tend to confuse the letter names with the letter sounds because of their close similarity in English. In Greek the letter names—alpha, beta, gamma—are quite distinctive and there is no way of confusing them with their sounds. However, in the transfer of the alphabet from Greece to Rome, these distinctive names were lost and new names quite similar to the letter sounds were adopted.

However, there is no reason to confuse your child. He is learning the letter names and their individual shapes so that he can identify them and know one from another, just as he knows his friends by their names. If his friends had no names, how would he identify them? It would be awkward to remember them by some physical feature alone. He talks about his friends easily by referring to them by name. Thus, he will be able to talk about the letters and their distinguishing shapes by their names. Remember also that our letter names contain an element of each letter's sound, so that the letter names will also be important reminders of the letter sounds when we get to that phase.

In teaching your child the letters, teach him to print them in capital and lower-case forms as well as to write them. Such printing and writing practice makes him learn the

shapes of the letters more thoroughly. Also, he must get used to the idea that reading and writing are inseparable skills. One goes with the other. When you learn the Morse code you learn how to send messages as well as receive them. When a stenographer learns shorthand, she learns how to take dictation as well as read it back. It is the same with the alphabet. The inventor meant it to serve as a way of encoding or putting down the spoken word on paper as well as a way of decoding or translating back into spoken words the written words on paper. Thus, reading and writing, or decoding and encoding, are two parts of one skill, and both should be learned simultaneously, for the learning of one reinforces the other. In addition, it teaches the child that the alphabet is to be used as a means of conveying his thoughts in writing to others as well as a way of reading the thoughts of others. It is important that he should be an active sender of messages as well as a receiver. He is talker and listener, not just listener, and he should be able to transcribe his talk into written words with ease. Thus, we start writing from the very beginning.

There are a number of pleasant and playful ways in which the child can be taught to recognize different letters. He can cut letters out of magazine and newspaper advertisements and paste them on the blank pages of an artist's pad—each page devoted to a particular letter. This can be his own personal alphabet book, and hunting for new letters to add to his collection can teach him to recognize the letter shapes more quickly. If he asks about words, point to the different letters in the words and tell him that he will be able to read the words after he is taught the letter names and then their sounds. Tell him, “You will be able to read any word you want to after you know the letters and their sounds.”

I believe that any child is quite capable of understanding that learning is an orderly process and proceeds in logical steps. When you proceed in this way, you are teaching your child something about the learning process, which is as important to know as what he is being taught in that process. It develops an orderly approach to learning which he will be able to apply in all of his schoolwork ahead of him.

Teaching the alphabet can be fun. You can use blocks. You can use alphabet books. I would discourage the use of pictures in conjunction with learning the alphabet. The picture he should be looking at is the *letter itself*, not an apple, or a ball, or an elephant. I make this point because shortly after he knows the letters, he will be taught to identify them with sounds, and that is very crucial. A letter is a symbol of a sound. It is not the symbol of anything else. Thus, it is important for the child to see the letter as symbolizing sound, a noise. The letter is supposed to stimulate his mouth, lips and tongue to shape themselves into a particular sound. It is not supposed to make him think of an apple or an elephant. He must translate groups of letters into speech, and he will do this more easily the better he associates the letters with sounds.

The child sees lots of pictures around him. The letter is simply another picture among them. But he must know that the letter stands for something. It has a meaning. It means a sound, not an object. Sound, *nothing else*.

When the inventor of the alphabet identified each distinct sound in his language and devised a system of symbols with which each sound could be represented, his purpose was to create a direct association between a symbol and a sound. In designating a name to each symbol, he included its sound element. But it was still a matter of remembering which letter represented which sound—and the name of the letter is a much better clue to

the letter's sound than a picture of an elephant or bumblebee. It was easier to commit the letters to memory in a set alphabetical order. However, as has been pointed out, the child will learn the letters better as he uses them.

Some teachers believe it better to teach the child only a few letters at a time and to start using those letters to create words. I suppose this is as good a way to do it as any. But I think there is a virtue in taking each step at a time, so that the child develops a certain sense of logic. Learning to read is the child's first real intellectual work, and therefore it should be as logical, organized and non-confusing as possible. While learning to read he should be also learning something about method and procedure. This will set the pattern for future learning habits. The child does not have to know the alphabet letter perfect before going on to the sounds, but he should be fairly familiar with most of the letters, being able to name them and write them.

When you are ready to teach the letter sounds, you tell the child: "Now we're going to learn the sounds each letter stands for so that you can put the letters together into words." That is the essence of what you want to convey to the child: that letters stand for sounds, and that when you put them together, they make words.

In teaching the child the letter sounds, we must always remember that the alphabet was invented by an adult for use by adults, and it was easy enough at that time to teach an adult to isolate the distinct sounds of the language and indicate which letter represented which sound. And obviously, the alphabet was invented by a man who spoke clearly and heard clearly and could distinguish between the fine differences of speech sounds, between the *t* and the *d*, between *s* and *z*. But a child's attunement to speech sounds is quite different. His words run into one another, and he may talk child-talk or baby-talk. So the approach must be scaled down to the child's ability to grasp the knowledge you wish to impart. *Take as much time as you need to do the job.* There is no rush. Your three-, four-, or five-year old has all the time in the world in which to learn how to read. What is important is not how fast he learns but how thoroughly and accurately. Remember, there are no shortcuts. The whole-word method was meant to be a shortcut. It has produced disasters. A whole remedial reading industry has grown out of this "shortcut." Shortcut to what? What's the big hurry? Why is there a need for a shortcut? The whole-word experts thought that if a child could not read words the first day he was in school, he'd never want to read a book for the rest of his life. Nonsense. Your child will want to read if he knows how to read, and if your child knows that learning how to read is an orderly process involving several preliminary steps, he will be quite happy to cooperate with you. Today's notorious adult nonreaders were taught the whole-word method. That inadequate method turned them away from books because it did not teach them to master the sound-symbol system, how to translate printed words into sounds instantly and automatically.

As we have pointed out, the alphabet is perhaps the greatest single intellectual invention of man. The sound-symbol system is an exciting piece of work and an exciting system to learn when you know that it is going to open up the entire world of literature to you and permit you to express your own thoughts in a durable, lasting way. How do you convey such intellectual excitement to a child? By being excited about it yourself. "Did you know that every sound you speak can be put down on paper?" you tell your child. That's exciting. "And that's what we are going to learn to do—put down every sound you make with your voice on paper."

By telling the child this, you've established the concept in his mind of being able to represent speech sounds on paper. That is the association you want to establish in his mind—that letters on paper stand for sounds which he can make with his voice, and that the sounds he makes can be put down on paper by way of letters representing them.

I have worked out the following sequence of instruction because it seems to me to be the most logical and easiest to accomplish what we want: an orderly understanding of the relationship between letters and voice sounds, an ability on the part of the child to hear the differences in spoken words and to translate them into written symbols.

Before proceeding into lesson one, however, a short word about the special problem our written language poses. While our written language is about 85 percent consistent in its sound-symbol correspondences, there are enough irregularities to warrant a very careful step-by-step procedure to minimize possible confusion. Since the child's own speaking vocabulary has a very large number of irregularly spelled words, we can make use of only a few of them in the early stages of instruction. That is why the child should be told that he is learning how to read, and that he will be considered a reader when he can read and write any word in his spoken vocabulary.

In the course of learning the sound-symbol system, however, the child will learn a lot of new words simply because these words fall into the most common and regular spelling patterns and best illustrate the alphabetic principle. They will represent a considerable expansion of his own vocabulary. After the child has shown that he can read these words, it is not necessary to spend too much time on their meaning just yet, since he will not be using these words in his own speaking vocabulary for a while. Emphasis on comprehension and meaning should not begin until *after* the child has mastered the sound-symbol system and can read and write with ease every word in his own spoken vocabulary. When this is done, the emphasis can then be shifted to the comprehension of new words and the general expansion of the child's vocabulary.

The plan of instruction is quite simple, based on the special characteristics of our sound-symbol system. We have forty-five sounds in our language, twenty-one of which are vowel sounds. Since there are only six vowel letters in our alphabet—*a, e, i, o, u* and part-time *y*—which must represent twenty-one vowel sounds, most of the difficult work in learning to read is in mastering the vowel-symbol correspondences. They are best learned in spelling family groups. So we begin with the five short vowels in combination with the consonants. The spelling patterns in these vowel groups are the simplest and most regular in our written language. They are easy to learn, and they teach the child the basic principles of the sound-symbol system. From there we move into the various consonant blends of our language. Finally, we learn the rest of the vowel sounds along with all of the important irregularities.

By the time the child has completed his final lesson he should be able to read any word he encounters. He may mispronounce some of the words he has never heard. But this is understandable. It should never be forgotten that the written language is merely a shadow of the spoken language and that the spoken language is one's basic guide to the pronunciation of the written word. In most cases the written word provides sufficient indication of stress and accent. But in multisyllabic words, the reader's knowledge of the spoken language becomes an indispensable requisite to correct pronunciation. The dictionary, of course, helps us determine how an unknown word is pronounced. However, a child learns it better by hearing it spoken. So pronounce all of the words clearly.

(Note: The division of the instruction into numbered lessons is for the sake of convenience and to provide a guide to the proper sequence of skill acquisition. You can cover as many lessons as you want in one session. However, set your pace according to your child's learning speed. Each lesson represents additional material to be mastered or a review of what has already been learned.)

Lesson 1: We start by telling the child that now we are going to learn what the letters mean: the sounds they stand for. We know the letter names and their shapes, now we are going to learn their sounds. Tell the child: "There are twenty-six letters which stand for forty-five sounds, and we are going to learn them all, one by one. So we have a lot of exciting work to do. When you know all of the sounds the letters stand for, you will be able to read any word you see." You start with the short sound of the vowel *a*. You explain to the child that there are two types of letters: vowels and consonants. The vowels are the most powerful letters in the alphabet, because you can't have a word without one. Consonants must always have vowels with them. They can never stand alone. You needn't go into detail at this point. Merely establish the fact that there are two classes of letters: vowels and consonants. Identify the vowel letters as *a, e, i, o, u*. All the rest are consonants. He will learn what you mean as he learns to use the different letters.

Tell the child that he is going to learn two words with the short vowel sound *a*: *am* and *at*. Ask him if he can hear the difference between *am* and *at*. Draw his attention to the fact that both words sound alike at the beginning, but end with a different sound. Then print them: *am* and *at*. The idea to get across to the child is that each word is composed of two sounds represented by two letters, a vowel and a consonant. The letter *a* stands for the short *a* vowel sound, and the *m* and *t* are consonants. Spell *am* and *at* out loud, and ask the child to spell them also. Pronounce the word *am* and ask the child if he can hear the *m* sound at the end of the word. Pronounce the word *at* and ask the child if he can hear the *t* sound. You might say: "The letter *m* stands for the *mmm* sound. The letter *t* stands for the *tuh* sound."

Then ask the child: "How do we make different sounds with our mouths?" If he can't answer, show him how we do it by shaping our lips and tongue in different ways to get different sounds. The purpose of this is to get the child to understand how we isolate sounds, so that he can see how we can identify a *t* sound and an *m* sound. Do not expect the child to repeat the sounds in isolation at first try, but let him hear you say them. You can tell by how a child speaks how well he can discriminate the different sounds. He has never before considered the idea that a word is composed of one or more different sounds. But as he sees the word written down, he becomes aware of that fact, simply because he sees that a word is composed of more than one letter, and he now knows that each letter stands for a sound.

Lesson 2: Now take the word *am*, erase the *m* and replace it with *n*. By doing this, we show the child how the beginning sound is retained, but how the final sound is changed. Play around with this concept by replacing the second letter in the word *am* to produce these different words: *am, at, an, ax, as*. This should begin to give the child the idea of the interchangeability of letter sounds. He is learning to identify the sounds of five different consonants combined with the short sound of the vowel *a*. Tell him that he has already learned six different letter sounds. Let the child write these five words himself.

These are five perfectly good English words which he will be reading and writing for the rest of his life. Let the child see the sound-symbol construction of the word. Arrange them in column form, so that he can see more graphically the beginning short *a* sound. Ask him to read the different words down the column. In this way he learns to associate the letters with sounds, and sounds with letters as you dictate the words back to him and ask him to write them down. By writing he also learns the left-to-right sequence of sound symbols in words. The letters follow the same sequence as the spoken sounds.

Do not at any time introduce any pictures into these exercises. The important task is to get the child to associate written letters with spoken sounds and vice versa. Pictures only disrupt this sound-symbol association process. The written word only represents sounds. It is the spoken word, which represents an object or an idea. Therefore, in the writing or reading process, the smooth transcription of sounds into sound symbols and sound symbols back into sounds should not be disrupted by the intrusion of pictures of any kind. The contemplation of a picture is an entirely different process and has absolutely nothing to do with reading.

By now you've taught the child the short *a* sound and the consonants *m*, *t*, *n*, *x*, and *s*. In the word *as*, the soft *s* sounds more like *z*. But at this point that fine distinction need not be stressed. We shall bring the child's attention to that later when we deal with the two sounds of *s* and the letter *z*. The point is not to make a fuss over such very minor distinctions. In time, the child will realize that in English spelling there is not always a perfect symbolic representation of spoken sounds, and that the ultimate guide in pronunciation is not the written word by itself, but the spoken word as it is used in everyday speech. Drill: Put the words on cards and flash them to the child until he can easily recognize them. A few minutes a day is all you need of drill.

Lesson 3: Arrange the words *am*, *at*, *an*, *as*, *ax* on the top of the page or blackboard and tell the child that you are going to make some new words for him. Directly under *am* write *Sam*, under *at* *sat*, *an* *man*, *as* *has*, and *ax* *tax*. Thus we've used the consonants we already know, added the *h*, and expanded our written vocabulary to ten words. You can write the sentences: *Sam has an ax. Sam sat.* But before you do that, make sure the child grasps the principle of word building, that he sees how each letter's power is used. This is the time to study the consonant sounds: *m*, *n*, *t*, *x*, *s*, *h*. Now use the *h* to create *ham* under *Sam*, *hat* under *sat*. When the child is thoroughly acquainted with these twelve words, can write them and read them and spell them, introduce the consonant *d* by changing *man* to *Dan* and *Sam* to *dam*. Introduce the consonant *w* by adding *wax* under *tax*. Drill the new words with flash cards.

Lesson 4: Take the *d* and add it to *an*, making *and*. This is our first final consonant blend. Explain how you've changed the word by adding the *d*, but do it in terms of speech first. Say *an*, *and*, and ask the child to tell you if he hears the difference and what it is. He should hear the difference before he sees it on paper or the blackboard. Once he understands this, write: *Sam* and *Dan*, *man* and *ham*, *tax* and *wax*. Now take the *h*, put it in front of *and* and ask the child if he can figure out what the word is: *hand*. Put an *s* in front of *and* and show him how it becomes *sand*. Introduce the consonant *l* by adding it to *and* to make *land*. Now you can play a game and see how many sentences the child can write with the nineteen words he now knows how to read:

am	Sam	ham	dam
an	man	Dan	
as	has		
at	sat	hat	
and	hand	sand	land
ax	tax	wax	

Suggested sentences: Explain that a sentence always begins with a capital letter and ends with a period or question mark.

Dan has an ax.
 Has Dan an ax?
 Sam has ham.
 Has Sam ham?
 Dan has sand.
 Has Dan sand?
 Sam sat.

Also arrange the words in columns so that the child can see more graphically the similarity of sound-symbol construction on word families.

am	an	as	at	ax	and
dam	man	has	sat	tax	hand
ham	Dan		hat	wax	sand
Sam					land

Then add these four new words to the appropriate columns: *Max, mat, Nat, tan*.

So far, the child has learned the short a sound and the consonants *d, h, l, m, n, s, t, x, w*, and the final consonant blend *nd*. “The child should by now have grasped how the sound-symbol system works, how he can transcribe the sounds of his voice into symbols on paper, and how he can translate symbols on paper back into spoken words. At this point you might play a game of creating nonsense words just to see if he understands the principle of sounds being put into sound symbols and vice versa. All the while, the child should be writing the words he is learning. He must know that decoding-encoding, reading-writing is a two-way process. One cannot be learned effectively without the other. Continue to use drill techniques to reinforce automatic recognition of words.

Lesson 5: Teach the child the consonant *b*. This will give him these additional words: *bat, ban, band, dab, tab*. Introduce the consonant *c* as its *kuk* sound. This will expand the word list to include: *cat, cab, can*. Next, introduce the consonant *f*. This will expand the word list to include: *fab, fat, fan*. Introduce the consonant *p*. This will give us: *Pam, pan, pat*. Next, comes *r* to make: *rat, ran, ram*. Next, introduce *v* with *vat* and *van*. Then introduce *g* with *gas, gap, gag, gab*, *j* with *jam, Jan jab*, *y* with *yap, yam*, *z* with *zag*.

Lesson 6: (Review) The child has now covered the short *a* sound in combination with consonants: *b, c, d, f, g, h, j, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z*, plus the final consonant blending *nd*. His reading and writing vocabulary can be expanded to include:

am	an	at	ax	as	and
Sam	ban	bat	Max	has	band
dam	can	cat	tax	gas	hand
Pam	Dan	fat	wax	<i>was</i>	land
ram	fan	hat			
jam	Jan	mat			
yam	man	Nat			
	pan	pat			
	ran	rat			
	tan	sat			
	van	vat			
cab	bad	gab	cap	Al	
dab	cad	gag	gap	Gal	
fab	dad	lag	lap	Hal	
jab	fad	nap	map	Pal	
lab	had	sag	nap	Sal	
nab	lad	tag	rap	Val	
	pad	zag	tap		
	sad		yap		
	Tad				

These words can also be arranged alphabetically to illustrate more graphically the sound values of consonants at the beginnings of words.

add	bad	cab	dab	fab	gab	had
Al	bag	cad	Dad	fad	gag	hag
am	ban	cap	dam	fan	gal	Hal
an	band	cat	Dan	fat	gap	ham
as	bat				gas	hand
at						has
ax						hat
jab	lab	mad	nab	pad	rag	sad
jam	lad	man	nag	pal	ram	sag
Jan	lag	map	nap	Pam	ran	Sal
	land	mat	Nat	pat	rap	Sam
	lap	Max			rat	sand
						sap
						sat

tab	Val	wag	yam	zag
Tad	van	was		
tag	vat	wax		
tan				
tap				
Tax				

An endless number of simple sentences can be made from the words above. Also, continue to use drill techniques to create automatic recognition of the word the child has learned.

Lesson 6a: Irregular word *was*. Explain to the child that some words are not pronounced exactly as they are spelled. The word *was* is one of them. Illustrate this with such sentences as; Jan *was* sad. Pam *was* mad. This inconsistency should not trouble the child at all and no special fuss should be made over it. It should be noted that the only inconsistency is in the sound of the vowel *a*, not the two consonants.

Lesson 6b: Review the two *s* sounds. Explain that sometimes the *s* has a harder sound and sometimes a softer sound, as in these words: *gas, has, sad, as, sand, was*. He can only tell which sound to say by hearing in his mind the word as it is spoken. Also, special drills with these words on cards will help develop instant recognition of the words.

Lesson 6c: Nonsense syllables. To test how well your child is picking up sound distinctions and associating them with the proper letters, you might give him some nonsense syllables to read and then dictate back to him. This would be a pure exercise in sound-symbol understanding and mastery. It will show you where the child is weak in sound discrimination and needs practice. Unless your child has a hearing problem he should be able to recognize the different sounds with little or no trouble as long as you pronounce them clearly. You can make a game of “Phony words” using such nonsense syllables as: *bam, bap, bax, cag, cam, dag, dat, fam, fal, fax, gan, gat, jav, jap, lab, lav, mag, nan, sab, tam, vam, zam*. Notice that most of these nonsense syllables are parts of multisyllabic words, which the child will be learning as he progresses. So his ability to hear them, write them, and read them will help him in his spelling later on. However, if your child is picking up the sound-symbol system rapidly and without any problems, you need not spend time on nonsense syllables. If your child finds it difficult to discriminate between subtly different sounds, take the time to train him to hear the differences and to speak the differences. You can show him how your lips and tongue are set in a different position to make a different sound. In any case, narrow down his sound discrimination difficulties and work on them in a playful, casual way. Never, under any circumstances, show impatience, and never force anything. Let him advance at his own pace.

Lesson 7: Introduce the *ck* consonant combination ending. Make the words: *back, hack, Jack, lack, Mack, pack, rack, sack, tack*.

Lesson 8: Introduce the short *e*. Start with the word *Ed*. Accustom the child to recognize the short *e* sound as distinguished from the short *a* by comparing *Ed* with *ad*. Then expand *Ed* into: *bed, fed, led, Ned, red, Ted, wed*. Introduce the word *egg*, pointing out that the double *g* sounds the same as a single *g*. From there expand into *beg, keg, leg, Meg, Peg*. The child will not be at all troubled by the inconsistency between *egg* and *leg*.

He doesn't expect perfect consistency. In fact, the reason why he will be able to understand and master the sound-symbol system is because it does have a very high degree of consistency. This basic consistency between written symbols and spoken sounds is the great intellectual lesson he is learning. So the exceptions that make the rule should neither be ignored nor overly stressed, but merely pointed out. *By pointing out the occasional exceptions and irregularities, the basic consistency of everything else is reinforced.*

Next take the word *and* and change it to *end*. Emphasize the difference in sound between *and* and *end*. Ask the child to say the two words and write them down from dictation. Now expand *end* into *bend*, *lend*, *mend*, *send*, *tend*. Show how *bat* can be changed to *bet*; *mat* to *met*; *pat* to *pet*; *sat* to *set*; *vat* to *vet*; *ban* to *Ben*; *Dan* to *den*; *man* to *men*; *tan* to *ten*. Go through the following list of words with the child:

	Ed	egg		
web	beg	deck	den	
	fed	heck	Jen	
	led	neck	Ken	
	Ned	peck	Len	
	wed	peg	men	
			pen	
			ten	
			yen	
bend	bet	bell	gem	pep
lend	get	cell	hem	
mend	let	dell		
send	met	fell		
tend	net	hell		Rex
	pet	sell		Tex
	set	tell		vex
	vet	well		
	yet	yell		
	yet			

In reviewing the words *bell*, *dell*, *cell*, etc., point out that the double *l* has the same sound as the single *l*.

Lesson 8a: Consonant *c* as *s* sound. Explain that *c* has both a *k* and an *s* sound. Illustrate with the words *cat* and *cell*. Consonant *g* as in *gem*.

Lesson 8b: Explain that so far we have learned three ways of writing the *k* sound: *Ken*, *cat*, *deck*, *keg*, *can*, *sack*.

Lesson 9: The name game. Since many simple names illustrate the short *a* and *e* sounds in a variety of consonant combinations, a game can be devised in which the child makes a list of those whom he would invite to his birthday party. He can choose from:

Pam, Sam, Dan, Jan, Nat, Van, Pat, Max, Tad, Hal, Sal, Al, Ned, Ed, Met, Peg, Jen, Ken, Len, Jack, Mack. Let him practice writing such simple combinations.

Jack and Dan.
Meg and Peg.
Van and Sam.
Max and Ed.
Pam and Mack.
Ned and Nat.

Names are also good for dictation purposes and spelling tests. Also, place names on drill cards for short drill practice.

Lesson 10: Many sentences can be made from the words already learned. These sentences are for the purpose of helping children master the sound-symbol system. No story interpretation is needed or even desirable at this point. The child should be totally absorbed in the challenging job of mastering the sound-symbol system. The sentences are quite obvious in meaning, and you can think up many more.

Jack has let Max get wet.
Pam fed Ted.
Dan and Ben met Val and Van.
Jan has wax.
Peg was fat.

Make up other sentences if you feel that additional work is necessary before moving on to short *i*.

Lesson 11: The short *i*. Begin with the words: *if, in, is, it, ill*. Compare *a* as in *at*, *e* as in *Ed*, and *i* as in *it*. Let the child hear the difference. Let him say all three vowels and feel the difference in the way he shapes his mouth when saying them. Then expand the five words as follows.

if	in	is	it	ill
	bin	his	bit	Bill
	fin		fit	dill
	pin		hit	fill
	sin		kit	gill
	tin		lit	hill
	win		mitt	Jill
			pit	kill
			quit	mill
			sit	pill
			wit	quill
				sill
				till
				will

Further expand your short *i* words to include the following:

fib	bid	big	dick	dim	dip	Dix	hiss
rib	did	dig	kick	him	hip	fix	kiss
	hid	fig	kick	Jim	Kip	mix	miss
	kid	gig	lick	Kim	lip	nix	sis
	lid	jig	Mick	rim	nip	pix	
	mid	Mig	Nick	Tim	pip	six	
	rid	pig	pick	vim	quip		
	Sid	rig	quick		rip		
		wig	Rick		sip		
		zig	sick		tip		
			tick		zip		
			wick				

Lesson 11a: Introduce the consonant *q* and explain how it is always followed by *u* as in: *quit, quill, quip, quick*. Explain *ss* as in *kiss*. etc.

Lesson 11b: Suggested sentences for practice.

Quit it.
 Bill is ill.
 Kim is ill and Nick fed Kim an egg.
 Fix it.
 Mix it.
 Will Bill win? Will Jill kiss Bill?

Lesson 11c: Introduce the name *Phil*. Explain that *ph* together is pronounced as *f*. Compare *Phil* with *fill*. Acquaint the child with the idea that often two different words that should sound alike are spelled differently. Expand *Phil* to *Philip*.

Lesson 12: The short *o*. Begin with the words *on* and *ox*. Let the child hear the distinction between short *a*, short *e*, short *i*, and short *o*. Expand *ox* into *box* and *fox*. Then expand *on* into *Don* and *Ron*. Further expand your short *o* words including the following.

Bob	cod	<i>of</i>	cog	on
cob	God		<i>dog</i>	Don
gob	mod		fog	Ron
mob	nod		hog	<i>son</i>
rob	rod		hog	<i>ton</i>
sob	sod			<i>won</i>
	Todd			

cop	cot	mom	ox	cock
hop	dot	Tom	box	dock
mop	got		fox	hock
top	hot		pox	lock
	jot		sox	mock
	lot			pock
	not			rock
	pot			sock
	rot			tock
	yot			

Lesson 12a: Irregular pronunciations: point out that *dog* is pronounced as spoken. Also take up the word *of*. Point out that it too is pronounced as spoken.

Lesson 12b: Irregular pronunciation of the words *son*, *ton*, *won*. Explain these exceptions as the previous ones have been explained. Suggested practice sentences:

Ron is his son.
Don won.

If you feel the child needs additional practice before proceeding any further, make up sentences using the new words with the short *o*. Also, use drill card techniques for developing word recognition.

Lesson 13: Introduce the word *a*, as in *a box*, *a dog*, *a mop*, *a cop*, *a kit*, *a hill*, etc.

Lesson 14 Introduce the word *the*, as in *the box*, *the dog*, *the mop*, *the cop*, etc. Explain the *th* sound. Take the words *at*, *in*, and *is*, and make *then* into *that*, *thin*, and *this*. Note that there is a soft *th* sound as in *thee* and a hard *th* sound as in *thin*. Also add *th* to *em* and make *them*. See if your child can read the following:

That thin cat has that fat rat.
This cat has that rat.
This cat is red.
Dan has fed them.
Bill sat on a hill and fed a cat.
The cat sat on the box.
Jim sat on the red box and fed the tan fox.

Lesson 14a: Introduce the apostrophe *s*: Bill's dog. Dan's cat. Pam's hat. Suggested practice sentences:

Rick has Tim's dog.
Peg's cat is sick.
That is Don's pig.

Lesson 15: The short *u* sound. Start with the words *us* and *up*. Compare the initial sounds of *as*, *is*, and *us*. Expand *us* into *bus*, *fuss*, *pus*. Expand *up* into *pup* and *cup*. have the children read the following short *u* words.

cub	bud	bug	cull	gum	bun
dub	dud	dug	dull	hum	fun
hub	mud	hug	<i>full</i>	mum	gun
pup		jug	gull	sum	nun
rub		mug	bull	yum	pun
sub		rug	pull		run
tub		tug			sun

up	us	but	lux	duz
cup	bus	cut		
pup	fuss	gut		
	Gus	nut		
	pus	<i>put</i>		
		rut		

Lesson 15a: Irregular pronunciation of the words *full*, *pull*, *put*. Numerous sentences for practice reading can be made up from the words the child already knows. Here are some suggestions.

Jack put the pup in the box.
 The pup sat on the rug.
 The cup is on top of the box.
 The jug is full.
 The cat is in the tub.
 Can Jack pull the log?
 Tom's dad is a cop and has a gun.

Lesson 16: General Review. We have covered the five short vowel sounds, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, all the consonant sounds, and *ph*, *th*, *qu*, and *nd*. Now it would be a good thing to see how well you child has mastered this much of the sound-symbol system and to give him general practice in what he already knows. You can do this by having him read mixed word lists, giving him spelling tests, and dictating sentences to him. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that encoding, or spelling, should be taught at the same time with decoding, or reading. One reinforces the other. It also shows the child that he can actively make words instead of merely passively reading them. He can use the sound-symbol system to communicate his thoughts to other as well as have the thoughts of others communicated to him. We build in him a double sense of mastery and independence in being able to handle the sound-symbol system in both active and passive capacities: as a sender of information as well as a receiver. This is the kind of confidence we want the child to acquire.

Also, in having mastered this much of the sound-symbol system, he will eagerly want to master the rest. He has seen how new knowledge builds consistently and logically into old knowledge and how it all makes sense. Words are no longer a mystery to him. He can't as yet read them all, but he knows that he can read many of them, and that eventually he will be able to read all of them with the same ease with which he now reads those he already knows.

Lesson 17: Adding *s* to words, which makes them plural or changes tense. You needn't go into the details of verb tenses. The child changes verb tenses in his speech all the time without being technically aware of what he is doing. We want him merely to recognize the sound change on paper as he does when he hears it.

cab	cabs	cup	cups
bed	beds	kiss	kisses
wag	wags	cat	cats
rock	rocks	box	boxes
bell	bells	hand	hands
yam	yams	egg	eggs
run	runs		

Lesson 17a: Contractions. Take the words *is not*, *can not*, and *has not* and explain how they can be contracted into *isn't*, *can't*, and *hasn't*. Also, contract *it is* and *let us*.

is not	isn't	it is	it's
can not	can't	let us	let's
has not	hasn't		

Suggested practice sentences.

Is Bill sick?	Has Jill a cat?
Bill isn't sad.	Jill hasn't a cat.
Can Ken Run?	Is this Bob's jug?
Ken can't run.	This isn't Bob's jug.
Is this Peg's dog.	Let us run. Let's run.
This isn't Peg's dog.	It is big. It's big.

Lesson 17b: Two-syllable words. There are a good many simple two-syllable words made up of two regular short-vowel pronunciation units. See how many our child can read on his own. Help him if he needs it. The point is to show how two syllables are put together to make one word. Discuss the meaning of the words he does not know. After he can read them, use them in a few simple sentences with other words he knows. The exercise is primarily to advance his mastery of the sound-symbol system in regular multisyllabic words.

napkin	lentil	nitwit	suntan
relic	pencil	vivid	husband
tidbit	comet	civil	magic
habit	puppet	Nixon	sudden
rapid	upset	dental	wagon
gallon	mimic	until	unfit
candid	public	vomit	hatbox
basket	picnic	tonic	exit
bathmat	kidnap	mascot	goblin
helmet	linen	hotrod	sunset
velvet	visit	boxtop	Philip
tomcat	rabbit	camel	robin

The next series of lessons is devoted to final consonant blends with regular short vowels in one-syllable words. This will teach the children to recognize the written symbols for two consonant sounds blended together at the ends of words.

Lesson 18: Review of the double consonant endings *bb, gg, ll, ff, ss, tt*. The children should be taught that although the letters are doubled, the sound is the same as though there were only final consonant:

Bell	Matt	doll	fill
ebb	well	muff	puff
hill	Bill	kill	less
egg	Webb	fell	dull
cuff	mill	kiss	tiff
hull	Jeff	will	hiss
lass	yell	miff	sell
Jiff	mess	pass	miss

Lesson 18a: The sound of *a* followed by double *l*. Explain the difference in sound between *Al* and *all*. Expand all into *ball, call, fall, gall, hall, mall, pall, tall, wall*.

Lesson 19: Final Consonant *ng*.

ang	ing	ong	ung
bang	bing	bong	hung
dang	ding	dong	lung
gang	king	gong	rung
hang	ping	pong	sung
pang	ring	song	
sang	wing		
	zing		

Mixed *ng* list:

bang	dong	lung	rung	wing
bing	hung	ping	rang	sang
dang	gang	pong	gong	zing
ding	hang	pang	ring	bong
ding	hang	ring	sung	bang

bing-bang	ping-pong
ding-dang	bing-bong
Hong-Kong	ding-dong

Lesson 19a: Explain how adding *ing* to many words gives us new words. Note how the consonant following a short *a* vowel is doubled.

fan	fanning	fix	fixing
nap	napping	rob	robbing
send	sending	run	running
get	getting	rub	rubbing
let	letting	dig	digging
yell	yelling	sing	singing
pack	packing	ring	ringing
kid	kidding	hang	hanging
pick	picking	pass	passing

Suggested practice sentences:

Jan is singing a song.
Bill is ringing a bell.
Ken is getting all wet.
Rick is calling his dog.

Lesson 20: Final consonant blends *nd*, *nt*.

and	rant	Kent	land
tent	fond	fund	rent
bend	dent	tint	tend
bent	hand	end	punt
wind	gent	lent	sand
hint	send	lent	sent
band	bunt	bond	mend
went		rend	

Lesson 21: Final consonant blends *ct, ft, pt*.

act	pact	lift
kept	apt	duct
fact	left	raft
aft	tact	gift

Lesson 22: Final consonant blend *nk*.

Lesson 22:a Irregular pronunciation: *Monk* rhymes with *junk*.

Lesson 23: Final consonant blends *sh, sk, sp, st*.

ash	dash	ask	asp	last	must	vest
mesh	wish	desk	lisp	best	fast	just
cash	lush	risk	gasp	fist	lest	zest
dish	gash	task		rest	list	vast
sash	mush	mask		bust	west	pest
gosh	lash	dusk		cast	rust	
fish	rush	Wisk		jest	mast	
rash	mash	tusk		gist	nest	
hush	gush			test	mist	

Lesson 25: Final consonant blends *lb, ld, lf, lk, llm, lp, lt*.

bulb	held	bulk	<i>calf</i>	elm	help	belt	quilt
	meld	sulk	<i>half</i>	helm	yelp	felt	tilt
	gild	milk	elf	film	gulp	melt	cult
	<i>bald</i>	silk	self		pulp	pelt	
		<i>talk</i>	golf			hilt	
		<i>walk</i>	gulf			jilt	

Lesson 25a: Irregular pronunciation, *talk, walk, bald*. Note also that in the words *calf, half, walk, and talk* the *l* is silent.

Lesson 26: Final consonant blend *mp*.

camp	romp	hump	lump
hemp	limp	pomp	limp
bump	dump	jump	hemp
damp	lamp	ramp	pump

Lesson 27: Final consonant blend *tch*.

batch	itch
etch	botch
catch	pitch
fetch	hutch
hatch	witch
hitch	patch
latch	ditch
Dutch	match

Lesson 28: Final consonant blend *dge*. Explain that the *e* is silent.

badge	Madge
edge	hedge
ridge	podge
hodge	fudge
budge	ledge
lodge	wedge

Lesson 29: Final consonant blends, *nce*, *nse*. Explain that the *e* is silent.

fence	mince	<i>once</i>
since	dance	
tense	hence	
dense	rinse	
sense	dunce	

Lesson 29a: Irregular pronunciation: *once*, rimes with *dunce*.

Lesson 30: General review of final consonant blends. These words can also be drilled on cards.

batch	kept	desk	hunt	next	belt
left	duct	last	went	path	self
fund	link	pest	dance	itch	help
ring	cash	lisp	much	film	milk
jump	fudge	half	with	sing	fond

Lesson 30a: Two-syllable words with regular short vowels and known consonant blends.

disgust	vanish	polish	Kenneth	within	fishnet
witness	rubbish	dentist	Nashville	contact	bathtub
suspect	content	after	conduct	often	offense
enrich	dancing	withheld	consent	selfish	punish
sandwich	enlist	absent	compact	engulf	dustpan

The next series of lessons is devoted to teaching the child initial consonant blends in words of known short vowel sounds and final consonant blends. Work on those words first which are in your child's speaking vocabulary. Then let him try others. At this point, we are still more concerned with his mastering the sound-symbol system than expanding his vocabulary. However, if he shows an interest in the meaning of a new word, explain the meaning to him.

Lesson 31: Initial consonant blend *bl*.

blab	bled	blink	block	blunt
black	blend	bliss	blond	blush
bland	bless		blop	
blank			blot	
blast				

Lesson 32: Initial consonant blend *br*.

bran	bred	brick	broth	brunt
brand		brig		brush
brash		bridge		
brass		brim		
brat		brink		

Lesson 33: Initial consonant blend *ch*.

chap	check	chin	chop	chum
chat	chest	chip		chug
chance		chick		chuck
		chill		chunk
		chink		

Lesson 34: Initial consonant blend *cr*.

crab	crest	crib	crop	crud
cram		crisp		crumb
crack				crux
crank				crush
crass				crutch

Lesson 35: Initial consonant blend *fl*.

drab	dress	drip	drop	drug	dwell
drag	dredge	drift		drum	
draft		drill		drudge	
		drink			

Lesson 36: Initial consonant blend *fl*.

flab	fled	flit	flog	flub
flag	flesh	flip	flop	flunk
flat		flint	flock	flush
flack				
flash				

Lesson 37: Initial consonant blend *fr*.

Fran	Fred	frill	frog
France	fret	fridge	frost
Frank	fresh		froth
	French		

Lesson 38: Initial consonant blend *gl*.

glad	glen	glib	glob	glum
glass			flop	glut
gland			gloss	

Lesson 39: Initial consonant blend *gr* and *gw*.

grab	Greg	grid	grub	Gwen
grad		grim	grudge	
gram		grin		
grand				
grant				
grass				

Lesson 40: Initial consonant blend *pl*.

plan	plop	plug
plant	plot	plum
plank		plus
		pluck

Lesson 41: Initial consonant blend *pr*.

prance	prep	prig	prod
		prim	
		prick	
		prince	
		print	

Lesson 42: Review of initial *qu*.

quack	quest	quit quill quick
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Lesson 43: Initial consonant blends *sh, shr*

sham shack shank	shed shell	ship	shot sock	shun shut
shrank	shred	shrimp shrink		shrug shrunk

Lesson 44: Initial consonant blend *sl*.

slab slam slat slant slash	sled	slid slim slit slick slink	slob slot slosh	slum slush
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Lesson 45: Initial consonant blends *sm, sn*.

smack smash	smell	smog	smut	snip snick	snob
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Lesson 46: Initial consonant blends *sp, spr*.

spam span spat spank sprang	sped spell speck spend spent	spin spit spill spick string	spot	spud spun sprung
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Lesson 47: Initial consonant blends *st, str*.

stag stab Stan stack stank stank strap stand	stem step strep	stiff stick stink string stint strip string	stop stock stomp	stub stud stuck stump stunk strut
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Lesson 48: Initial consonant blend *sw*.

swam	swell	swim
<i>swan</i>		swish
		swift

Irregular pronunciation: *swan*.

Lesson 49: Initial consonant blend *sc*, *scr*, *sk*.

scab	skid	scum	scrub	scrod
scan	skim	scuff	scrunch	
scant	skin	skunk		
scat	skip			
scalp	skit			

Lesson 50: Initial consonant blend *th*. Note that there is a soft *th* sound as in *than* and a hard *th* as in *thick*.

	then	thin	thus
that		think	thrush
thank		thick	thrust
		thrill	

Lesson 51: Initial consonant blend *tr*, *tw*.

tram	treck	trip	trod	truck	twin
trap	trend	trick	trot	trunk	twit
trance				trust	twig
				trudge	twill
					twist
					twitch

Lesson 52: Initial consonant blends with *wh*.

whip	when
whim	
which	

Lesson 53: General review of short vowel words with initial and final consonant blends. These words can be used to make up new sentences, in spelling, tests, in dictation.

truck	quick	blond	task	dwell	witch
skip	grudge	fudge	sash	slack	jump
swift	glass	dump	lisp	spring	bless
then	frill	edge	bank	trick	bring
spun	flag	golf	king	France	chance
slosh	cliff	elm	fond	hitch	flash
shrimp	crux	Dutch	hint	next	plus
sack	draft	with	act	rich	grin
plum	chest	pest	lift	lunch	class
prom	bridge	dish	kept	patch	stink

Lesson 54: Show the child how that by adding *s*, *ing*, or *ed* to many words, you can change the tenses:

hint	hints	hinting	hinted
lift	lifts	lifting	lifted
act	acts	acting	acted
miss	misses	missing	missed
pass	passes	passing	passed
jump	jumps	jumping	jumped
dump	dumps	dumping	dumped
vanish	vanishes	vanishing	vanished
visit	visits	visiting	visited
zigzag	zigzags	zigzagging	zigzagged

The next series of lessons is devoted to the remaining vowel sounds to be learned as written symbols. The long vowel sounds are not quite as regular in their written forms as the short ones, and they can be spelled in more than one way. However, despite the higher number of irregularly pronounced words to be found among the spelling families of the long vowel sounds, there is still a very high degree of consistency, and your child should have no problem mastering both the regular and irregular words. As we pointed out earlier, the occasional exceptions and irregularities merely confirm the basic consistency of everything else. Again, take time, have patience and let your child learn at his own rate. There is no hurry.

Lesson 55: Introduce the long *a* sound. Explain to the child that the long *a* sounds the same as the name of the letter. Let the child hear the difference between *at* and *ate*. Both words have two sounds each – a vowel and a consonant. But one has the short *a* and the other the long *a*. In written English we find the long *a* represented by several spelling forms. We shall take up the most common one first: the *a* followed by a consonant followed by a silent *e*.

Take the word *at*, add an *e* to it, and tell the child that the word is *ate*. Let him hear the long *a* sound and ask him if he knows of any other words which begin with a long *a*. if he can't think of any, suggest: *Abe, ace, age, ale, ape*. Write them down and tell him that the silent *e* is there to tell us that the *a* is a long *a*. It's a signal to us to say *ay* instead of *aa*.

Now expand the six words as follows.

Abe	ace	age	ale	ape	ate
babe	face	cage	bale	cape	date
lace	page	dale	gape	fate	
pace	sage	gale	tape	gate	
race	wage	hale	drape	hate	
grace	stage	male	scrape	Kate	
place		pale		late	
space		sale		mate	
trace		stale		rate	
brace				crate	
				grate	
				plate	
				state	

When the above words are learned, add the following:

fade	safe	bake	came	cane
jade		cake	dame	Dane
made		fake	fame	Jane
wade		Jake	game	lane
blade		lake	lame	mane
grade		make	Mame	pane
trade		quake	name	sane
		rake	same	crane
		sake	tame	plane
		take	blame	
		wake	flame	
		brake		
		stake		
		shake		
		flake		

bare	base	cave	daze
care	case	Dave	craze
dare		gave	graze
fare		<i>have</i>	maze
hare		pave	
mare		rave	
rare		save	
ware		wave	
share		brave	
stare		crave	
<i>are</i>		grave	
		slave	

Lesson 55a: Irregular pronunciations: *are, have*.

Lesson 56: The next most common letter symbols for the long *a* sound is the *ai* combination. Introduce the words *aid* and *aim* and *air*. Explain how *ai* represents the long *a* sounds. Expand *aid*, *aim* and *air* as follows:

aid	aim	air
laid	maim	fair
maid	claim	hair
paid		pair
raid		chair
<i>said</i>		Clair

When these are mastered, add the following:

bail	Cain	bait
fail	gain	wait
hail	lain	trait
jail	main	
mail	pain	
nail	rain	
pail	vain	
rail	brain	
sail	chain	
tail	drain	
wail	grain	
frail	plain	
trail	slain	
	Spain	
	stain	
	strain	
	train	
	twain	

Lesson 56a: Irregular pronunciation: *said*. Rimes with *red*.

Lesson 57: The next most common spelling form for the long *a* is *ay* as found in the following words.

bay	may	clay
day	nay	gray
Fay	pay	play
gay	quay	pray
hay	ray	slay
jay	say	stay
Kay	way	tray
lay		stray
		sway

Lesson 57a: Irregular words: A few words spelled with *ey* and pronounced as *ay*, as in *they* and *grey*. *Gray* and *grey* are two different spellings for the same word.

Lesson 58: Another, less common, way of writing the long *a* is with *ei*, as in the words *vein*, *veil*, *heir*, and *eight*. Explain that sometimes two different words like *vein* and *vain*, which sound alike but mean two entirely different things, are spelled differently so that the reader can tell which meaning is intended by the writer. The same is true of *veil* and *vale*, *heir* and *air*, *eight* and *ate*. Point out that the *h* in *heir* is silent. As for the word *eight*, which sounds exactly like *ate*, point out that the *gh* is silent and is found in other words which taken up in later lessons.

It is no necessary for your child to remember everything you tell him about irregular words. Most of them are our most common words and he will get to know their spellings and pronunciation peculiarities through repeated use of them in reading and writing.

Lesson 59: General review of long *a* words.

face	grace	tail	heir	main
vain	scrape	dare	fake	flame
way	paid	brave	stain	grade
plate	chair	brain	care	cake
cage	say	stake	gate	bay

Lesson 59:a Two- and three-syllable words composed of known short and long vowel units.

payday	explain	waitress	raining	tailgate
railway	complain	cake-mix	painful	graceful
airplane	mailman	enslave	embrace	engage
careful	inkstain	grateful	away	maintain
	engagement		complaining	

Lesson 59b: Suggested sentences for practicing the long *a* in its various spelling forms.

The train is late but on the way.
Dave is complaining that it's raining.
Clair and Ray went away on the same airplane.
The mailman came late.
Jane said, "If it rains let's take the train."

Explain the use of quotation marks when quoting the speech of a person. Make up more sentences if additional practice is needed.

Lesson 60: Introduce the *a* sound as in *all*, *Paul*, *jaw*. Teach the following words:

all	halt	balk	haul	gaunt
ball	malt	calk	maul	haunt
call	salt	<i>talk</i>	Paul	jaunt
fall		<i>walk</i>	Saul	taunt
gall		<i>chalk</i>	fault	launch
hall			vault	staunch
pall		Maud		
tall		fraud		
wall				
stall				

cause	awe	hawk	bawl	drawn
pause	jaw		bawl	fawn
	law		crawl	lawn
	paw		drawl	pawn
	raw			yawn
	saw			brawn
	claw			drawn
	draw			
	flaw			
	thaw			
	straw			

Irregular pronunciations: Note that in *talk*, *walk*, *chalk* the *l* is silent.

Irregular spellings: Take up the following group of irregularly spelled words all of which rime with *taut*. Note the silent *gh* and the mixed pattern of *au*, *ou* spellings.

ought	fraught
bought	nought
caught	sought
fought	taught
brought	thought

In learning these words, it is obvious that the child will have to devote some practice to reading them and writing them. The important thing is not to make any great fuss over the, except to point out that they are unusual spellings and represent something of a challenge in mastering them. Again these irregularities merely confirm the consistency of everything else.

Lesson 60a: Suggested practice sentences.

Tall Paul caught the ball.
 Small Paul hit his jaw.
 Saul walked and talked with Paul.
 Paul taught Saul a lesson.

Lesson 61: Introduce the *a* sound as in *arm, art, ah, ma, pa*. Words with this *a* sound include the following:

bar	bard	scarf	ark	arm
car	card	<i>wharf</i>	bark	farm
far	hard	<i>dwarf</i>	hark	harm
jar	lard		lark	<i>warm</i>
par	yard		mark	
tar	<i>ward</i>		park	
war			Clark	
			spark	
barn	carp	art	farce	ah
darn	harp	cart		ma
yarn	tarp	dart		pa
<i>warn</i>	<i>warp</i>	<i>heart</i>		
		mart		
		part		
		tart	max	
		<i>wart</i>		
		<i>quart</i>		
		<i>quartz</i>		

Irregular spelling: *heart*

Irregular pronunciation: Notice the similar pronunciation of the *a* in *war, ward, wharf, dwarf, warn, warp, quart, quartz*.

Lesson 62: Introduce the long *e* sound by comparing such words as bet and beet, fed and feed. Show the child the *ee* as the most common written form of the long *e* sound. Show how *ee* can be expanded into *bee, fee, see, see*, etc. Then introduce the word *eel*. Expand *eel* as shown

eel	eel
fee	feel
gee	peel
Lee	reel
see	steel
free	
tree	

Then create additional words with the long *e* sound spelled as *ee*:

heed	beef	leek	deep	<i>been</i>
deed		mEEK	seem	seen
feed		reek	teem	teen
need		seek		queen
reed		week		screen
seed				
weed				
breed				
creed				
greed				

beep	beer	beet	breeze	sleeve
deep	deer	feet	freeze	
keep	jeer	meet		
jeep	peer	greet		
peep	cheer	sweet		
seep	queer	tweet		
weep	steer			
creep				
sleep				
steep				
sweep				

Irregular pronunciation: The word *been* is pronounced as if it were *bin*.

Lesson 62a: There is a group of short common words in which the long *e* is spelled with a single *e*, as follows:

be
he
me
we
she

Lesson 63: another way in which the long *e* sound is written is *ea*. Introduce the words *eat*, *ear*, *each*. Expand them as follows.

eat	ear	each
beat	<i>bear</i>	beach
feat	dear	peach
heat	fear	reach
meat	gear	teach
neat	hear	preach
peat	near	
seat	<i>pear</i>	
cheat	rear	
treat	sear	
<i>sweat</i>	tear	
wheat	<i>tear</i>	
	<i>wear</i>	
	year	
	<i>swear</i>	

Irregular pronunciation: The word *sweat* rhymes with *wet*. The following words rhyme with *care*: *bear*, *pear*, *pear*, *tear*, *wear*, and *swear*. Point out that regular *tear* (as in *teardrop*) is an entirely different word from irregular *tear*, which means to rip apart.

pea	bead	<i>deaf</i>	beak	deal	beam
sea	<i>dead</i>	leaf	leak	heal	ream
tea	<i>head</i>		peak	meal	seam
			teak	peal	team
	lead		bleak	real	cream
	lead			seal	dream
	read			veal	stream
	<i>read</i>			weal	
	<i>bread</i>			zeal	

bean	heap	east	ease	cave
dean	leap	beast	cease	leave
Jean	reap	feast	lease	heave
lean		yeast	tease	weave
mean			crease	
clean			please	

Irregular pronunciations: The following words rime with *red*: *dead, head, lead, read, bread*. Explain that there are also regular pronunciations to lead and read which have different meanings from the words, which rime with *red*. The word *deaf* rimes with *Jeff*.

Lesson 64: Sometimes the long *e* is spelled *ie*, as in the following words.

niece	thief	pier	field	stage	sieve
piece	chief	tier	yield		
	grief	pierce	shield		
		fierce			

Lesson 65: The long *e* is also commonly written as *y*. This usually occurs at the end of a two-syllable word or name, as follows:

Abby	daddy	taffy	saggy	Billy
baby	daddy	daffy	baggy	silly
Tabby	paddy	jiffy	Maggy	Sally
Libby	Teddy	puffy	Twiggy	hilly
lobby	giddy	stuffy	foggy	Molly
	muddy		Peggy	Polly
			muggy	Dolly
				bully
				chilly
mammy	Danny	happy	Harry	messy
mommy	Fanny	pappy	carry	fussy
tummy	Benny	poppy	Perry	sissy
Tommy	Kenny		Terry	
Timmy	<i>Jenny</i>		merry	
	Lenny		hurry	
	Kenny		sorry	
	bunny			
	funny			
	sunny			
		easy	batty	hazy
		<i>busy</i>	fatty	lazy

ratty	crazy
catty	dizzy
city	fuzzy
pity	
<i>pretty</i>	
nutty	

Irregular pronunciations: *Pretty* rhymes with *city*. *Busy* rhymes with *dizzy*.

Lesson 66: There are also a few words in which the long *e* is followed by a consonant and a silent *e*, as in *gene*, *here*, *mere*, *these*. However, *there* and *where* rhyme with *care*; *were* rhymes with *fur*; and *eye* is pronounced the same as the name of the letter *i*.

gene	here	eve
	mere	Steve

Lesson 67: Review of words with the long *e* sound represented symbolically by *e*, *ee*, *ea*, *ie*, *y*, or with a consonant and silent *e*.

tea	please	steal	meet	treat	eve
week	queen	feet	tease	cheer	weep
gear	reach	eel	here	fear	tree
niece	sweet	ease	near	chief	breeze
see	sea	clear	greet	mean	Steve
beet	field	city	Pete	need	Jean
easy	she	beach	feel	bean	believe
feast	steer	read	she	seat	Jeep
jeer	greasy	dear	thief	these	leave
meat	hear	he	feat	we	leaf

Lesson 68: Suggested practice sentences:

Pete and Steve are sleeping on the beach.
 Peggy ate a pretty peach.
 The busy airfield is near the city.
 A green leaf fell from the tree.
 Jean ate a piece of greasy meat
 He drank a cup of sweet tea.

Lesson 69: To further explain why there is more than one way to write a sound, show how different words, which sound the alike, are spelled differently to help us tell them apart. Here are some examples.

week	weak	seem	seam
meet	meat	feet	feat
meat	beat	see	sea
peek	peak	heel	heal
reed	read	reel	real

Lesson 70: Introduce the long *i* sound. Tell the child that the long *i* sounds the same as the name of the letter *i*. First teach the word *I*. *I am*.

I am.
I take.
I make.
I have.
I had.
I met.
I ran.

Next, show how the most common way to write the long *i* is with a consonant followed by a silent *e*. Illustrate with the word *ice* and the word *Ike*. Explain *ice* and *Ike* as follows:

ice	ike
dice	bike
lice	dike
mice	hike
nice	like
rice	mike
vice	pike
price	spike
slice	strike
twice	

Teach these additional words in these spelling families:

bribe	bide	life	bile	dime	dine
tribe	hide	wife	file	lime	fine
	ride	rife	mile	mime	line
	side	knife	Nile	rime	mine
	tide	strife	pile	time	pine
	wide		tile	chime	vine
	chide		vile	crime	wine
	bride		smile	grime	brine
	pride		while	prime	shine
	slide		aisle	slime	spine
					swine
					twine
					thine

pipe	dire	rise	bite	dive	size
ripe	fire	wise	kite	five	prize
wipe	hire		site	<i>give</i>	
gripe	mire		trite	hive	
swipe	sire		quite	jive	
stripe	tire			live	
	wire			<i>live</i>	
	spire			chive	
				drive	
				strive	
				thrive	

Irregular words: The *kn* of *knife* is pronounced *n*. The *s* in *isle* is silent. The *s* in *aisle* is silent. Both *isle* and *aisle* are pronounced the same as *ile*. Explain the difference in meaning of the two words. *Give* and *live* are pronounced as if they were spelled *giv* and *liv*, with short *i* sounds. Note the difference in meaning between *live* (short *i*) and *live* (long *i*).

Lesson 72: The long *i* sound is also sometimes written as *ie*, *y*, and *uy*, as in the following simple words:

die	by	buy
lie	my	guy
pie	ply	
tie	sly	
vie	cry	
	dry	
	fry	
	pry	
	try	

In the past tense, the *y* is changed to *ied*.

die	died	cry	cried
lie	lied	dry	dried
tie	tied	try	tried

Lesson 72: In some words the long *i* sound is also found in combination with silent *g* or *gh* as in:

sign	high	fight
	sigh	light
	thigh	might
		night
		right
		sight
		tight
		bright
		fright

Irregular spelling: The word *height* rhymes with *light*, not *eight*.

Lesson 73: Review the long *i* pronunciation units in two-syllable words:

reply	defy	delight	admire
decide	inside	beside	assign
refine	define	sublime	alive
rely	imply	astride	alike
abide	divine	design	advice
desire	retire	advise	reptile

Lesson 74: Introduce the long *o* sound. Say the words *oak*, *old*, *oat* to make sure the child identifies the sound. Then tell him that the long *o* sound can be written in a number of ways and that it is easy to learn them all.

The most common way of spelling the long *o* is with a consonant and a silent *e*, similar to the way the long *a* and long *i* are spelled. Show him how *rob* is changed to *robe* by adding the silent *e*, *cod* to *code*, *rod* to *rode*. Then show him the words *Dave* and *dive* and show how inserting an *o* in place of the *a* and *i* makes it *dove*, the past tense of *dive*. Present him the following words.

robe	ode	coke	hole	dome
	code	joke	mole	home
	mode	poke	pole	Rome
	rode	woke	role	chrome
		broke	sole	<i>come</i>
		choke	whole	<i>some</i>
		smoke		
		spoke		
		stoke		

one	cope	ore	dose	note
bone	dope	fore	hose	vote
cone	hope	core	nose	quote
lone	mope	fore	pose	
tone	pope	more	rose	
zone	rope	sore	chose	
phone		tore	close	
done		yore		
none		chore		
gone		store		
		swore		

cove	doze
dove	froze
	<i>dove</i>
	<i>love</i>
	<i>move</i>
	rove
	wove
	clove
	drove
	grove
	stove
	<i>glove</i>
	<i>shove</i>

Irregular pronunciations:

come, some rime with *hum*.

one, done, none, rime with *fun*.

gone rimes with *Don*.

dove, love, glove, shove are pronounced as if they were spelled *duv, luv, gluv, shuv*.

Lesson 75: Reviews of words with long *a*, *e*, *i*, and *o* sounds spelled with consonant and silent *e*.

cake	Dave	grave	Jake	lane
coke	dive	grove	joke	line
	dove			lone
cane	drive			
cone	drove			
mare	male	pale	ride	whale
mere	mile	pile	rode	while
mire	mole	pole		whole
more			rise	
			rose	
made				
mode				
make				
mike				

Lesson 76: A second common way in which the long *o* is spelled is *oa* as in the following words:

load	loaf	oak	coal	foam
road		soak		roam
toad		cloak		
soap	oar	boast	oat	
	roar	coast	boat	
	soar	toast	coat	
		roast	goat	
			moat	
			float	
			gloat	

Lesson 77: A third way of writing the long *o* sound is with *ow* as in the following words:

bow	blow	own
low	crow	blown
row	flow	grown
sow	grow	shown
tow	show	
	slow	
	snow	

Lesson 78: A fourth way in which the long *o* is written on combination with a consonant blend as in the words:

old	host	cord	cork	dorm
bold	most	ford	fork	form
cold	<i>cost</i>	lord	pork	norm
fold	post		York	
gold	<i>lost</i>			
hold				
mold				
sold				
told				
born	fort	horse	boss	or
corn	Mort	Norse	loss	for
adorn	port	Morse	moss	nor
horn	sort		toss	
morn				
torn				
worn				

Irregular pronunciation: Note that a *cost* and *lost* sound like *boss*, *loss*, *moss*, *toss*, all of which have a slight variant of the long *o* sound, close to *aw* of *jaw*.

Lesson 79: In a few simple words, the long *o* is simply spelled with an *o*, as follows: *go*, *no*, *so*, *quo*, *yo-yo*. The pronunciation of these words will be obvious to the child when he encounters them in reading. He should become aware of the exceptions in this group, namely *do*, *to*, *who*, and *two*.

Lesson 80: Introduce the *oo* sound as in *good* and *food*. There is a slight difference between the two sounds, but the spoken language is always the guide to the word's pronunciation.

coo	boob	brood	goof	kook
boo		food	roof	spook
moo		mood	proof	book
too		good	hoof	cook
woo		hood		hook
zoo		wood		look
		stood		nook
				took
				brook
				crook
				shook

cool	boom	boon	boop	boor
fool	doom	moon	coop	<i>door</i>
pool	moon	noon	loop	moor
tool	noon	soon	hoop	poor
wool	soon	spoon	poop	
drool	spoon		stoop	
	swoon			
	loose	boot	ooze	booth
	moose	coot	booze	tooth
	noose	foot		
choose	hoot			
	loot			
	soot			
	root			
	toot			
	zoot			

Irregular pronunciation: *door* rimes with *more*.

Special group: the following group of irregular spelled words also rimes with *good*: *could*, *would*, *should*. After you explain their meanings, explain also that these words are more often contracted with *not* to make *couldn't*, *wouldn't*, *shouldn't*.

Lesson 81: Introduce *ow*, *ou* sound as in *cow* and *ouch*. There are many common words in this word group, as shown below:

bow	owl	own	browse	ouch
cow	bowl	down		couch
dow	cowl	gown		pouch
how	fowl	town		touch
now	howl	brown		vouch
pow	jowl	clown		
sow	growl	crown		
vow		drown		
wow		frown		
loud	gouge	ounce	noun	
cloud		bounce		
		founce		
		trounce		

bound	count	our	douse	out
found	fount	<i>four</i>	house	bout
hound	mount	hour	louse	lout
pound		sour	mouse	pout
round		tour	rouse	rout
sound		<i>your</i>	souse	tout
wound		flour		clout
<i>wound</i>				flout
ground				<i>doubt</i>
				trout
		<i>bough</i>		
		<i>plough</i>		

Irregular spellings:

bowl rimes with *role*.

own rimes with *tone*.

touch rimes with *much*.

four and *your* rimes with *or*.

tour rimes with *poor*.

the *ou* of *wound* sounds like *oo* in *moon*.

Irregular spellings: *bough*, *plough*. Silent *gh*

Irregular spelling: *doubt*. The *b* is silent.

Lesson 81a: Here are some simple two-syllable words with *ow*, *ou* sounds which the child should be able to read quite easily.

dowry	bowery	downtown	Mounty
towel	dowel	flounder	bow-wow
country	bounty	tower	foundling
flower	voucher	vowel	counsel
council	lousy	<i>country</i>	pow-wow

Irregular pronunciation: *country*. The *ou* sounds like *u* in *hunt*.

Lesson 82: Introduce *oy*, *oi* sound as in *boy*, and *oil*. Here are some words in that sound group.

boy	void	oil	coin	joint	noise	hoist
coy		boil	join	point	poise	foist
joy		coil	loin			boist
Roy		foil				
soy		spoil				
toy		broil				

Lesson 83: Introduce the long *u* sound. Illustrate by pronouncing such words as *use*, *June*, *cube*, *mule*. These words are spelled with *u* followed by a consonant and silent *e* as follows:

cube	dude	huge	cuke
lube	Jude		duke
rube	nude		juke
tube	rude		Luke
	crude		puke
	prude		

mule	fume	dune	dupe
rule	plume	June	
Yule		tune	
		prune	

cure	fuse	cute
pure	muse	jute
<i>sure</i>	ruse	lute
		mute
		brute
		chute
		flute

Irregular pronunciation: The *s* of *sure* is pronounced with *sh*.

Lesson 84: Review of long vowel sounds as spelled with consonants and the silent *e*.

Dane	fame	Jane	lake
dine	fume	June	like
dune			Luke
male	pike	pride	tame
mile	poke	prude	time
mole	puke		tome
mule			

Lesson 85: Here are two-syllable words with long *u* pronunciation units, which your child should be able to read with little or no trouble.

cupid	assure	ice-cube
Yuletide	refuse	duty
jukebox	prudent	rebuke
dilute	Neptune	tuneful
amuse	pupil	jury
tubeless	ruler	student

Lesson 86: The long *u* is also spelled as *ue* and *ui* as in the following words.

cue	blue	juice
due	clue	fruit
hue	flue	bruise
rue	glue	cruise
due	queue	
	true	

Lesson 87: The long *u* is also spelled *ew*, *eu* and *ue* as in the following words:

dew	blew	flew	news	feud	duel
few	brew	grew		deuce	fuel
Jew	chew	sew			cruel
Lew	clew	view			
mew	crew	screw			
new	drew				
pew					

Lesson 88: The *er*, *ear*, *ir*, *ur* sounds. Note the similarity, as in the following words. A few words *or* words have the same sound.

	her	search	fir	fur	word
	jerk	heard	sir	fur	work
	clerk	learn	bird	purr	worm
	germ	yearn	gird	curd	worst
	term	earth	firm	hurd	worth
	fern	dearth	girl	urge	
	Bert		whirl	purge	
	pert		dirt	splurge	
	terse		flirt	curl	
	verse		shirt	hurl	
	berth		squirt	furl	
Perth		birth	urn		
nerve		girth	burn		
serve		mirth	turn		
verve		first	Burt		
swerve		thirst	Curt		
Merve		dirge	hurt		
		smirk	curse		
		quirk	nurse		
			purse		
			burst		
			curve		

Lesson 89: Your child should be able to read the two-syllable words made up of *er*, *ear*, *ir*, *ur*, and *or* pronunciation units joined with other known sounds.

perfect	himself	terminal*
nervous	Mervin	searchlight
birthday	mirthful	thirsty
unfurl	return	auburn
Bertram	expert	reverse
learning	affirm	
further	current	
Burton	confirm	

* try this three-syllable word

Lesson 90: Many common English words have an *le* ending. These words will familiarize your child with this common construction.

able	apple	battle	ample
cable	grapple	cattle	sample
fable	paddle	rattle	dimple
gable	faddle	little	rimple
table	fiddle	brittle	pimple
sable	saddle	settle	temple
stable	coddle	mettle	gentle
maple	riddle	kettle	fumble
staple	peddle	kettle	bumble
isle	hobble	tattle	humble
bridle	bubble	tittle	mumble
eagle	babble	turtle	rumble
beagle			grumble
			stumble
			tumble
			jumble
			nimble
			thimble
			handle

jungle	dazzle	hustle
juggle	fizzle	bustle
struggle		rustle
oggle	raffle	wrestle
bungle	ruffle	pestle
wiggle	piffle	
wriggle		
wrinkle		
crinkle		
jingle		
jangle		
strangle		
bangle		
single		
dangle		

Lesson 91: Show how three multisyllabic words are derived from the above words:

wrestler	settler	constable	cobbler
wrinkled	rustler	littlest	babbling
juggle	fizzled	ruffled	drizzling
struggling	tumbler	gently	unsettling
simply	gentleman	pimplly	paddling
strangler	rattler	handling	tattler

Lesson 92: Many common English words have an *er* ending. These words will familiarize your child with this common sound-symbol.

better	lower	upper	zipper	summer	dinner
rubber	lumber	bitter	framer	gutter	trigger
higher	winter	butter	sitter	chatter	father
other	letter	later	maker	bumper	fewer
bigger	dreamer	shimmer	slipper	faker	fever
baker	biker	rather	mother	brother	heater
teacher	preacher	pitcher	slumber	number	rover
sister	blister	corner	over	dealer	owner

Lesson 93: Introduce the child to the silent *k* and *kn* with the following words:

knack	knap	knave	knee
knight	knit	knob	knock
		know	knowing
		known	
knead	knelt	knickers	
knot	know	knowledge	
knuckle			

Lesson 94: Introducing the silent *g* in these words beginning with *gn*.

gnarl gnarled gnat gnaw gnawing gnome gnu

Lesson 95: Introduce the child to *w* and *wr* with the following words:

wrack	wrangle	wrap	wrapping	wreath	wrathful
wreath	wreck	wrench	wrestle	wrestler	wriggle
wright	wring	wrist	write	writer	writing
wrong	wrote	wrought	wry	wren	wretch

Lesson 96: Introduce the child to the silent *b* as in the following words:

dumb	thumb	plumber	limb	climb	numb	debt
lamb	comb	crumb	dumb	thumb	bomb	bombing

Lesson 97: Introduce the silent *t* with these words:

castle	hustle	nestle	rustle	often	listen
whistle	hustling	hasten	jostle	soften	wrestle
whistling	bristles	hastening	rustling	moisten	wrestling
gristle	christen	thistle	jostling	moistening	softening

Lesson 98: We have already learned the silent *g* and *gh* in relation to the long *i* in such words as *sign* and *sight*. The silent *gh* is found in other common words as well. The following is a review of such words:

ought	taught	caught	thought	wrought	slaughter
bought	fraught	naughty	daughter	naught	eight
straight	weigh	weight	eighty	neighbor	eighteen
freight	height	bright	light	lighting	frighten
frightening		frightful		brighten	

Lesson 99: The *h* is silent in some word, as follows

honor hour ghost honest ghastly ghetto ghoul

Lesson 100: Review of *ph* and *gh* as *f* sound:

phantom	Ralph	rough	cough	laugh	laughter
graph	pharmacy	phase	Phoenix	Phillip	phone
tough	phony	photo	graphic	physic	phrase
emphasis	physical	phrase	photograph		Philadelphia

Lesson 101: There are many words of Latin origin in which *the ce, se, ci, ti, xi, sc, si su, and tu* are pronounced like *sh, ch, or zh*. Here are some of them the child can become familiar with.

ocean	ancient	nation	mission	sure	nauseous
insure	fission	fraction	measure	treasure	issue
special	racial	facial	conscious	anxious	atrocious
station	ration	patient	bastion	section	question
fracture	rapture	capture	pleasure	leisure	tissue
fissure	fusion	traction	obnoxious	musician	physician
initial	crucial	ration	motion	patience	picture

Glossary of Terms

affix - a syllabic unit which, when added to a word, modifies the meaning of the word. There are three types of affixes: prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings.

alphabet - a set of graphic symbols (letters) representing the speech sounds of a given language, the purpose of which is to permit the speaker to record (write) his words and thoughts in a manner as closely resembling his actual speech as possible and to permit the reader to translate back into sound the precise spoken words of the writer.

antonym - words having opposite meanings, such as hot-cold, big-small.

auditory discrimination - the ability to distinguish by ear the subtly different sounds of the spoken language so that they can be accurately identified by the proper written symbols.

basal reader - a textbook in a structured series used for the purpose of teaching children to read. Vocabulary is controlled throughout the series so that the ability to read the advanced readers depends on the pupil's knowledge of the vocabulary in the pre-primers and primer of the series.

configurationalism - a concept by which one learns to recognize a whole word by its total overall shape rather than by the sound values of its individual letters.

consonant - an elementary irreducible speech sound produced by stopping and releasing the air stream, or stopping it at one point while it escapes at another, or forcing it through a loosely closed or very narrow passage.

consonant digraph - two alphabet letters representing one consonant sound, such as *th*, *sh*, *ch*, *ph*, *gh*, etc.

context clues - a means by which a reader determines the meaning of a word by its relationship with the other words in a sentence. Same as context cues.

decoding - a means of determining the sound of a written word by translating the letters into spoken sounds. Sounding out a word. The term is also loosely used by eclectic basal series authors to describe any technique to determine the meaning of a word.

diphthong - two vowel letters together in the same syllable representing one sound in which both vowels are heard, such as in *boil*, *sound*, *boy*.

dyslexia - a term widely used to describe the inability to learn to read by sight-vocabulary techniques. The causes of dyslexia are widely disputed within the remedial reading community, but they include mixed dominance, ambidexterity, or simply poor memory of word forms.

eclectic basal reader - a current euphemism for sight-vocabulary basal textbooks in which no one method of teaching reading is singled out as being better than any other. Usually combines techniques of sight-reading with phonetic clues. Some current eclectic basal series now feature linguistic decoding instead of incidental phonics.

encoding - writing.

grapheme - a representation by alphabet letters of a phoneme, or distinct irreducible speech sound.

hieroglyphic - a picture, character, or graphic symbol representing a word, syllable, or sound in which some sound-symbol correspondences may be present, but which depends mainly on a meaning association rather than a sound association are pure ideograms, such as numerals and the dollar sign, others represent whole words, parts of words, or

pronunciation units. Was considered a cumbersome, inaccurate, difficult system for recording spoken language and was replaced by alphabetic writing. The alphabet was specifically invented in order to overcome the serious shortcomings and handicaps of hieroglyphic writing, which had become a serious bottleneck to intellectual development.

homographs - words spelled alike but with different meanings and pronunciations, such as wind-wind, convict-convict.

homonym - words which sound alike but with different meanings and, sometimes, spellings: *one, won; air, heir; bare, bear; bear, bear.*

ideogram - a graphic symbol representing an object or idea such as the numeral 5 or such symbols as %, \$, ¢, , #, +, —.

inflectional ending - an affix at the end of a word to form plurals, possessive cases, comparisons, tenses of verbs, etc., as in: boys, boy's, biggest, talked, walking.

i.t.a. - initial teaching alphabet devised to create perfectly consistent letter-sound correspondences between spoken and written English so that a child can learn to read without having to learn irregular spellings. Eventually the child is transferred to t.o., traditional orthography.

linguistics - the study of language, in spoken and written forms.

look-and-guess method - a description of the look-say method by some of its critics.

look-say method - synonymous with sight-vocabulary, whole-word, and sight-word method whereby a child is taught to read by remembering the appearance of the whole word rather than by learning the sound values of the individual letters. It is a hieroglyphic technique of reading applied to a sound-symbol system.

manualism - school of deaf-mute instruction in which sign language, the manual alphabet, is used as the chief means of communication and learning among the deaf. This is a hieroglyphic system since it involves sight symbols and associations only.

mixed dominance - a condition in some children associated with ambidexterity which makes them read words in reverse in sight reading.

morpheme - the smallest unit of meaning in written language.

oralism - the school of deaf-mute instruction in which the student is taught to articulate in order to gain a concept of spoken language and to read phonetically.

orthography - spelling, or the study of spelling.

phoneme - a distinct, irreducible language sound.

phoneme-grapheme correspondences - the sound-symbol correspondences of a spoken language and its written counterpart. The phoneme is a distinct, irreducible language sound and the corresponding grapheme is its representation by one or more written letters.

phonemics - a linguistic term referring to the study of the specific sounds of a specific language, as opposed to phonetics, which is the study of language sounds in general.

phonetic alphabet - a system of language sound symbols in which each distinct sound feature of the language is identified by one separate symbol. A phonetic alphabet for the English language as it is spoken in different parts of the world with different accents would require well over 100 separate graphic symbols. The phonetic alphabet for English in most American dictionaries numbers about 44 or 45 symbols.

phonetics - the study of language sounds and their representation by written symbols. It covers the complete range of sound differences producible by the human vocal apparatus for the purpose of speech.

phonics - the application of phonetics to the teaching of reading and spelling.

phonography - the written representation of the sounds of speech; phonetic spelling or transcription. Also, any system of shorthand based on a phonetic transcription of speech.

phonogram - a sign or symbol representing a word, syllable, or sound, as in shorthand. Also used to describe certain regular graphemes found in common spelling families in written English. Also referred to as a graphemic or graphonic base in some textbooks.

prefix - an affix at the beginning of a word, modifying the meaning of the basic word, such as prefix, redone, undo.

pictograph - a picture representing an idea as in primitive writing and hieroglyphics. Widely used in road signs and traffic signs.

pre-primer - the first and most elementary reading textbook in a basal series. It is generally used to introduce the child to a basic sight vocabulary.

primer - generally, a book whereby a child is taught how to read. In whole-word parlance, it is the first textbook reader of a basal series, following the pre-primers, incorporating all of the sight words learned in the pre-primers.

reading for meaning - a method of reading instruction whereby a child is taught to associate a whole written word with its meaning. In reading for meaning a child may misread the word father for *daddy*, or *vice versa*, since he has not been taught the relationship between written symbols and spoken sounds. He associates the whole word with an idea, a meaning. In some reading-for-meaning instruction, phonetic clues are introduced early enough so that the most blatant misreadings are avoided.

reading readiness - a concept regarding the readiness of a child to learn how to read. Phonics advocates suggest that a child is ready to learn how to read when he has an adequate speaking vocabulary and can distinguish between subtly different speech sounds. Sight-vocabulary advocates suggest the need to develop visual discrimination skills before a child is ready to learn how to read. Sight-word readiness programs teach picture reading, shape configurations, then word-picture associations.

remedial reading - a course of instruction to help poor readers improve reading proficiency. Methods vary according to the teacher's preference and training.

reading disability - general term applied to children who, for a variety of reasons, cannot learn to read with any proficiency via the sight-vocabulary method.

schwa - the unstressed, central vowel sound of most unstressed syllables in English, such as the *a* in *ago*, *above*, the *e* in *agent*, *taken*, the *i* in *pencil*, the *u* in *circus*, etc. Sometimes referred to as the muttering vowel.

sight-word method - synonymous with look-say, whole-word, or sight-vocabulary method, whereby a child is taught to read by remembering the appearance of the whole word rather than by learning the sound values of the individual letters.

sight vocabulary - words which a child has learned to read or recognize on the basis of their overall appearance and configuration before he has learned the alphabet and the sounds the letters stand for.

silent reading - a concept, sometimes advocated to extremes, in which children are trained to read silently without moving their lips so that printed words are associated with mental images rather than speech sounds.

sound-symbol system - the alphabetic means of writing and reading, whereby one uses written letter-symbols to represent speech sounds.

strophosymbolia - a term coined by Dr. Samuel T. Orton to describe the habit of reversing letters and of reading words backwards which plagues children with mixed dominance who are taught to read via a sight-word method.

structural analysis - the use of meaning units in the recognition of sight words of more than one syllable.

suffix - an affix at the end of the word: *safely, forceful, teacher*.

synonym - words that have the same or nearly the same meaning: *love, adore; careful, cautious; car, automobile*.

vowel - a voiced speech sound characterized by generalized friction of the air passing in a continuous stream through the pharynx and opened mouth, with relatively no narrowing or other obstruction of the speech organs. In written English the vowels are represented by the letters *a, e, i, o, u*, and *y* in cases where the latter substitutes for one of the other letters.

vowel digraphs - two vowels together in one syllable representing only one or a new vowel sound, such as in *receive, beam, does, again, pail, leather*.

whole-word method - a hieroglyphic method of learning to read English by associating whole-word configurations directly with pictures or meanings. Synonymous with sight-word, sight-vocabulary, and look-say method.

word forms - whole words seen as hieroglyphics in which the parts of the word are visually studied as one would study a Chinese character.

word attack - the technique of figuring out the meaning of a word by its configuration, relation in context with other words, structural analysis, phonetic rules, and letter-sound correspondence clues. It is a development of sight-word methodology, whereby hieroglyphic reading techniques have been applied to the reading of a sound-symbol writing system.

The “Glossary of Terms” is from pages 283 to 288 in *The New Illiterates* (1973).

Although Mr. Blumenfeld calls this a *Preschool Home Primer*, it can be used to teach people of any age to read. Notice that Mr. Blumenfeld teaches spelling patterns. This is essentially a spelling approach to teaching reading. It produces students who are equally good a reading or spelling.

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These intensive phonics lessons are taken from Chapter 10 of Samuel L. Blumenfeld's 1973 *The New Illiterates*. They have been expanded in subsequent editions in *How to Tutor* (1973), *Alpha-Phonics* (1983), and most recently *Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics* (1997, 2005, 2010). I highly recommend all these books, especially the latter, which is available at <http://chalcedon.edu/store/Books/>

I am publishing these lessons for both **historical** and **practical purposes**.

Historically: The fact that this complete and thorough intensive phonics method was offered to the public as a definitive answer to the massive illiteracy in America is of capital importance. Mr. Blumenfeld examined in detail the most popular look-and-say methods used in the public schools at that time. He determined from his detailed analysis that dyslexia would be the natural and necessary outcome of this method of instruction for many students. His arguments were almost totally ignored by the reading establishment. In *The New Illiterates*, Mr. Blumenfeld expressed high hopes that intensive phonics would soon replace the look-say method of teaching reading in the classrooms of America; but most unfortunately the tidal wave of whole-language, under the generalissimo of Professors Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith, largely stopped the further expansion of intensive phonics into the classrooms. The phonics basals, for not entirely explicable reasons, either disappeared (*Economy*, *Basic Reading*, the old *Open Court Long Vowel First Program*), or morphed into compromises with whole-language (names withheld). Readers should be forewarned that the current Guided Reading movement employs a very weak and ineffective form of inductive phonics call whole-to-part phonics.

Practically: I am delighted to put into the hands of parents and educators the kind of materials they need to produce high levels of reading achievement. I also hope that publishers will consider ways to incorporate this type of sequential phonics instruction into their basal reading programs. The important thing is to avoid any instruction that would lead to guessing. This would include pictures, predictable texts, and sight-word instruction. The goal should be "total linguistic function:" speaking, reading, spelling, and writing. When spelling with cursive handwriting is made the foundation of literacy development, very high levels of reading achievement are attainable by all children.

I have produce a document of quotes from *The New Illiterates* with information that I believe everyone interested in restoring high reading achievement needs to know. It can be downloaded for free from my website, www.donpotter.net

The "Glossary of Terms" will be helpful to people new to the study of reading instruction. It is particularly valuable because the definitions are written from the viewpoint of an advocate of intensive phonics-first, giving definitions that clearly reveal the **true** nature of the terms.