

# Natural Phonics Primer

## Preprimer

213 Decodable Practice Words

177 Short-Vowels Single-Letter Words  
and  
36 Double-Letter Ending Words

To prepare students for Step One of the  
*Natural Phonics Primer™*

A Superior Phonics–First Approach for Teaching Reading

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# Natural Phonics Primer™ Reading Program

## Preprimer

Lesson 1: Mm (monkey)

Lesson 2: Aa (at) am

Lesson 3: Nn (nest) an, man, Nan

Lesson 4: Rr (rabbit) ran, ram

Lesson 5: Ff (fan) fan

Lesson 6: Ss (saw) Sam

Lesson 7: Ee (ed) men

Lesson 8: Tt (top) mat, set, ten, met, sat, at,  
tan, Nat, net, fat, rat

Lesson 9: Ll (leaf) let

Lesson 10: Gg (goat) rag, gas, tag, get, sag, gag, leg,  
nag

Lesson 11: Cc (can) can, cab, cat

Lesson 12: Kk (keg) keg

Lesson 13: Bb (bear) Ben, bag, Tab, bat, beg, bet

Lesson 14: Ii (ish) bit, tin, bib, big, sit, in, fit,  
fin, fig, rib, rim, it

Lesson 15: Hh (horn) hat, hit, hem, ham, him, hen

Lesson 16: Dd (duck) red, hid, sad, rid, had, did, lad,  
mad, den, led, mid, din, lid, bed,  
dig, fed, bad, dim, kid, kit, nod

Lesson 17: Pp (pig) tap, map, pin, tip, lap, pig, pen,  
rip, lip, pet, rap, cap, pat, sip,  
dip, pit, sap, hip, nap, pan, peg,  
pad, pun

Lesson 18: Oo (top) log, rod, got, fog, pot, cob, hop,  
rob, not, lop, hot, sod, top, pod,  
lot, dot, cot, cod, on

Lesson 19: Jj (jug) jam, jet, jig, jug, jog, jot

Lesson 20: Ww (wagon) wag, wig, wit, wet, web, win

Lesson 21: Uu (uck) gum, pug, run, hum, bun, fun, tug,  
gun, bug, tub, sun, hub, cut, rub,  
hut, jut, mud, bud, rug, sup, up,  
hug, cup, but, pup, nut, us

Lesson 22: Zz (zebra) zap zip

Lesson 23: Xx (box) ax, box, six, mix, fix, tax, Max,  
ox, fox

Lesson 24: Qq qu (queen) quit

Lesson 25: Vv (valentine) vat, van, Val

Lesson 26: Yy (yard) yes, yet, yam

Lesson 27: Double-Letter Word Endings

pass mass lass mess less fuss Bill fill bill fell Jill  
will till tell well sell yell jell bell dull moss boss  
toss loss kiss muss muff off puff huff cuff mutt jazz  
buzz fuzz Ann

## *Note to the Teacher*

The *Natural Phonics Primer: Preprimer* is designed to be taught to young children **before** they begin the 72 Exercises in the *Natural Phonics Primer* (NPP). Flash cards are available.

I highly recommend using the *Phonovisual Charts* in conjunction with both the *Natural Phonics Primer: Preprimer* and the *Natural Phonics Primer*. The charts teach 43 of the 44 English speech sounds and their major spelling patterns. The charts are available in color with flashcards and other aids from [www.phonovisual.com](http://www.phonovisual.com)

Once the students know the sound-to-symbol correspondences and are able to sound-out and spell the words, they will be ready for success with the NPP. The NPP consists of 72 carefully designed and sequenced Exercises to teach children to read fluently and spell correctly without guessing. The exercises first appeared in Rudolf Flesch's 1955 classic, *Why Johnny Can't Read and what you can do about it*. I have a whole webpage dedicated to materials for teaching that method.

The section below "On Teaching Phonics" was largely taken from Florence Akin's 1913 all time phonics classic, *Word Mastery*. My hand-typed edition is available for free on my website, [www.donpotter.net](http://www.donpotter.net)

Students who learn to read with the *Natural Phonics: Preprimer*, and *Natural Phonics Primer* will never develop the whole word guessing habit. The whole word guessing habit caused by sight-word "instruction" is the main reason for children struggling with reading. Guessing words from shape and context leads to poor comprehension. Conversely, good decoding leads to high comprehension. Many supposed comprehension deficiencies are nothing more than poor decoding skills that lead the children to misunderstand the meaning of the text. The tests for silent comprehension are a poor means of accessing a student's reading difficulties.

The best test currently available for telling if a student has artificially induced whole-word dyslexia is the *Miller Word Identification Assessment*, available on my website. Students who take their first steps into literacy with the *Natural Phonics Primer* will avoid these popular man-made hindrances.

Parents and teachers should take as long as necessary teach the Preprimer. It is vital to lay down a firm foundation before proceeding to the *Primer*. I also recommend that the student learn to identify the letters by letter name so they can begin oral spelling right away.

If the student is old enough, start them on writing the letters so they can practice writing the words. It is better to have them write on a chalkboard at the start so they can use their large motor skills.

The consonants m n, r, f, s, l represent sounds that may be prolonged. This make them the easiest of sounds sounds to blend, and therefore are taught first.

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## On Teaching Phonics

The teacher must decide the amount of time given daily to the work in phonics. Classroom conditions make it possible for some to give twenty minutes a day while others can give but ten. Two exercises a day of ten minutes each is perhaps the ideal arrangement. The exercise should never be continued until pupils weary of it. At the first indication of lagging or weariness it is time to stop.

The teaching of phonics includes

1. Ear training,
2. Tongue training,
3. Eye training,
4. Word building.

**Ear training** may begin on the first day the child enters school. Say to the pupils, "We shall play a little game. You may do what I tell you, but do not speak a word." Then say to one, "Bring me a b-o-x," speaking the last word very slowly (phonetically); to others, "Show me something r-e-d," "Tap on your d-e-s-k," "Touch something made of t-i-n," "Cl-a-p your hands," "R-u-n to the d-oo-r," "H-o-p to the w-i-n-d-ow," etc. Sufficient interest will soon be aroused to permit the teacher to leave off the play and say words phonetically, one after another, asking pupils to tell what each word is. In a few days they will be able to recognize almost any word that may be sounded. Occasionally tell a little story, saying a word phonetically here and there, and allowing pupils to pronounce the word. This form of training may be profitably continued throughout the first half-year.

**Tongue training** should begin about the third or fourth day. Sound a word and have a pupil tell what sound he hears first, what sound he hears last. Be very careful that he gives the sound correctly. There is a natural inclination to voice a breath, or voiceless sound, such as *h*. Holding an object before a pupil, have him say the name slowly (phonetically), as *h-u-t*, *c-a-p*, *v-a-s-e*, *p-e-n*, *b-oo-k*, *f-a-n*, etc. A picture may be placed before the class, and a pupil may be asked to say phonetically the name of each thing he sees in the picture. After a few days' practice offer a sound (it may be a simple speech sound, as *l*, or a consonant blend, as *sl*); have the pupils see how many different words they can think of beginning with that sound. This training should be continued for several months. Ear training and tongue training should be practiced for eight or ten days before taking up eye training.

**Eye training** begins with the book, — teaching the pupil to associate the sound with the symbol. Ask the pupil to name the picture used to represent the sound *monkey*, *m*. Ask him what sound he hears first (the ear and the tongue training have prepared the way for prompt recognition), and he will reply, /*m*/. Now tell him that the pictures represent the first sound and that hereafter they will help him to tell words. The pupil next learns the sound of *a*, in the same way. Then he learns the sound of *n*. Now he says the sounds of the three letters m-a-n, and thereby discovers the word man. At first the pupil will say these sounds so far apart that he cannot hear a word, but keep him trying to say them more rapidly, as, *m—a—n*, *m—a—n*. *m-a-n*, *m-a-n*, until he does hear the word and tells it. Proceed in like manner with the lessons that follow.

## 213 Words the NPP Preprimer

### *In Alphabetical Order*

am an Ann at ax

bad bag bat bed dig beg bell Ben bet bib big Bill bill bit boss box bud bug bun but  
buzz

cab can cap cat cob cod cot cuff cup cut

den did dim din dip dot dull

fan fat fed fell fig fill fit fin fix fog fox fun fuss fuzz

gag gas get got gum gun

had ham hat hem hen hid him hip hit hop hot hub huff hug hum hut

in it

jam jazz jell jet jig Jill jog jot jug jut

keg kid kiss kit

lad mad lap lass led leg

nag less let lid lip log lop loss lot

man map mass mat Max men mess met mid mix moss mud muff muss mutt

Nan nap Nat net nod not nut

off on ox

pan pass pat peg pad pen pet pig pin pit pod pot puff pug pun pup quit

rag ram ran rap rat red rib rid rim rip rod rob rub rug run

sad sag Sam sap sat sell set sip sit six sod sun sup

Tab tag tan tap tax tell ten till tin tip top toss tub tug

up us

Val van vat

wag web well wet wig will win wit

yam yell yes yet

zap zip

# consonants



p-



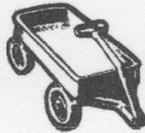
b-



m-



wh-



w-



qu-



f-  
ph



v-

3

th-

this

th-



t-



d-



n-



l-



s-  
c



z-  
s



r-



sh-



y-



ch-  
tch



j-  
g



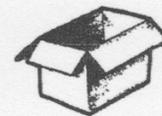
k-  
c ck



g-



-ng  
n(k)



-x



h-

# vowels



**a-e**

ay ai



**ee**

-e ea



**i-e**

-y igh



**o-e**

oa ow -o

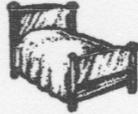


**u-e**

ew



**-a-**



**-e-**

ea



**-i-**

-y



**-o-**



**-u-**

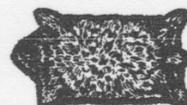


**aw**

au a(ll)



**oo**



**ur**

er ir or



**a(r)**



**oo**

u



**ow**

ou



**oy**

oi



**o(r)**

## Brief Suggestions for Teaching the *Natural Phonics Primer: Preprimer*

I highly recommend the use of the *Natural Phonics Primer Decoding Cards* to develop audio and visual discrimination. The students should be able to identify all the words and spell them *accurately* and *rapidly*. This combination of accuracy and speed is called “automaticity.” It is proof that the “reflex bonds” or “neurological connects” are correct and strong. The establishment of these bonds requires frequent, short episodes of spaced practice.

Teach the sounds represented by the letters using the Phonovisual Chart. Have the student say and spell the word being learned. Then teach another word the same way. Lay the words on the table and ask the student to point to the word when you say it. Eventually you can do several words at a time. Hide the deck behind your back and show a word at random to make sure the student can identify the word instantly, and does not confuse words. Take deck of words they have worked with, holding the cards so the student cannot see the words, and ask the student to spell the words. Do this with just two words at first and then add more words as their skills increase.

Remember that the subconscious mind works between training sessions. Students who cannot perform satisfactory during one session often perform quite well later, after the subconscious mind has had time to process the new learning. NEVER practice until students become tired or discouraged because *frustration* is a leading cause of reversals and maladaptive behavior that works against learning.

The Preprimer is **vastly important** because it introduces ALL the consonant sounds and short vowel sounds in an optimal sequence for easy mastery. It is **essential** to automate this level **before** satisfactory progress can be made further down the line in the acquisition of the necessary sub-skills. Often failure at the higher levels is due to a failure a lower level. For example, an apparent comprehension problem is more likely due to lower-level decoding deficits than actual problems with comprehension. Misdiagnosing a decoding deficit as a comprehension deficit can lead to a tremendous waste of instructional time addressing the wrong problem. Conversely, targeting decoding problems inevitably leads to huge increases in comprehension. The so-called top-down model assumes (falsely) that student will learn lower-level skills independently by extracting them from reading text that has the lower-level skills embedded. This is a false assumption that has led to the high illiteracy rates in our country.

Success with the Preprimer will assure rapid success with the *Primer*.

This method is characterized by its faithfulness to the principle of phonics-first and the total absence of instruction in guessing.

## Natural Phonics Primer: Preprimer Skills Ladder

Lesson	Card Numbers	Sound-to-Letter Correspondence	Phonovisual Sound-Picture	Sample Words
27	178-213	-ff, -ll, -ss, -tt, -gg, -nn,		less bill box huff
26	175-177	Y y	yard	yes yet yam
25	172-174	V v	valentine	vat van Val
24	171	Q q qu	queen	quit
23	162-170	X x	box	ax box fix tax
22	160-161	Z z	zebra	zap zip
21	133-159	Short U u	duck	gum pug fun hug
20	127-132	W w	wagon	wag wig web set
19	121-126	J j	jug	jam jet jog jot
18	102-120	Short O o	top	log rod cob top
17	79-101	P p	pig	tap pan pit pad
16	58-78	D d	duck	red did dad mad
15	52-57	H h	horn	hat hit him hen
14	40-51	Short I i	fish	bit fit it rim
13	34-39	B b	bear	bag bat bet Tab
12	33	K k	key	keg
11	30-32	C c	key	can cat cab
10	22-29	G g	goat	rag gas sag leg
9	21	L l	leaf	let
8	10-20	T t	top	mat sat net fat
7	9	Short E e	bed	men
6	8	S s	saw	Sam
5	7	F f	fan	fan
4	5-6	R r	rabbit	ran ram
3	2-4	N n	nest	an man
2	1	Short A a	cat	am
1		M m	monkey	

The phonics sequence is based on pages 5 to 25 in Florence Akin's 1913 *Word Mastery*. It begins with the letters m, n, r f, s, l because these letters represent sounds that may be prolonged (continuants). This makes them the easiest consonant sounds to blend, and therefore to learn first.

This is a Preprimer, a book to be taught **before** the Primer. A primer is a book for teaching beginning reading. The Natural Phonics Primer: Preprimer is to be taught BEFORE the Natural Phonics Primer.

The word "Primer" does not mean that the program is limited to young, beginning students. Older students with reading difficulties suffer from poor initial reading instruction, and is, therefore, benefit from returning to the foundational skills they were initially denied.

Prepared by Donald L Potter on April 8, 2014. [www.donpotter.net](http://www.donpotter.net)