



A PARENTS GUIDE TO THE THREE STAGES OF READING



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ABLE TO READ

Teaching a child to read and showing them the wonderful information that can be found in the printed words is a very rewarding gift. The day your child reads you out an unknown sentence will be a day you swell with pride.

Words are everywhere! From story books to road signs, from the supermarket to the internet, literacy provides windows to information and pleasure.

There's a lot of jargon and confusing words that are often associated with the learning to read process. This guide shows you a simplistic view that you can use at home.

Everyone has a different theory and a different technique to teaching reading. Throughout a child's learning to read experience, the most important thing is to keep a positive attitude.

Always read to your children, this encourages good expression when they learn to read, and also a love of books. When you are reading to your child, there is so much to talk about. Ask your child what the book was about, their favourite character, what things they can see in the picture, what letters or words they can recognise on the page.

There are about 100 common sight words that we use that children can learn by sight, for everything else however, children must possess the ability to decode. Knowing the sounds that letters make, will help children to become competent and fluent readers through decoding.

From an early age you can make your child aware of the reading process. Always have something around for them to 'read' like board books, television guides, magazines, novels. Encourage them to hold the book the right way up and turn the pages. Often children will make up great stories just doing this and looking at the pictures.

Key Factors that will aid in a child wanting to read:

- Experiences must be positive
- Ability to use a variety of techniques for decoding unknown words
- Always "model" the reading process - read to your child regularly
- Asking questions
- Every reading session should equal success
- Choosing books that "spark" interest
- Exposing children to reading material in the early years
- Building a knowledge of sight words
- Making it fun!



In the first three years of school (and beyond if necessary) all children learn best with an integrated approach to reading which teaches:

Phonemic awareness: the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in oral language;

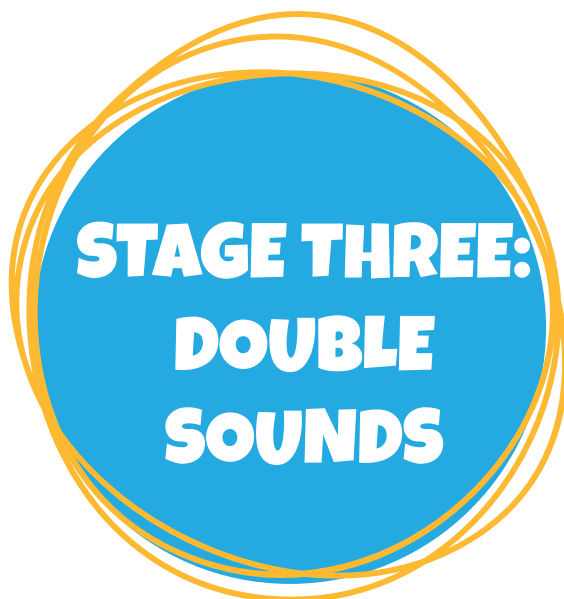
Phonics: the relationships between letters and sounds;

Fluency: the ability to read quickly and naturally, recognise words automatically, and group words quickly;

Vocabulary knowledge: new words and what they mean; and

Text comprehension: understanding what is being read and developing higher-order thinking skills.

MAIN STAGES OF READING:



SINGLE SOUNDS

This is where children learn the name and the sound of the letter. For a beginner, this can be very tricky. b, p, d are three of the most commonly confused sounds as they look so similar.

At this early stage it is essential for children to practice all their sounds so that they can begin to build words. In this stage children can look at simple words (CVC's) like bed, peg, cat, dog and identify the beginning, middle and end sound. CVC's means a 3 letter word made of a consonant, vowel, consonant.

They can also rhyme words, and have a simple grasp on comprehension. English is a particularly hard language to learn to read and write.

Children spend their first years learning that the letter 'c' makes a 'c' sound in cake, but then they discover that it makes 'sss' in circle and 'ch' in chips. To avoid confusion, explain early on that letters sometimes change the sound they make in words.

Vowels are also a "tricky" concept to grasp. Vowels can say their sound or name.




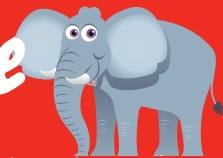












Activities to help this stage are:

- Put a couple of letters at a time on the floor, ask children to run to the card that makes an 'a' sound. Ask them to tell you the sound, and three or four things that start with that sound eg. a is for apple, a is for acrobat, a is for ant.
- Concentrate on one sound at a time, learn the same and sound that the letter makes, learn how to write the letter, talk about things that start with that letter sound. For example, if you are concentrating on 'a', go out into the backyard and find some ants, eat some apples and swing around the living room like an acrobat!
- There are many single sounds games available that you can buy or make yourself.
- To practice single sounds, you can scatter them onto the floor and have a treasure hunt.
- Alphabet Bingo: write sounds onto a piece of cardboard and show children letters, they have to tell you the sound and mark it off if they have it.
- Read stories to children and ask them to retell the story.
- Have a picture and ask children to find all the things they can starting with a certain sound, this can also be done out the car window. 'Eye spy with my little eye' is one of the BEST games for single sound practice.
- Chalkboard or whiteboard writing
- Eye spy (with the sounds not letter names)
- Magazine cut out collage
- Craft activities





ALPHABET CHART

Aa Ant 	Bb Bee 	Cc Crocodile 	Dd Dog 
Ee Elephant 	Ff Frog 	Gg Gorilla 	Hh Horse 
Ii Iguana 	Jj Jellyfish 	Kk Kangaroo 	Ll Lizard 
Mm Mouse 	Nn Newt 	Oo Otter 	Pp Pig 
Qq Quail 	Rr Rat 	Ss Snail 	Tt Turtle 
Uu Unicorn 	Vv Vulture 	Ww Whale 	Xx Fox 
Yy Yak 	Zz Zebra 		

BLEND AND END SOUNDS

After children are familiar with all things in stage one, they can move onto blending sounds. In this stage children learn the common sounds that are made when two or three consonant letters are grouped together. Once they have established this connection, decoding words and reading fluency will come much easier.

What is blending? Blending is mixing the letters together

In this stage children learn the common sounds that are made when two or three consonant letters are grouped together. Once they have established this connection, decoding words and reading fluency will come much easier.

Examples of blends:

tr - tractor, trip, trace

bl - blue, blink, blood

str - strong, straw

thr - three, throw

Activities to help this stage are:

- Write the sound you're focusing on a card and put it on the floor. Get your child to read out that sound and then run to a wall when they can think of a word that starts with that sound. Keep going until they've run out.
- Play true or false with sounds that are similar. E.g. Does tractor start with 'br' "No!" Tractor starts with 'tr'
- Place words on the floor and collect all words that start with a certain sound. Then ask your child if they can tell you what words they are.



DOUBLE SOUNDS

Double sounds are the trickiest ones to learn. There are a lot of them, different letter combinations make the same sound, and the same letters can make different sounds! This is not something that you would think about when reading, but it is extremely confusing to children so a lot of patience has to be exercised when trying to explain.

There are a lot of them, different letter combinations make the same sound, and the same letters can make different sounds! For example:

“oo” as in book & look OR “oo” as in moon

“igh” as in light & bright

“ee” as in see and “ea” as in sea

We'll practice more on the following page.

AUTOMATIC recognition is the key to success!!!

Activities to help this stage are:

- Look at the sounds and think of three words that have that sound in them.
- Write a word like b_ _ch and draw a picture of a beach. Ask your child to choose the correct sound to go in the space. This can be repeated with all of the different sounds.
- Go through sounds that sound the same but have different letter combinations. You can print these onto card and scatter them onto the table for children to group together.
- Draw pictures and write two similar words next to each picture for your child to choose the correct word. e.g. Draw a cloud and next to it write 'clown' and 'cloud' ask, "Which is the right word?"
- Have your double sounds cards and play who am I? I have the 'ai' sound in my name, I arrive at your house, you can open and read me? Who am I? Mail!



DOUBLE SOUNDS

CH	as in chalk
SH	as in sheep
TH	as in think
EE	as in bee
EA	as in teapot
EY	as in key
AR	as in star
ER	as in sister
IR	as in bird
UR	as in turtle
OO	as in book or as in food

OA	as in boat
OW	as in window or as in cow
OU	as in sound
AW	as in saw
AY	as in day
AI	as in rain
OR	as in torn
IGH	as in night
AIR	as in chair
ING	as in sing



SIGHT WORDS

The following page has a list of the 100 most frequently used words in our language. Some are easy for children to decode once they have their knowledge of sounds. Others are still quite difficult so must be remembered by sight.

To teach sight words, schools generally use the 'look and say' method. With all of the spelling rules, sight words and sounds, this is A LOT to remember by sight! The most efficient way for children to recognise and decode words is to form a solid understanding of the single and double sounds and that will help them to know most of the words in our language.

They can then use those sounds to decode unknown words and use contextual clues to change the word to make sense. Sight words occur so frequently in texts that it's important your child knows them before diving into trying to read books independently. Not knowing their sight words will cause them to constantly stop and start while trying to read and make them lose confidence.

To get around this, underline all of the sight words in a book and when you get to an underlined word, it's your turn to read.

Activities to help this stage:

- Make your own sight words cards. A lot of children are quite visual with their learning. If you can let them make their own cards and get them to rainbow write or make the word into a pretty picture, they can use this as a cue to remember the word.
- Play sight word snap. Have two sets of sight words cards and play snap. When you snap a pair you have to say the word.
- Games to play with their sight words cards: bingo, word hunts, memory
- You can cut out the words on the next pages and stick them to magnetic tape for children to use on the fridge.
- Sand writing
- Play dough



a	down	if
after	for	in
again	friend	into
and	from	is
at	gave	it
away	get	like
because	girl	little
been	give	looked
before	goes	love
big	good	made
boy	had	make
by	have	me
came	he	mum
come	her	my
could	him	not
dad	his	of
didn't	how	off
do	I	on

one	their	what
our	them	when
out	then	where
over	there	which
people	they	who
play	this	why
run	to	will
said	too	with
saw	upon	you
say	two	your
school	up	
see	us	
she	use	
should	very	
so	was	
stayed	we	
that	went	
the	were	

WHAT IF MY CHILD ISN'T PROGRESSING?

If you feel your child's literacy skills are not progressing how they should, then consult with your child's teacher or health professional first.

Ask about:

- The schools expectations - appropriate reading levels at the end of each year
- Strategies to help at home
- Does my child need extra support / assistance - evaluation of progress
- Can the school assess child's progress or does it need to be done by an outside agency
- Does my child need to see a Behavioural Optometrist? - tracking
- Does my child need a hearing check?
- Does my child need a speech pathologist?
- Consider 1 on 1 or small group tutoring

Remember to always encourage children to try! It is better to have a go and get closer than to not try at all. Use the pictures to help with children's reading, they often provide the meaning.

Always praise your child's reading. The English language is a very difficult one to learn. At the start it seems like there is so much to remember and it can often be very overwhelming to children. Praise their efforts, for every small achievement they are advancing to the time when they can read without consciously thinking about it. When you see your child do that after years of learning and practice, you will feel proud as punch!



**“PARENTS NEED TO FILL A
CHILD’S BUCKET OF SELF
ESTEEM SO HIGH THAT THE
REST OF THE WORLD CAN’T
POKE ENOUGH HOLES TO
DRAIN IT DRY”**

Alvin Price

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