

A First Phonics Course for Young Children

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A note on these materials

This is not, in fact, an e-book. It is a set of materials that could possibly be turned into an e-book with a great deal of expansion and tidying up. The table of contents, above, gives page numbers for various pieces of the materials here. This short note is meant to give you, the reader, some idea of what you will find here and of the meaning of the various headings. Once you know what is here, you will be able to use the table of contents and/or a search function to go where you want to go, to browse, and to use what is likely to be most helpful to you.

Immediately following this note you will find the most book-like sections. These were originally written in (approximately) the summer and fall of 2006. My intention, reflected in those sections, was to write an entire book giving detailed instructions on how to teach each aspect of the phonics course I use to your own child. My decision to stop after Chapter 4 was a result not only of laziness and lack of time (though both of those played a role) but also of an increasing awareness that once the parent and child are well underway in phonics teaching, they do not really need a blow-by-blow set of instructions on how to teach each new sound, written in the form of book chapters. The principles they have already learned, together with tips on what worked for another person going through the process, should be enough if combined with a great deal of material in the form of lists, sentences, and stories.

I do, however, include here a running set of notes that I have just made while teaching one of my children using these lists and Rudolf Flesch's indispensable book *Why Johnny Can't Read*. Your challenges may be different from mine, but the notes will continue to give something like the types of tips that I give in the sample chapters. They will also explain to some degree how I combined the use of my own lists with Flesch's. Suffice it to say that I used all of Flesch's lists. Sometimes I teach the concepts in a different order from his, and very often I teach them more gradually than he does, breaking down what he does in one lesson into many different lessons. But I did not simply skip his lists. I found them extremely useful, and where my own lists are a bit thin you may guess that I was sometimes depending more on his, especially after (as I note) my daughter became able to read his lists from the book without struggling with the font size.

There is indeed, as you can see, a lot of material here for you to use. Following the book-like sections (headed "Introduction," "Chapter 1," "Chapter 2," and "Chapter 3") and the notes on teaching Faith (just discussed), you will find a very small number of pages containing early sentences. I had originally thought of separating sample sentences from sample lists but very quickly realized that this was a mistake. From then on, all of the sample sentences are included with the lists. There is no way of telling from the Table of Contents if a given set of lists will contain sentences or a short story to illustrate the phonics concept. You just have to look at what is there.

After the short set of early sentences, you will find a huge number of phonics word lists. The table of contents indicates consistently from List 6 on what phonics concept is taught in each section. Some lists are actually groups of lists, while others are only a page long. The page numbers in the table of contents will give you some idea of how long each section is. Do not think that your child is to do one list section at each sitting. Roughly speaking, each portion separated from the next by a page break is a lesson I had my own daughter do at one sitting. But

as you will see, some phonetic list sections contain several such portions. Also, your child's attention and endurance span may be shorter than my child's was, so you may need to break down the work still further.

If you think you need just some selected lists on particular phonics concepts, the table of contents makes it possible for you to go to these. One problem that might arise from picking and choosing in this way is that the later lists build on the earlier ones, so if you are teaching concepts in a different order from mine, you might find my later lists less useful to you than if you had used my order from the beginning.

And now, a final note on the use of these materials. I am not out to make money on these materials. For one thing, they are obviously not now in saleable form. It is possible that at some later time I might want to whip them into shape, add to them, and sell e-books or physical books containing them, though I doubt it.

My own purpose in putting this large document on the web is to help parents to teach their own children. I encourage you to use these materials for yourself. If you e-mail me and we are able to work out a way for you to get this document in a word processed version (rather than PDF), I encourage you to add things to the lists that make them more applicable to your own child or to modify them in ways that will help your child. I encourage you to be inspired by my ideas and to make additional lists along the same lines of your own when your child needs more practice. I encourage you to recommend this material to other parents. What I do strongly request that you **not** do is in any way to imply that you originated these lists or chapters yourself, to sell them to anyone, or to deny or remove acknowledgment of my authorship. By making this material available for your copying, use, and even modification (for your own use), I do not mean to set aside my claim to have written it in the first place. Telling lies is wrong even if it doesn't cost anyone any money. My concern is not that I might lose money if someone else were to steal these materials and publish them under his own name. My concern rather is with the injustice of someone else's taking credit for what is my work, into which I have put a great deal of time, and which I have made available for the sake of parents and children. That, therefore, is where I draw the line.

Please feel free to send me an e-mail if you think I can help with roadblocks you run into with your own child or questions about the materials here.

Introduction

On methods of teaching reading

This book fills what I see as a hole in the market for, among other things, detailed instruction on the very earliest stages of teaching reading. It is in one sense an extended riff on Rudolf Flesch, *Why Johnny Can't Read*. Flesch is excellent and indispensable, and nothing I am doing here makes him dispensable. Get a copy of the book and read it.

But Flesch doesn't tell you in detail how to teach your little child the sounds of the letters that he recommends you teach. Even with an older child, it is necessary to make those basic sounds second nature. I tell you how to do that. Flesch also doesn't go into detail on the first steps to teaching your child how to sound out. Sometimes it can be difficult to get the process off the ground. I will tell you exactly what to do to move through that phase from the identification of the letters to, and through, early sounding out.

What Flesch *does* give you is a sustained defense of the phonics method of teaching reading. I do not. This is a how-to book. I assume that you are interested enough in knowing what I have to teach about how to teach your child to read that you will at least give it a look and, maybe, give it a try. While occasional polemical remarks against the whole-language, look-say, (aka word guessing) method will crop up here, what you will find more often are tips on how to prevent your child from guessing and how to prevent yourself from encouraging guessing. These tips arise from the assumption that you want to know how to teach your child to read by phonics.

If you have never looked into the phonics vs. whole-language debate, and if you are an intellectual and bookish type of person, you may feel that you need to do research and read both sides of the argument. I hate to discourage the attempt to be objective in the search for knowledge, but in my opinion you will be wasting your time. My best advice would be this: Read Flesch's arguments. Read my concrete how-to advice here. If it sounds like phonics makes sense and is worth trying, then try it. It will work with any child of normal intelligence, you will be able to see that, you will get the bonus of having a very good speller on your hands without any extra effort expended, and then you can do it from then on with other children you might have. You won't have wasted your time and brain cells puzzling out the supposedly profound meaning behind such odd whole-language slogans as "Children read to get the story."

One of the best things about teaching by phonics is that it takes the artificial air of mystery out of teaching your child to read. Here's another slogan: "The most important thing you can do to help your child learn to read is to read aloud to your child." Tommyrot. Also balderdash. The most important thing you can do help your child learn to read is to teach your child to read! Teachers and education schools maintain the fiction that you are not competent to teach your child to read by hiding from you the fact (though they may not know it themselves) that phonics can be taught to any normal child by any moderately intelligent and fairly patient parent. They will imply that you must just read aloud to your child for years, pointing at the words as you go along, and then turn the child over to them in kindergarten and first grade to be taken through whatever highly scientific and awe-inspiring process they have learned in secret at education college to teach him to read. Home schoolers don't have this option anyway, and you will be especially glad, if you are planning to homeschool, to hear this: Teaching reading is

straightforward. That does not mean that it is easy. It takes plenty of work, time, and patience, as well as creativity and a knowledge of your individual child. But it is not a vague or mysterious process. You will not have to sit around in frustration wondering what in the world you can do to help your child to read, reading aloud to him endlessly, telling him what the words are when he asks, and hoping that someday, somehow, something will go “click” in his head and he will be able to read. Some children *have* learned to read in that way. (They are often, interestingly, poor spellers or struggling spellers as a result, a point that Flesch makes at length and that is borne out by plenty of anecdotal evidence.) That way of learning is far less than ideal for a great many reasons, and it makes both the parent and the child feel fairly helpless as to what they are supposed to be doing. Phonics is not like that. You will always have things you can do, concrete, sensible, and relevant things, to teach your child to read when you are teaching by phonics. That fact alone should commend the method.

On age and font size

Though I don't read a lot of material on teaching reading, I have gathered from home schooling friends that there is a school of thought according to which you may seriously harm your child's eyes if you try to teach him to read before age seven. You'll gather from the many references to three-year-olds in what follows that I don't agree. But I do think that font size is very important in connection with age and experience. If you are going to start teaching your three-year-old or even your four-year-old to sound out words, you must make them large. One of my only practical complaints about the invaluable word lists in the back of Flesch's book is that they are printed too small. I don't actually think you would harm your three-year-old's eyes by teaching him to read words in the font size Flesch uses. But I do think you would frustrate both him and yourself by starting with that size, especially since you will need to be pointing to the letters to help him sound out. Once he is a little older and has more experience, he will know how to focus on words of that size. But at the very beginning, I recommend the largest font size your computer has to offer--72 point. Once the child has a little more experience, try moving down to 40 point and then scale it further down as it becomes practical. Little kids learning to read means big letters.

As you will see in the following chapters, my age-range recommendations are as follows for children of normal intelligence:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Age 2-3 | Your child can learn to recognize and name capital letters to the point of mastery |
| Age 3-4 | Your child can learn to recognize lower-case letters to a decent level of competence. (Lower-case d and b may remain troublesome for some time.) |
| Age 3-4 | Your child can learn exactly one sound for each letter |
| Age 3 ¹ / ₂ -5 | This will vary greatly, depending on child's ability and maturity. Begin teaching sounding out regular, three-letter and, a bit later, four-letter words |

once the child knows one sound for each letter. Back off if it isn't working and return to the earlier steps until the child is older and you can try again.

Age 3 ½-5

Continue teaching phonics concepts in approximately the order given by Flesch or given here. Move at the speed your child can handle. Plenty of bright children will be proficient readers by the age of five.

Age 5

If your child has not even started learning to read before now, move him with a fair degree of speed through the letter recognition stage, on to a sound for each letter, and immediately into sounding out and the rest of the lessons. Do not waste long periods of time on letter recognition unless he is having serious trouble. He is old enough to move to real reading without significant delay.

If your child knows at this point how to read basic material, give him easy books to read aloud to you, making sure he does not guess at the words, supply words that aren't there, or skip words that are there. Books by Arnold Lobel such as *Frog and Toad* are good at about this stage. But don't neglect moving on to teach him the more difficult phonics concepts (e.g. "-scient" as in "omniscient," "-tial" as in "partial," and the like) using the lists, sentences, and stories I hope to be able to include in the latter parts of this book. Or make up your own lessons, expanding on Flesch's later and harder lists. These harder ideas don't need to wait and will stick with him better in life if he learns them now.

I strongly recommend that you not wait until your child is six to start teaching him what the letters say and how to sound out. If you have an "average" child, probably you should start teaching him the letter sounds using the chant described in Chapter 1 by age four at the latest and should get him started sounding out easy words by the time he turns five, at the latest. Precocious children may start sounding out far earlier, though I wouldn't recommend trying to teach sounding out for the majority of children before 3 ½.

One reason not to wait any longer than age five to teach sounding out is this: Children are curious. Your child may ask you to tell him words on signs or in books when he is five or even younger, and if he sees you reading he will want to do it, too. He may start guessing words out of books using the pictures or his memory of the story. It's important that he not develop bad habits of word guessing, which can be hard to eradicate, so it's best to start showing him how to read "for real" fairly young.

Side note: I keep using phrases like "children of normal intelligence." I do *not* mean to imply that disabled children should be taught to read using some radically different method like look-say. On the contrary, the evidence I have indicates that phonics is the only hope for a child with a learning disability or a mental disability. If he cannot learn to read by phonics, he won't learn to read at all. It takes a fairly intelligent child to figure out phonics tacitly when he is taught

only by the word guessing method, and a child of less-than-average intelligence or with some other problem affecting his reading skills can't afford the time wasted and the frustration caused when teachers coyly refuse to tell him what sounds the letters make. Even the public schools grudgingly recognize this, and children diagnosed as having learning disabilities are the only ones systematically taught phonics. Flesch discusses some of this in the context of dyslexia in his sequel, *Why Johnny Still Can't Read*. My point in using such phrases is that it will (of course) be a slower, more difficult process to teach a mentally disabled or learning disabled child to read, and therefore age estimates or glowing predictions of success should not be taken to apply with the same optimism to such children. As I have no experience with disabled children, I cannot make reliable estimates for them.

On materials

You don't need fancy curriculum to teach your child to read, and in fact you may slow yourself, and him, down to an enormous extent by using standard reading curricula. Here are some good tools for teaching reading:

Essential materials

You
 Your child
 Paper (lots of paper)
 Pencil or pen
Why Johnny Can't Read, by Rudolf Flesch

Very Helpful materials

A computer word processing program with a color palette and a color printer
 Crayons or markers (These are especially helpful if you don't have a word processor with a color printer.)

Supplementary (optional) materials

Lauri letters
 A Magna-Doodle or other write-n-erase thingy
 The Bob Books

On your work

Not only will you be teaching your child to read. You will also, if you follow my advice here, be writing much of what your child first reads. That may seem surprising, since I will include (if I finish the intended project here) many suggested word lists, sentences, and even stories.

But I've come to the conclusion that there is really no substitute for the parent's hand-writing or writing on the computer a lot of what the child reads at the very beginning. Only you know what sounds, words, or phonetic combinations your child is having trouble with. Only you know the names of his friends (especially if they are regular and phonetic) to include in little sentences and stories to charm him. Only you can spontaneously write words down to illustrate a new concept at the moment when he is most ready. Only you can print a word while sitting next to him, have him sound it out, and then draw a quick little illustrative sketch as a reward. (I say more about this idea in Chapter 2.) Only you know what font size he is working with best at each stage. Pre-made lists and sentences are models. They are never a complete substitute for your work in writing while working with your child. Don't be discouraged by this. The extra work is worth it, and it does not seem like so much when you're in the middle of doing it. For this reason, all lists, sentences, and stories contained here are free for copying and modifying to anyone to whom I give this book for use with that person's own child. I request only that you credit me in writing if you pass my material on to others and that you not sell my material.

Chapter 1

The Letters and the Chant

The capital letters

The first step to teaching your child to read, as every parent will guess, is teaching your child to recognize letters. What many parents *don't* know, and what no one seems to tell parents, is how early this step can be taken and how early you can move beyond it (and where to go next). If your child is already five years old and doesn't know his letters, don't despair. Start now. But remember: With your next child, teach him to recognize his capital letters when he's two or three.

When your child is two, you can begin teaching him to recognize his capital letters just as you are teaching him to know the names of all the other objects in his environment. He's having a linguistic explosion at this age, pointing at things and wanting to know what they are. Capital letters should be just more "things." I recommend getting the Lauri letters, both in capital and in lower-case. But don't try to teach the lower-case letters to your child until age three, possibly not until age four, depending on the child. When I say, "Don't try to teach," I don't necessarily mean that you shouldn't show them to him. In fact, it may be good to show the lower-case letters to him *with* the upper-case letters, as in the chant procedure described below. What I do mean is that you shouldn't work very hard on getting him to distinguish the lower-case letters from each other at age two, as you can do for the upper-case letters. The lower-case letters are a bit difficult even for a bright toddler to distinguish, because so many of them look alike, and their identification depends upon their orientation. *Do* try to get your two and three-year-old to be able to say what each capital letter is when you hold it up or show it to him on the computer.

You can teach letters using many of the tools described above. Show him the capital Lauri letters and tell him the names. Write big letters in crayon and in pencil and tell him the names. Let him sit on your lap and type a letter in giant type (I recommend 72 point, the biggest size on Word Perfect, to begin with) on your computer and tell him the name. Keep doing this until he can name any capital letter when you show it to him.

The chant

As soon as your child knows the names of his capital letters, it's time to start the chant. This is where many parents lose several years quite unnecessarily, because they have no idea where to go after teaching a child letter names, and they still think of the ABC Song as a kindergarten activity and letter identification as a five-year-old activity. Capital letter identification is a two- and three-year-old activity, and as soon as it's accomplished, the chant comes next.

As a rule of thumb, the earlier you begin a stage of teaching, the longer you will remain at that stage. (Teachers of games like chess find the same thing is true.) So, for example, if you don't start teaching your child to read at all until he is five, you will be able to move through the letter identification and letter sounds in a fairly short time--perhaps only a few weeks--and get on

to the easy word sounding-out stage. And indeed, you should, because five is a time when a child of ordinary intelligence should be actually learning to read, not spending hours circling letters on worksheets and singing the alphabet song. If you start teaching the letter names at age two, you can, and should, go at a far more leisurely pace. You might teach capital letter names for six months to a year, letter sounds for a year or more, and go on to easy words only when your child is both confident enough in the letter sounds and mature enough that you feel you can at least try to show him how to sound out. But the chant is ideal for two- and three-year-olds, and beginning it at that age will insure that the common letter sounds are indelibly stamped in your child's brain when you begin to teach sounding out. This will make the earliest stages of sounding out far easier than they would be otherwise.

I want to say here and now that I owe the concept of the chant to the teachers at the three-year-old and four-year-old daycare at Ravenswood Christian School in Chicago. I went to high school at Ravenswood, a tiny Christian school in the inner city (or what is now considered the inner city), and every day, through the open doorway of the daycare room, I could hear the teachers doing "the chant" with the little children. The children clearly loved it, and I incorporated it into my early-reading work with all three of my children with great success. I have never seen anybody else recommend it or do it anywhere else, and I'd like to advertise it as widely as possible.

Here's how it works. For every letter, pick a short word that begins with that letter sound. It should be a word you will be able to remember and a word that your child will like and will be able to remember. It doesn't have to be a word that is easy to read, as he won't be reading it but only chanting it. Contrary to what you would gather from most alphabet card sets you see, the words do not all have to be nouns. If you think your little boy would like to jump high and hard when he gets to the letter J, by all means use "jump" for your J word. By the same principle, try not to use a word totally unfamiliar to your toddler or pre-schooler. A word like "X-ray" is more or less meaningless to him. Though it is a compromise (since we'd prefer to begin each word with the corresponding sound), it's better in my opinion to use "box"--emphasizing the final X sound--for the letter X than "X-ray." "Xylophone" should be absolutely o-u-t, out, as it really begins with the sound of Z. It's a great idea, if your child's name begins with one of the sounds below, to use the child's name as one of the words. (This option not available for parents whose children's names begin with long vowel sounds or with soft C or G.) Sometimes you have to give up on familiarity. I haven't been able to find a good, familiar word for the short I sound and have had to use "igloo" or "Indian." Something similar is true for a short O, though "otter" is pretty good, and there may be pictures of otters in some of your child's books.

The goal here is to teach your child exactly one sound for each letter of the alphabet, and the chant will take the form, "A says a as in apple, A says a, a, a," "B says b as in bat, B says b, b, b." The capital letter here means that at that point you say the *name* of the letter. The lower-case letter represents your saying the *sound* of the letter that begins the chosen word. Try if possible to avoid drawing out the sound of the letter B as "buhh." This is especially important for unvoiced consonant sounds like the initial sound of "cat." You should not say "C says cuh, cuh, cuh." Instead, say (three times) the actual, sharp-sounding, unvoiced sound that begins the word "cat." This is easier to explain and illustrate in person or on the phone. Since you, my initial audience members, will all be family or friends, please ask if this is unclear.

The sounds you should be teaching are the *short* vowel sounds--the initial sounds in “apple,” “egg,” “igloo,” “otter,” and “umbrella”--and the *hard* c and g sounds--the initial sounds in “cat” and “goat.” The letter Y should be treated as a consonant and given the initial sound in “yellow.” All other consonant sounds are obvious--B having the initial sound in “bottle,” D in “dog,” and so forth.

Digression: Let me pause here to address a worry that has been raised to me by a most sincere and kind-hearted gentleman who came to me asking for advice about teaching a little boy he knew to read. As the child was already four years old and could already identify his letters, I said that they should start doing the chant immediately, and I described it to him. But he seemed to feel that he would be *deceiving* the boy by telling him that A says a as in apple, since A can also have a long vowel sound and, indeed, many other sounds in English. In fact, so disturbed was he by this problem, as well as by his concern that the little boy “wouldn’t sit still long enough” for the chant, that he didn’t even try, and the child, as far as I know, remained ignorant of the most common sounds of the letters of the alphabet for some years longer.

This is foolishness, and it is a disservice to the child to refuse to use the chant described here because of such a scruple. Every new skill has to begin somewhere. The letter A in the English language *does* say--among other things--the initial sound of the word “apple,” and this sound will be the most useful to the child in teaching him to read the short, easy, phonetic words that will be his first, and tremendously exciting, accomplishments as a new reader. End of digression.

Get your list of words in hand, and then begin doing your chant with your child. Try to stick with the same words every time. There are two possible versions of the chant. In one version, you first show the capital and small letters to the child, identify them, and then say what the letter says. In the second version, suitable for chanting while walking and doing other activities, you just give the sounds. For showing the letters to the child, I suggest either large pieces of card-stock or papers with just the capital and small letter, or else the computer. One procedure I’ve found very successful is this: Set your two-year-old on your lap. Get your font size up to something huge on your word processing program. Ask the child what color he wants for the letters this time. Change the font color to that color. Type a capital and little A, say the A portion of the chant. Quickly backspace to delete the A’s, type the capital and little B, say the B portion of the chant, and so forth. You will see here that the lower-case letters are being introduced. You are here using the fact that your child already knows the capital letters to help him learn the lower-case letters by osmosis. You won’t be asking him at a very young age to identify lower-case letters by themselves. That can come a bit later. But just seeing the lower-case letter next to the capital letter will invariably help him to learn them fairly painlessly.

As I am typing the chant here, I’m typing the capital letter both times to indicate that you should speak the name of the letter when you name the capital and small letter. Of course, you will *show* the child the capital and small letter side by side, like this:

A a

Speak loudly, enthusiastically, and with a bouncy rhythm. The meaning of the words will help to hold the child’s attention, if they are familiar words. Here is a sample of the entire alphabet:

Capital A, little A. A says a as in apple; A says a, a, a.
 Capital B, little B. B says b as in boat; B says b, b, b.
 Capital C, little C. C says c as in cat; C says c, c, c.
 Capital D, little D. D says d as in dog; D says d, d, d.
 Capital E, little E. E says e as in egg; E says e, e, e.
 Capital F, little F. F says f as in face; F says f, f, f.
 Capital G, little G. G says g as in goat; G says g, g, g.
 Capital H, little H. H says h as in horse; H says h, h, h.
 Capital I, little I. I says i as in igloo; I says i, i, i.
 Capital J, little J. J says j as in jump; J says j, j, j.
 Capital K, little K. K says k as in kite; K says k, k, k.
 Capital L, little L. L says l as in lion; L says l, l, l.
 Capital M, little M. M says m as in mouse; M says m, m, m.
 Capital N, little N. N says n as in nose; N says n, n, n.
 Capital O, little O. O says o as in otter; O says o, o, o.
 Capital P, little P. P says p as in pillow; P says p, p, p.
 Capital Q, little Q. Q says kw as in queen; Q says kw, kw, kw.
 Capital R, little R. R says r as in rabbit; R says r, r, r.
 Capital S, little S. S says s as in snake; S says s, s, s.
 Capital T, little T. T says t as in turtle; T says t, t, t.
 Capital U, little U. U says u as in umbrella; U says u, u, u.
 Capital V, little V. V says v as in van; V says v, v, v.
 Capital W, little W. W says w as in water; W says w, w, w.
 Capital X, little X. X says ks as in box; X says ks, ks, ks.
 Capital Y, little Y. Y says y as in yes; Y says y, y, y.
 Capital Z, little Z. Z says z as in zipper; Z says z, z, z.

A few more notes on pronunciation: In two cases here (Q and X), I've actually written out the relevant sound. Here my concerned gentleman would *really* have been disturbed, as technically Q by itself does not say "kw" in English; that's the combination "qu." But it's good to complete the alphabet, and this is the best sound to teach the child, as almost invariably in English Q does occur followed by U, the combination having the sound "kw." Your child won't actually get to reading words with Q for quite a while in his lessons and will doubtless have to be reminded of the sound at that point, anyway.

When you make the sounds for m, n, r, v, and z, you should be sort of "humming" them. I might more precisely have written it as "M says mm," "Z says zz," "R says rrr," and so forth. *Don't* make them the beginnings of little words ("muh," "vuh"), as these will not combine well with other sounds when you come to teach sounding out. Again, be sure to keep your unvoiced consonants sharp, as loud as you can make them, clear, and free of following vowel sounds. Your sound for t, for example, should just be a loud example of the isolated sound that begins the word "turtle," *not* "tuh." Your F and S sounds can and should be nice and sibilant--ff and ss. For some voiced consonants, avoiding a following vowel sound is not possible. There is no way around having a little "uh" when you give the sound for W. That will have to come out as "wuh, wuh,

wuh.” Something similar is true for Y, the sound of which will sound like a brief “yuh, yuh, yuh.” You will be able to see what other letters this point applies to. This is not a problem so long as the following “uh” is not drawn out more than necessary.

The pronunciation of the sound of L is a little sticky. It should not be “luh.” Instead, try as much as you can (practice this on your own) to isolate the sound that the L makes at the beginning of a word like “lion.” It is much like the sound of “le” at the end of a word like “little.” It will sound a little like “ull,” but with the short u sound somewhat swallowed and unemphasized. It should be as close to a pure L sound as you can get, without surrounding vowels.

All of these pronunciation tips are geared toward the following idea: When you finally present your child with a word like “hug” or “lap” or “fun” and start to teach him to sound it out, you want to a very great extent to be able to take the very sounds you have taught him and string them together to make the word: You should be able to take the breathy sound he’s learned for H, the short u sound he’s learned for U, and the voiced but not drawn-out hard G sound he’s learned and simply make the word “hug” for him. This process will be hindered if the sounds are turned to any greater extent than necessary into short syllables of their own.

Now, how about that little issue of the child who won’t sit still? Well, true confessions: I’ve never done this with a boy. But my girls could get wiggly, too. So for that child, I strongly recommend the aural version without visual props, said while going on a walk or while clapping and/or marching or jumping around. This version simply drops the “Capital A, little A,” “Capital B, little B” part at the beginning of each line and concentrates on teaching what the letters say, pure and simple. Remember that this is done after the child knows what the capital letters are, anyway. If you do this version exclusively, you will have some more work later teaching the lower-case letters, but it’s worth it to introduce the chant in a congenial way for an active child.

Also, it’s not absolutely necessary to do the whole thing every time. You can do the first half of the alphabet at one sitting and the second half at the second sitting. Or break it into thirds if you have to. Remember, this isn’t the alphabet song. Your goal isn’t, *per se*, to teach the child the *order* of the letters all the way through the alphabet. He won’t be putting things in alphabetical order for a very long time! Rather, your goal is to teach the child the sounds in a memorable, repetitious, and orderly way. Of course you should do them in alphabetical order as far as you go, but you can break off if he gets bored and continue at another time, picking up where you left off. To get the feeling of chant and rhythm, you should do some stretch longer than just a couple of letters, but any normal child should be willing, even if he won’t sit still, to march around chanting, or listening to you chant, at least eight or ten lines at one sitting.

It would be more work, but if you really wanted to, you could make up motions for the whole thing. Do whatever you have to, even if that takes creativity. If you find that eye contact is of great help, don’t use the computer unless you and the child can easily look each other in the eyes and see the computer screen at the same time. Try instead sitting on the floor facing the child and making lots of eye contact and showing lots of facial enthusiasm. Unfortunately, you probably won’t find store-bought alphabet cards particularly helpful for props. They have colorful pictures, but almost invariably they pick some undesirable word like “xylophone” or “giraffe” that teaches the wrong sound, and often the pictures are unrecognizable and hence not helpful. If the pictures on the cards will distract from the words you have chosen with your

specific child in mind, or if the pictures illustrate the wrong sound, you definitely should not use store-bought alphabet cards. It's easy enough just to draw big, black letters on pieces of white card stock and hold them up in turn. Your own enthusiasm and awareness both of the sounds of the letters and of the meanings of the fun words are your best props.

Continue doing the chant, over weeks, months or even a year if necessary, as a normal part of your life and play time, until your child can readily answer the question, "What does ___ say?" for any letter of the alphabet.

The lower-case letters

You have two options after your child knows, cold, one sound for each letter and has mastered identifying his capital letters. Depending on your child's age, you can immediately move on to showing him how to sound out three-letter words (see the next chapter), writing them with capital letters only, or you can start teaching the lower-case letters he cannot already identify. My own preference has been to take the time at this point to teach the lower-case letters while illustrating sounding out for the child myself, without demanding performance of sounding out. See the next chapter to learn what to do while getting ready to teach sounding out when your child isn't yet ready to do it.

If you've been showing your child the letters while doing the chant, he will probably already be able to recognize many lower-case letters. Find out how many he knows by writing them on paper or showing them on the computer (remember, large font) and asking him to identify them. Then focus on the ones he doesn't know yet, while of course not just letting him forget the ones he does know.

If you've been exclusively using the aural version of the chant and he knows no lower-case letters, wait to start teaching the lower-case letters from scratch until your child is at least three, possibly 3 ½. Then teach them by showing them with the capital letters and identifying them as capital and little versions of the same letter.

Almost invariably, the hardest lower-case letters are the group d, b, p, q, the group u and n, possibly w and m, and the lower-case l. This last is difficult because your child probably already knows it as the number 1. The others are difficult because their identification depends on their orientation. It isn't necessary to have them all down absolutely cold before moving on to sounding out. If he knows the majority of lower-case letters cold and has a good batting average at the troublesome ones, that will do.

A word about serifs and differing fonts for lower-case letters: It's particularly important to teach your child two different versions of lower-case a and lower-case g and to teach lower-case l with and without serifs. Sometimes you will be giving him reading lessons from a book, sometimes on a computer, and sometimes by hand-writing the words, and so he has to be able to recognize both versions of these lower-case letters. (The third letter in each group is what you will probably use yourself when hand-printing, so he needs to know it.) I suggest simply writing or printing out large examples of both versions of the lower-case letter, side by side, along with the capital letter, like this:

A a a

G g g
L l l

(The third font in the first case is Century Gothic on Word Perfect. The second is Ariel on Word Perfect.) It's probably good to show him and teach him to recognize a sample of your own hand-printed version of these letters, as you must have the flexibility to hand-write words for him to read. Do this separately from the chant. The chant cards or letters on the computer should just have one capital and one lower-case letter apiece.

I suggest not trying to teach him to recognize a capital I without top and bottom serifs (I), as this of course is *exactly* the same as a plain lower-case L, and that is much too confusing. You will be able to avoid un-serifed capital I's for quite a long time in his lessons, as the version with lines on the top and the bottom is more common and is what your word processing program will produce in a default font like Times Roman. It is also easy to hand-print.

When you hand-print letters, you can make them pretty simple. For example, I've found no trouble with children's recognizing a plain lower-case t, though the usual print version has a little hook at the bottom. Just make the little T like a cross when you hand-print: † (A hook or serif in hand printing is much more noticeable than it is on the computer.) As already indicated, *do* put the lines on the top and bottom of your capital I.

Lower-case q is troublesome. Not only does it look just like lower-case p flipped over, but it's hard to work up much enthusiasm for teaching your child a letter he won't need for so many reading lessons yet to come. My own preference is to focus, when deciding whether he knows his lower-case letters, on showing him and teaching him a hand-printed version that has a very noticeable "tail," a bit like this: **q** Of course, he will just have been seeing the plain print version that looks like a backwards p in the course of the chant. And if he recognizes it, great. But if not, you can put a tail on it and teach it that way.

When your child is very solid on his easy lower-case letters and reasonably solid on the harder ones, depending on your preference and his age, and when he has his capital letters and his letter sounds down pat, you can start trying to teach easy sounding out. This is an exciting stage and a big move. More on age and on what to do during any intermediate waiting period at the beginning of the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Earliest Steps in Sounding Out

The interregnum and the introduction

Suppose that your child has learned all his capital letters, is doing quite passably on his lower-case letters, and is able to answer any questions of the form, “What does ____ say?” readily and correctly.

You can, if you wish, introduce him immediately to the idea of sounding out words and see if he can learn how to do it. You can always go back to maintaining the earlier stages if he is strongly resistant or doesn’t seem to be getting it at all. If your child is already five years old, I would strongly encourage you to move right on to teaching him to sound out easy, three-letter words. So for you, the implication in this section of a waiting period before starting to sound out will be misleading. Even so, some of the things I’m going to tell parents of very young children are relevant to the teacher of the five-year-old as well, because what they amount to is the introduction of the concept of sounding out before actually asking him to do it himself. But that introduction period may be drawn out longer or kept quite short, depending on your child’s age and maturity.

If your child has his capital letters down and a sound for each, but is still struggling with his lower-case letters, you can use some of the ideas here for a while, writing anything you do write in capital letters only.

If your child has zipped through the earlier steps and has just barely turned three, or if he is four but seems extremely wiggly and immature, and you feel it would be a bad idea to try to get him to sound out words yet, there are things here that you can do in the meanwhile--besides, of course, keeping up the skills of letter identification and knowledge of letter sounds that he already has.

First, start illustrating out loud the concept of taking words apart and putting them back together. The very young child may well appreciate this concept most when done purely aurally, because three-year-olds sometimes have trouble focusing on something written on a piece of paper. So start with three-letter, easy words that come up in daily life and show him, as a game, how they can be taken apart and put back together. Take the word “fun,” for example. Say the sounds separately, then put them together to form the word, like this: “f, u, n--fun.” You don’t have to show him anything for this version of the game; just say it to him.

Note that this does *not* mean that you are spelling the word. Instead, you are saying the sounds of the letters sequentially and then putting them together. I’ve seen people, trying to introduce pre-reading concepts to children, point to the word “cat” and say, “See, Johnny, C-A-T spells ‘cat’!” Now, I don’t mean to say that this is entirely misguided. It would be useful for an older child who already had some idea of how to read. And it is certainly better than just telling him what the word is and trying to get him to memorize it as a whole gestalt object, in the classic look-say manner. But it won’t contribute significantly to teaching a young child to read. A child who has no idea how to read needs to learn that you put the *sounds* together to make the word. You don’t, in fact, put the names of the letters together to form the sound of the word. So

throughout this book, when I separate lower-case letters with commas as I do above, I'm talking about saying the sounds made by these letters in the word in question, just as you taught the sounds in the letter-sound chant in the last chapter.

If you start this verbal game with sufficient enthusiasm, your child will probably start doing it himself. He may do it with longer words, and in that case he'll probably take apart only the first bit of the word and then string all the rest together, like this: "m, ommy-mommy." You can show him that it's possible to do even more: "m, o, m, ee--mommy." But the important thing is that he's having some fun taking apart words and noticing their component sounds.

The aural version of taking apart and putting together can be done with words that he won't be able to read phonetically for quite some time. It isn't necessary always to stick to three-letter words with short vowels, though these are probably the best. But you can do a word like "plane" as well: "p, l, ā, n-plane."

Second, start showing him how to take words apart and put them together visually. Here you will be doing the sounding out for him. Write a single word in very large letters on a sheet of paper, a white board or blackboard, or a computer. It should have no more than three letters and must use the sounds he knows for each of the letters. You might try starting with the word "up," which has only two letters and is sometimes a good one for early sounding out. The well-known "cat" is also great. Point to each letter, and first have him tell you the sound of each letter, pausing for him to fill in the blank. "C says ____." "A says ____." "T says ____." After he's given you the sounds in order, you tell him that you can make a word by putting together the sounds the letters make--what they say. Then do it: "c,a,t-cat."

If you are working with a child younger than four, and if he seems completely bored, stop for now but do it again, with that word or a different one, later on. Don't give up, as the idea of taking words apart and putting them together while looking at the letters is getting into his head in such sessions, however brief. I suggest making a five-year-old sit there and pay attention through at least several illustrations. If the child (of any age) thinks this idea is interesting or is at least willing to sit still and pay attention, do several words for him in the same way.

Be sure at this stage that there is only one word at one time in front of him. Fold the paper after doing one word and before doing another, or use different sheets if necessary, but make sure he is able to see clearly what letter you are making the sound for and what word you are sounding out at every moment. If his eyes are wandering and he's just listening, try to get him to look at the paper. Point to each letter very clearly as you say the sound for it, then run your finger (or other pointing object) under the whole word from left to right as you put the sounds together. If you have a white board or blackboard and a long pointing stick, this might work well as well.

Another way to do the visual version of this game is on the computer. Make the word very large and highlight each letter as you say its sound, then highlight the entire word (or else click on the page to un-highlight the whole word) when you put the sounds together to make the word. Delete that word when you are ready to do another. You can let the child choose the color of the letters, as long as it isn't something hard to see like yellow.

Pointing to the letters as you say the sounds and then running a pointer from left to right under the word is important at this early stage, because a three-year-old probably has no idea that left-right direction is important. You've already seen this if he's confused lower-case D and B (d and b). Reading words from left to right off the page (in Flesch's phrase) is something that

doesn't come automatically, natural though it seems to adult readers of English. Even an older child will find it a new idea. When you first start to have your child sound out for himself, you will have to point to the letters for him to make sure he goes from left to right, and you may still find him trying to start reading on the right at times or starting with some other letter he happens to notice.

One of the many problems with the look-say method is that it deliberately teaches the child to look *around* at anything on the page that might be a clue to help him guess the word, sometimes glancing at the first letter of the word and then immediately at the last letter, noticing that the word ends in y, noticing that one of the letters somewhere in the word has a tail, and so forth, rather than reading in the rational sequence in which the word is actually spoken and which is represented in English by the left-right order of the letters. It is true that with later, more advanced phonics concepts like long vowel sounds, it is sometimes necessary to look ahead in the word (for example, to see if it ends in the letter E) to find out how to pronounce an earlier letter, but this is always done in the service of pronouncing correctly the letter that you have come to as you go through the word in left-right order. In this sense, *all* English words are pronounced from left to right. The important thing at this point is to din into your child that words are read from left to right.

Keep on with the aural and visual take-apart-put-together games for as long as you think necessary before trying to get your child to sound out himself. And don't forget to keep up his letter recognition practice and his letter sounds chant. Sometimes some letters and sounds can be forgotten if the words you are using to show sounding out don't use all the letters in the alphabet. Try making some of the illustrative words all in upper-case and some in lower-case letters to review both of these, and use occasional proper names (like "Tim," "Jan," "Tom," "Ben") to introduce him to a combination of upper-case and lower-case letters.

This period might be only a week or two long for an older child. It might be up to a year for a very young child. You can use for visual illustration any of the words in the first sets of lists given later in these materials, and there are plenty of others you can think of for yourself--no more than three letters and phonetic according to the sounds taught in the chant. If you are planning to take the longer interregnum approach, don't be too shy about checking from time to time to see if your child is ready to take the next step. It won't do him any harm, and he might surprise you.

A note on rhyming

It's important in these earliest stages that as you illustrate sounding out to your child, and later when you make up word lists for him to read, you mix up the vowel and consonant sounds in the order of your lists and not have several words all in a row that rhyme. Remember that your child now knows one sound for each of the letters. There is no need to have all of the words contain the vowel E or to avoid some letter he hasn't learned yet. You will see that the sample lists are organized this way: "pot," "Sam," "tub," "van," and so forth, rather than "cat," "bat," "sat," "rat."

This is an anti-guessing precaution. If you have a whole list, especially a fairly long list, of rhyming words ("hen," "Ben," "den," etc.), any child is likely let his mind wander in the latter

part of the word. He won't pay attention. If he's reading the words himself, he'll just automatically end each one with the rhyming sound that "we're learning today."

It's true that when you start teaching some of the harder phonics concepts (the sound "oo" comes to mind here), you will often have a list with a lot of words with that sound. But even then, the words don't have to rhyme--e.g. "book" followed immediately by "wood" is better than "book" followed immediately by "cook." In any event, by the time you get to having your child read "tension" and "ascension" (to study the "-sion") ending, you should be past the time of greatest danger for word guessing.

A book that is written in rhyming lines (like *The Cat in the Hat*) will do your child no harm, because either you will be reading it to him and making no pretense that he is reading if he happens to guess the word that comes at the end of a line, or else he will *really* be reading the whole book, in which case he will have to do plenty of actual sounding out in between the rhyming end-words (unless, of course, he really has the whole book memorized).

If your child is having special trouble with one word ending, you can mix words with that ending among others that have different endings. There's nothing wrong with having all of the words "bag," "sag," "rag," and "tag" somewhere in the same list, if that's the ending on which the child needs special work. But they should not all come in a row. He should really have to pay attention to the whole word. Alternate "bat" with "bag," for example, to make sure he's paying attention to the end of the word.

If you decide to use reading curriculum, keep an eye out for any curriculum that relies on lists of rhyming words in the earliest stages, and don't use it for those lists or rewrite and modify the lists yourself.

The next step: Earliest sounding out

In my experience, the hardest part for a 3- or 4-year-old about learning to sound out words is moving from saying the sounds separately to putting them together. As an adult, I found this surprising, and when I taught my first child to read I believed it would be an easy matter for her to obey my direction, after she had said the sounds for a single word: "Okay, now put it all together." But all I got was a blank look. "Put it together" meant nothing to her. She didn't know what that would be like, and she could not hear the smoothly-spoken word at first in the separated sounds. Nor was she alone in this. Every child I have taught has had the same difficulty. This is why it helps so much for you to illustrate sounding out in the visual game described above.

If you are very lucky, and especially if your child is older, the transition between your showing him how to sound out and his starting to do it on his own may happen automatically and smoothly. Perhaps one day he will simply start doing it with you. But I have to admit that this has never happened to me.

So try this: When you're ready to try to have the child sound out for himself, pick a word that ends in T, P, B, or D. That seems to work especially well, probably because these ending consonants do not noticeably alter the sound of the preceding vowel. G and N do make a subtle but noticeable alteration in the sound of some preceding vowels in American English, as I will discuss below. For this reason, words like "bag" and "van" can be a bit difficult for the child to

read at first. So try “hot” or “hat” or “mop” or “Bob” or “mad,” etc., for your child’s first word on his own. Make it a word that you have recently shown him how to sound out, but not in this session. Then do the first step in the game above, *not forgetting to point at the letters and making sure he’s looking at them*: “H says ____.” “O says ____.” “T says ____.” He should fill in the sounds. At this point, *you* say the separated sounds: “h,o,t.” Then look at him expectantly and ask him, “What’s the word?” or “And the word is...?” or “Put the sounds together. What’s the word?” Run your finger or pointer under the word from left to right. If you get no response, try saying the separated sounds again, then ask him what the word is, say the “h” sound of H to “jump start” him, and run your finger or pointer under the word to see if he will complete it. If you still get nothing, try saying the separated sounds again, making them very clear and making them sound almost like the word itself, though still a bit separated. Then try again to get him to say the whole word while you run the pointer under it from left to right. (You can do this with the highlight function on the computer, too.) If you still get nothing, try saying the separated sounds again and then, running your pointer under the word, saying the first two sounds together, “hō” (short O sound, of course) and then pointing at the T to get him to complete the word. You should be able to get him to say the “t” sound of the T. Then say, “That’s right! The word is ‘hot’!” And do another one, trying all the time to reduce the extent to which you need to put the sounds together for him, until he can listen to you say the separated sounds, watch you point at the letters, and then, looking at the word, put them together for himself.

Note (to be repeated later): When you ask him what the word is after saying the separated sounds, make him look at the word, not at you, and **do not mouth the word or any part of it that you are asking him to do**. The temptation to do so is almost overwhelming. Try to catch yourself. Watch him to make sure he is looking at the word when he puts it together or tries to do so, rather than looking at you. If he is looking at your face, he’s hoping to see you mouth the word or somehow tell him what to say. Keep running your finger or pointer under the word when you are trying to get him to say it, and make sure he’s looking at that, not at your face.

For a while at first, your saying the separated sounds for him will be a special help. This is because you can, without telling him the word and while pointing at the letters sequentially, make him start to hear the word “in” the separated sounds. I do not entirely know why, but at the beginning it is easier for the child to hear that the separated sounds make the word when you say them than when he says them himself. Note, though, that this is very different from simply telling him the word as is commonly done in the look-say method. You are always pointing at the separate letters and saying the separated sounds, then trying to get him to put them together. The emphasis is always on the take-apart-put-together nature of reading.

Your saying the sounds like this is a crutch that you should remove as quickly as you are able to do so. After he starts being able to put the words together easily after you say the separated sounds, without additional prompting, while looking at the letters, tell him it’s now time for him to say the sounds by himself as you point (or as he points) at the letters, then to put the word together. It may take several tries or several sessions for him to say the sounds himself and to move from that to reading the put-together word, but he will get it eventually. You may have to recur later on to the crutch of saying the separated sounds for him when you introduce blends that he has trouble hearing like “sp” or “sl.” (You may, in fact, need to show him how to sound out some of those words as samples.) But any such recurrence should be brief and

temporary. Of course, if he puts in a letter that doesn't belong, reading "cup" for "cap," it's not only okay but a very good idea for you to point to the erroneous letter and say, "That's not a U, that's an A. A says..."

You should also, by the time that he is sounding out and putting together himself, remove the initial step in which you ask him the sounds of the letters. That step was there mainly to get him to pay attention to the sounds when you were doing most of the actual work of sounding out. Once he is able to produce the sounds himself in order (while you point or he points at the letters from left to right) and then put them together himself, you don't need to ask him what they are as a separate first step. In this way the visual version of the take-apart-put-together game from the "interregnum" period turns into independent reading by the child.

It's fine to use a small number of words at first and to have the child sound these out, or to work with him in the above manner to help him sound them out, repeatedly. While there is some danger that the child will memorize them, any problem this might pose is mitigated by the fact that you are never rewarding him for simply looking at the word and saying it. You are always demanding that he say the sounds first. This requirement of saying the sounds first will continue for quite some time, until it is clear that the child is reading words phonetically and without guessing, and until he becomes rather smooth and proficient at this.

If you have a genius on your hands, or if you suspect that you do, and he begins simply to say the word when he sees it, don't praise him for doing so. Ask him, "Is that really the word? Sound it out and check." And if you start getting immediate, whole-word responses without sounding out, responses that might indicate guessing, test that hypothesis by throwing in a different word that he's never done before but that bears some similarity to the one he seems to be "reading" so readily. If he starts saying "cat" the minute he sees "cat," ask him to read "cab," which he's not already practiced. Ten to one, he'll say "cat." Then you'll know it was memorization-plus-guessing. Drop "cat" at that point for a little while and expand your list to words he doesn't know that meet the other criteria.

A word about telling your child that he can read: I recommend telling him merely that he is learning to read at first. Tell him that he can read words only when you can put a word in front of him and he can say the sounds in order and then the word itself. When he can do that for a list of, say, eight words or so, then it's fine to tell him that he can read those words. Nothing else is really reading. When he's still getting significant prompting from you, as in the very first lesson described above, he's not reading the word yet. Just producing the final T in "hot" as you partly say the word isn't reading the word. Nor, of course, is guessing a word off the top of his head after he notices the initial letter! And it especially is not reading for him to sit with a book in front of him and quote it from memory or make up a story. Telling an 18-month-old that he's "reading" when he does this is fine. Telling a 4-year-old so is misleading. At least from the age of 3, pretend reading should be distinguished from real reading. You don't have to be a Grinch about your little girl's "reading" to her dollies, but you should cheerfully label it as "pretend reading" or "pretending to read."

It's very important, once your child is starting actually to sound out and read short words for himself, that you not mouth the word with him as he does it. He'll watch you instead of the letters. To check for his looking at you rather than the word, have some lessons where the two of you are sitting side by side. Firmly check yourself to make sure that you aren't whispering the

word with him or mouthing it for him, and watch him out of the corner of your eye. He may try, especially if he's having trouble, to look at you instead of at the paper. Draw his visual attention back to the paper and to the procedure he has to go through to decode the word: He must say the sounds in order and then put them together. Once he *can* do this and *is* doing it on a regular basis, the help you are offering should consist in pointing and, if necessary, in catching his mistakes and getting him to correct them by remembering the right sound for the letter in question. If you must in some case recur to sounding out the word for him, sound it out for him; don't just tell him what it is. But then ask him to do it himself while you point at the letters and he looks at the letters, and at that point be sure to keep your own mouth shut and your face still and unhelpful.

Special motivation--sketches

Little children often don't like to sit still and sound out words. Once reading isn't so hard for your child to do and is a regular part of your life, you won't need special bribes, or at least not for each and every word. But at the beginning, it isn't a bad idea to give him a small reward for sounding something out. (A note in passing: If you ever have to do speech therapy with your child, the type of reward described here works well there as well.) For my first two children, I did a fair bit of this: Hand write a word for the child to sound out. Tell him that you will draw a picture of the thing after he sounds it out. When he does so, draw a quick sketch. Don't worry about how silly these will look, and make them quickly so that there's time for more words. If the word is "hug," a stick-figure Mommy hugging a stick-figure child is *great*. It usually doesn't matter if the picture looks much at all like the item. The child just likes the attention and the fact that Mom is going to all this trouble to make a drawing as a reward for him. If the word is "big," draw a big bear or a big man or even a big rock and explain to him what it is.

It should go without saying that, until the child is a pretty good reader and the danger of guessing has mostly passed, you should not draw the picture before he reads the word. The idea isn't to give him a clue as to what the word is but just to give him a reward for figuring it out by phonics.

I tried to phase this reward system out fairly soon, because it does certainly slow down the lessons. But if you have a resistant child, it's extremely helpful as a motivator.

Word lists

Once your child can sound out some short words himself, it's time to start having regular reading lessons with lists. These lists may be as short as five words at first, up to ten, fifteen, or longer, depending on your child's age, maturity, and ability to concentrate and sit still. You will be able to tell when he is getting tired and needs to do something different. It's much better to have him do short periods of sounding out work on, say, five days out of the week, than to make him read lists of fifteen words at a time to you and come to detest and strongly resist his reading lessons.

Moving to lists means moving to having multiple words in front of the child at once. You will see in the first set of suggested lists at the back that the words are not only in very large font but also widely spaced. If necessary, you can cover up the words on one side or the other, or both,

to help your child focus on just one word at a time, but pointing--his or yours--should do the trick by itself. And it's important that he learn to focus on one word rather than another and to read that word from left to right. This helps him to get the idea of words as units of language that stand out from their background and have meaning, even though there are other letters and words on one side or another of the word on which he's focusing.

Don't forget that each word should be sounded out and put together before going on to the next word. He shouldn't sound out a whole row without stopping to put any of the words together. Even later when he begins reading sentences, each word in the sentence will be sounded out and read as a word before going on to the next one.

The word lists in the back are merely models. (Each page is an example of a very early reading list.) Flesh's first few lists will provide more ideas, and you will think of many words I have not included. You may want to put up one of these pages electronically and then let your child choose a color to make the letters. Then the list can be printed out and read.

Obviously, this is just the beginning of bigger things. By the time your child has been doing reading lessons for, say, a year, he will be reading much longer lists, doing it fluently, and doing it with much harder words. But now he starts understanding that this is what reading lessons are usually like.

Words ending in -ag, -an, and -og

For some reason, I've found that very early readers have trouble with the word "bag" and other words that rhyme with it. They also have some trouble with words ending in the letter N and especially words that rhyme with "can." But it would be a shame, and a fairly major and unjustified restriction, to cut all such words out of your reading lessons. I've already suggested that they not be among the very first words you try to get the child to sound out himself. The child should be able to sound out some words that don't end in these letters before he's introduced to these. But they need to come in quite early.

Why is there this problem? My own theory runs like this: If you speak American English, and if you say the word "bag" out loud to yourself, you can hear that the letter A in the middle has more of the sound of a diphthong than it does in the word "cat." Try it. The A in "bag" and "rag" has a bit of an "ee" sound just before you say the hard G at the end. The A in "van," though not as much of a problem as in "bag," is drawn out more than the A in a word that ends with a T or a B, like "bat" or "cab." This phenomenon may in part depend on the teacher's (and child's) regional background, and perhaps my own difficulties have been exacerbated by the fact that I'm from the Midwest.

The solution to this problem lies in your own illustrations to the child of sounding out. If you find that your child has special trouble with words ending in "-ag" and "-an," just show him how to sound some of these out yourself and then ask him to do it, then put extra practice with the words into the word lists you give him. I've included a few of both -ag and -an words in Set 1 of model word lists. You may need to make lists that include more, rather than fewer, of such words in order to give your child enough practice. See how it goes and then write your own lists or modify mine accordingly.

As for "-og," let's be honest: The word "dog" is pronounced "dawg" in American

English. One might initially wonder why Flesch suggests (as he does, without comment) including words like “dog” and “log” in the earliest reading lists, as the O in the middle doesn’t actually have the sound the child has been taught. This would seem to violate the criterion that one include only words that use the sounds the child has been taught. And if you wanted to do so, you could separate these words and teach them as a separate phonics concept, limiting your words that include O only to “mop” and “Tom” and “on”--in other words, those where the O really has the initial sound in “otter.” But interestingly, though I worried about this issue with my first child, I have found “dog” and similar words not to be much of a problem.

To avoid any trouble, I have not included words rhyming with “dog” in Set 1 of model word lists. (They do occur in Set 2.) When you do introduce it, I suggest this: When your child sounds out “dog” and puts it together, if he doesn’t right away see that this word refers to a dog, just gently morph the sound for him by re-pronouncing the word from the ordinary short O to a sound more like “aw.” You can even pronounce it first with the ordinary short O sound and then pronounce it just a little differently to let him see that the word is “dog.” This usually does the trick, and he may have no more trouble with it. You may have to do the same thing with “log” and “fog,” especially if he has no idea what “fog” means, but at that point there is usually no more trouble. My brightest three-year-old used to get rather a kick out of emphasizing the fact that this O was actually saying “aw.”

Two-letter words and words beginning with vowels

Why am I writing about two-letter words *after* suggesting (mostly) teaching the child to read three-letter words? As you noticed, one of my suggestions for a first word to try was “up,” which has only two letters. And it might seem that two-letter words should be easier to read than three-letter words. But let’s face it: There are many, many more three-letter words of the consonant-vowel-consonant form that use the correct sounds than there are two-letter words. You can’t make much progress teaching reading if you restrict yourself to “up,” “it,” “if,” “at,” and so forth. Moreover, though “up” is in some ways a good initial word to teach, my experience has been that, overall, children catch on more quickly to reading words that begin with consonants than words that begin with vowels. But all two-letter words that meet the phonetic requirements begin with a vowel. So you want to have lots of words of the “bat,” “cup,” “tub” type at the beginning.

This position, by the way, apparently puts me at odds with some other phonics-based curriculum writers who suggest that the child first sound out non-word, two-letter consonant-vowel combinations like “pa” (pronounced like the beginning of the word “pan,” not like the word “pa” meaning “father”). I cannot endorse such two-letter non-word early lessons, though I have never tried them. Maybe, contrary to my instinct, the “pa, fa, ba, da” sort of thing would work well. But my own opinion is this: The excitement in early reading for the child lies in finding, when he’s sounded out the word, that he’s said something meaningful, something that he recognizes in his own language. This sort of reinforcement won’t be there for mere word-beginnings like “fa,” “mo,” and so forth. Moreover, too many of these combinations of letters actually *are* words in English, though with the vowels pronounced differently. “Pa,” “ma,” and “me,” for example, are like this, and to teach the child to read them with a short A and E sound

could be confusing when later you teach the child to read them differently.

So when I speak of two-letter words, I mean things like “at,” “it,” “is,” “up,” “in,” and “on.” These will be invaluable when you start giving the child little sentences, and they are perfectly phonetic and use the sounds he’s learned. Most of them aren’t very interesting, and as I’ve said, a new reader sometimes has a little trouble sounding out words that start with a vowel. I introduce these words in Set 2 of the model word lists, interspersing them with three-letter words of the consonant-vowel-consonant type. I also include the word “and”--very useful for sentences--and other words like “ant” and “ill” that begin with vowels.

You will hopefully find that double-letter endings (like the final double L in “ill”) pose no problem for your child once you’ve illustrated them. Just show him that the L doesn’t need to be said twice if it occurs twice in a row at the end of a word. This will add to his repertoire words that actually contain four letters but have the final letter repeated--e.g., “buzz,” “hill,” “doll,” and so forth. He really has to remember only three sounds when he puts the word together.

Don’t fret about the fact that the S at the end of “as” and “is” and “has” is voiced and hence technically has the sound of Z. I have found that children sail over this. As with “dog,” if the child faithfully produces an unvoiced S at the end of “has” and fails to recognize the word, just repeat it for him with a slightly voiced S, and he will get it. A little practice will take you beyond any trouble. The words “has,” “as,” and “is” are too valuable for making sentences to be left out of early reading training because the S at the end is voiced.

On teaching your child to spell

One of my only outright disagreements with Flesch concerns his recommendation that you make your child spell all the words he’s learning to read at the same time that you teach him to read the words. Here, I think Flesch is wrong. The recommendation would be *more* appropriate for a five-year-old or six-year-old, but even then, I think it would be discouraging if you followed religiously a requirement that your child be able to spell any word that he can read.

Spelling requires that the child produce the letters, either by saying them or writing them. Reading requires that he recognize the letter sounds and put them together. The two skills are closely related, and Flesch is on to something when he connects them (more on that in a moment). But in my experience a beginning reader spells slowly and with difficulty. There’s nothing wrong with introducing the concept and having your child start to spell words if he can. In fact, it can be valuable to him. It reinforces both the phonetic makeup of the words and the left-to-right order in which the letters are to be read. And if you have waited until your child is as old as six, he should have a spelling book as part of his first-grade school work. The only thing I balk at is going through his reading lists twice--once for him to read the words while looking at them and once to spell the words when you pronounce them. I think this would slow the process of teaching him to read far too much.

Where Flesch is right is both in seeing that spelling has value in reinforcing phonics and also in saying that a child taught to read by phonics will be a better speller than one taught to read by the look-say method. I was skeptical about this at first, but my experience has borne him out. Phonics readers, as Flesch says, naturally look at all the letters in the word and hence are more likely to remember them when they try to spell. When it comes to oddly-pronounced words like

“Wednesday,” a reader taught by phonics may even pronounce the word wrong originally (“Wednes-day”) and then, after being corrected, hold that phonetic pronunciation in his mind and remember it when he’s asked to spell the word. I’ve certainly found it true (though in a small sample) that children taught by a rigorous phonetic method learn how to spell very nearly by osmosis, and by the time they are in second grade, they are far ahead of their grade level in spelling skill.

Since spelling is valuable, here are a few tips on teaching spelling to your beginning reader: You should, of course, write down the letters. Your child is almost certainly not able to write yet if you are following the age recommendations here. And even if he is starting to learn to write, that is a physical skill. He should focus on the spelling itself without also having to think about letter formation. So sit down with your child with a pencil and paper or (even more fun) with a Magna-Doodle. Tell him he's going to tell you the letters and you are going to write them down to make words. But tell him that they have to be words he can read. Suggest a word. Then start pronouncing it for him very slowly--in essence, sounding it out. Ask him what letter makes each sound. This is the reverse of the drills he has already done in which he's asked what sound each letter makes. If he has trouble, isolate each sound in order, make it for him, and then remind him of the chant. Say, for example, "What says s, s, s as in snake?" He should remember eventually as you do that part of the chant, leaving a blank for the letter name, and you can tell him if he doesn't. (Telling is okay for letters in spelling when he's just getting started.) Then write that letter down and move on to the next. When the word is spelled, have him sound it out and read it as usual. Then you might want to spell it out loud for him. You'll recall that I said that spelling a word is not helpful for a child who doesn't know how to read. But as your child does know how to read simple words, you can put together spelling with sounding out to reinforce the fact that words are made up of letters put together from left to right.

The left-to-right point is especially important. You may find that your child says the final letter of a word first when he's trying to spell the word. This is probably because, when he or you say the word out loud, the last sound is the one ringing in his ears last. It's fun and valuable to tell him, "No, that letter *is* in the word, but it comes at the very end. We have to think before that of some other letters. Which letter comes first in the word?" When it's time for him to say that final letter, you can tell him that *now* it's time for the letter that he wanted to give before.

Giving hints and using eye contact are fine in teaching a child to spell. The rule of thumb here is that many of the things you were trying to avoid doing when teaching him to read--giving hints, whispering, letting him look at you, etc.--are perfectly fine and even good to do in teaching him to spell. This is because you never have to worry about whole-word guessing when it comes to spelling. By the very nature of the activity you are putting words together from their basic building blocks. There's no problem if a young child who is a beginning reader gets a hint from you that the word "sun" begins with the letter S. You aren't training him for a spelling bee at this point. By the same token, while you almost never want to tell him what a word is before you have him *read* it, of course he knows what word the two of you are trying to spell before he spells it. So spelling is reading turned inside-out, both in its intrinsic nature and in its pedagogy.

This is also a good chance for you to review letter names with your child. If you've not been doing the chant much lately now that he's concentrating on reading itself, he is likely to have begun replacing the letter names in his mind with the sounds, to think of the letter B solely

by thinking of its sound. This is not a terrible tragedy, but you don't want him to forget the names of the letters completely nor to come to forget the distinction between the name of a letter and its sound. Reviewing the chant and learning to spell will remind him of any letter names that are being supplanted by their sounds.

Final notes on this stage

I must here emphasize again that the model word lists are meant to prime the pump for you. Notice what problems your child is having and work on those by making your own lists. If he's trying to start words at the right rather than the left, make him lists that include "pot" and "top" or "map" and "Pam" next to one another. If he's struggling with "bag" and other similar words, make him lists with more of those. If he is having trouble with "dog," make lists that have that word cropping up more than once. And so forth.

If you are beginning to teach reading to a child of only four or even 3 ½, you will need many more lists than I have provided. For one thing, there are probably sounds that I have not used often enough to keep them fresh in the child's mind. This is why it's important to have the Flesch lists on hand for extra ideas and to use your own creativity and notice what sounds your child might be forgetting or what words come up in his environment that will be especially fun for him to be able to read.

As mentioned above, it's never a bad idea to review the letter-sounds chant, especially while you are still at this early reading stage. You shouldn't give the impression that "we don't do that anymore" or "you're a big boy and don't need to do the chant now that you're reading words." Review of basic sounds is good at least until he begins doing more advanced phonics concepts. Even at an advanced stage, I find that occasionally I will fix in a student's mind that a vowel is short in a given word or has its normal sound by referring back to the chant: "No, the I there isn't long. It just says i as in igloo."

If you're beginning to teach reading to a child of five, it might not be a bad idea, after using the model lists I've provided, to move over and have the child read Flesch's first lists as well. (I will certainly be recommending this for his lists of words using harder phonics concepts later.) If the font size is a problem, you could blow his early lists up on a photocopier or type them out in a larger font for your child's own use.

It's important to go back over words that have been a problem in a given lesson. This is so important that I recommend telling your child, when he has gotten to the bottom of the list, "Now we're just going to go back to the ones you had a little trouble with and go over those again." If you find that this seriously discourages your child, consider two moves: 1) Break the lessons down into shorter lists. 2) Have words you suspect will be problems (or that were problems yesterday) printed multiple times in the course of a list the next time you have a lesson. That way he will get extra practice without having to go back when it seemed that he had reached the end of the lesson. Option 2 is not as desirable as simply making the child go back and go over the words he has just this moment had trouble with. For one thing, you won't always be able to anticipate what the problem words will be. For another thing, the timing isn't quite as good: When you go back to the words within the span of one lesson, he has to remember at least for a little while what you said when you helped him with the word. But it is closer to the first time

that he (with your help) sounded out the problem word than is the next day. So if you can get him to go back to his problem words at the end of a lesson, this is best. And it's worth making shorter lists to avoid discouragement.

At this point, you can sit back and congratulate yourself and your child. Your child is able to read easy phonetic words for himself. He has gotten over a potential sticking-point and is able to see how separate sounds are put together to make a word. And the pattern for his reading lessons has been set in that he sits down with you and sounds out a list of words, taking apart each one and putting it together. You're ready to move on to short sentences.

Chapter 3

Short Sentences, Longer Words, and Earliest Stories

Sentences

Sentences will never replace word lists in your reading pedagogy, but they have a place of their own. It's important for the early reader to start understanding not only that letters are put together to make words but that words are put together to make sentences. Sentences are also more interesting for the child to read than word lists alone. I recommend, once your child can read sentences, interspersing lists and sentences and sometimes having a lesson consisting of just one or just the other.

When the child reads a sentence, he should first sound out each word just as he's been doing already. If the sentence is "Tom can run," he should sound out "Tom" and then put it together, sound out "can" and then put it together, and sound out "run" and then put it together.

At that point, it's good for him to see that the three words aren't disconnected, as in a list, but that they make a sentence. At the beginning, you will want to read the whole sentence for him after he reads the words separately, showing him what he's just read. But fairly early, you should try to have him go back to the beginning of the short sentence and read the whole thing after reading the individual words by sounding out.

Here we come to a rather delicate question: How do you distinguish the first time through the sentence, when he sounded out each word, from the second time through, when he's supposed to be seeing that the group of words put together has meaning as a sentence? My own preference is to try to induce him to go through the second time, while the sounded-out words are fresh in his mind, reading the words without sounding them out. This can be difficult. I usually say something like, "Now, this time, let's try just reading the words." I may then read the first word or two to give him a "running start." Then see, while you run your finger under each remaining word from left to right, if he can complete the sentence. If he stops--either because he is unsure and needs to do so or because of his previous training--and sounds a word out, go back yourself to the beginning of the sentence and read all the words he's said up to that point, so that he hears the sentence in the making. Once he is reading sentences fairly regularly, you can remind him to go back and read the whole sentence after he sounds out the words by saying something like, "And the sentence is..." or "What does the sentence say?"

How is this not a look-say approach? First and most obviously, because you made him read each word by sounding out first and are having him read the words without sounding them out only on the second time through the short sentence. In the long run, as the child matures as a reader, you will have him read words carefully *using* phonics but not require that he sound out each word as a separate step. That time will come later, and for now he should still sound out every word once before he reads it in a lesson, but reading sentences the second time through without separate sounding out is the beginning of learning that skill.

Second, if the child guesses a word and gets it wrong on the second run through the sentence--and this *will* happen at some time, because children are natural guessers--you must *always* stop him and say, "No, don't guess. There's no L in that word, is there?" Or, "Don't

guess, Johnny. See, that's a U, not an A." Then he will have to sound that word out. Then you can start reading the sentence for him at the beginning to see if he can read the rest of the sentence correctly. Or have him start reading the sentence over again, without sounding out each word separately, only stopping him to sound out if he guesses, e.g. "pan" for "pat." So you are never suggesting to him that he guess at the words or read them as gestalt "wholes" without reference to phonics.

Don't worry that you must have done something wrong if you catch your phonics-taught child guessing at words. That's just his human laziness coming out. If he can guess the word by looking at the first letter, he figures, why should he bother looking at the whole thing? Not that human laziness is always such a bad thing. In many other areas of life, skill comes more quickly and more by instinct than it does in reading, so it's natural for the child to try, here as elsewhere, to minimize effort and move ahead as quickly as he can. In the end, reading will become easy and fast, but this is still early days, so some attempt at short-cutting on his part is only to be expected.

Your child's ability to read a sentence--even after having just sounded out the words--without separate sounding out depends at this very early stage on his memory capacity and on keeping sentences short enough. As you get to longer sentences, you may need to break them in the middle, preferably in some place such as before the word "and." If you sense that reading sentences the second time without separate sounding out is leading to a severe and intractable problem with guessing, back up and try nothing more than three-word sentences for this type of exercise. If you find that your child can't remember the words he's just sounded out one time well enough to read a three-word sentence without sounding out, abandon the sentence-reading requirement for now. Instead, for the time being, just go back yourself and read the sentence for him after he has read each word separately. Run your finger under the words from left to right to show him that the sounds are being put together even when you are not stopping to sound out. (Don't forget to keep your font size large enough!)

For this stage, see the earliest model sentences. Feel free to improvise and write more of your own, as you will probably want them. Remember that you have the word "will" at your disposal for sentence-making, since it simply uses a doubled final consonant.

Short connecting words, aka "sight words"

You'll find pretty quickly that it's nearly impossible to make normal-sounding sentences without at least the words "a" and "the." And this problem is exacerbated when you are still working with just three-letter words. "Jim can run," "Ken has an egg," "Bill is in bed" and such-like get old quickly. Pretty soon you start writing strange sentences like "Ken has cat," which sounds like it was written by someone who speaks English as a second language.

It's okay to do this for a while, especially if your child is having a lot of trouble reading sentences at all and you want to keep them especially short. But for the sake of your own sanity and your child's education you'll want to introduce "a" as a word pretty soon and "the" at the same time or soon thereafter. Fortunately, "an"--the other article--is just an ordinary two-letter phonetic word.

When you want to introduce the article "a" as a word, just tell your child that the letter A says its name when it is all by itself. Then make sure all your sentences are printed with enough

space between the words to let him see easily when the letter A is all by itself. If he starts to try using a long A in words like "and," just point out to him that there the letter A isn't all by itself. This should do the trick after a little practice. Make sure that sometimes the word "a" begins a sentence and sometimes doesn't, so that he sees that this new idea works whether the letter is capital or lower-case.

Don't worry about the fact that the word "a" is normally pronounced with the schwa sound "uh" in many sentence positions. We would literally say, "Ken has uh cat," not "Ken has ā cat" in ordinary life. But it won't matter. The child will first learn to read it under your tutelage as "Ken has ā cat," and he'll know perfectly well what it means. The smoothness of ordinary pronunciation can come later.

You can use the same process to teach "I" as a word, though it's not so necessary to your sentence-writing as "a" and can be put off a bit. You will see it show up in my model sentences at a particular point and at that time, if you haven't taught it already, you can explain to your child that I says its name when it's all by itself.

Now we come to the more difficult matter of the word "the." I refuse absolutely to talk about "sight words." You will find that even most phonics-based reading curricula and short readers use this phrase and include lists of words under this heading, but I consider it misleading. Some words often called "sight words" are "the," "one," "my," "to," "of," and "you." Of all of these, "one" is probably the worst from a phonics perspective. It may be the most unphonetic word in English, not counting loan words. The E at the end is silent, the O is not even pronounced long given the silent final E, and there is no phonetic indication at all for the W sound at the beginning. But fortunately "one" isn't needed for a great many sentences, and teaching it can be put off for quite a long time with the very early beginning reader.

But for all of these (including "one"), the vowels are the major problem. The consonants, as is almost universal in English, are regular. Moreover, for all of the words called "sight words," it's possible to divide the word into pieces and to explain to the child what each piece says. Most of the pieces, too, are actually phonetic in the sense that they fit into phonetic groups or families. For example, Y saying the long I sound as in "my" is a perfectly normal and phonetic usage ("cycle," "dry," etc.), as is the th at the beginning of "the." So the words are not even, for the most part, unphonetic. (Aside: Flesch discusses the percentage of the English language that is unphonetic and argues that the claim that English is "not a phonetic language" is complete balderdash. Most of the pieces of nearly all words fall into phonetic groups.)

The major problem, then, with so-called "sight words" is not that they are fundamentally unphonetic and so must be memorized as gestalt wholes but rather that many of the phonetic concepts used in them would normally be taught only at a later stage of the child's reading lessons than the stage at which you first want to use them. The th sound is a prime example of this problem. While it's one of the earliest single-sound blends (like "sh" and "ch") you'll be teaching, the time for it is not *quite* yet. (All of that really gets going in the next chapter.) When you're first teaching sentences, you're still at an early stage of teaching reading. You probably don't want to start introducing whole lists of words using "th," putting on a full-court press to teach the child this blend. The more natural order is to move next to longer regular words that use only the sounds he's already learned for letters--plural words like "cups" and "dogs" and words like "stop," "dress," and "sand."

My own advice is that you minimize the introduction of connecting words involving jump-ahead phonics concepts (like th) or irregular sounds (like the beginning of "one") as much as possible. Don't blithely teach your child a list of five "sight words" at a time. This will positively encourage guessing and run counter to your whole effort to get him to sound the words out in detail. You can get along quite nicely for some time with nothing but "the" and the article "a." Probably the next such connecting word you'll want to introduce is "to" and perhaps "into" and "of." You will find such words cropping up in model sentences and can teach them at that time.

In all these cases, the procedure is this: Take the word apart as far as you are able and explain the phonetic significance of each part. Do this even if the letter uses involved are not going to be familiar yet. For example, for "the" tell your child that the letters "th" together say ____ (making the "th" sound). Then tell him that in this word, the E is funny and is making an "uh" sound. So the word is "the." Here you are indeed telling him the word, but you are explaining the parts as well, so he will still be encouraged to sound it out from left to right by saying the proper sound for the th when he comes to it and the schwa sound when he comes to the E. He won't need to gain proficiency in the th sound right now or to have it presented to him in other words, but neither will you be actively encouraging whole-word guessing. The procedure for "to" is similar. The T is regular, and then all you have to tell the child is that the letter O here is a little different and says "oo."

Unfortunately, there is no getting around the fact that introducing even one word in this way *does* have some tendency to encourage guessing. I've had an intelligent child who was having no trouble with words beginning with H begin to guess that they were the word "the" once "the" had been introduced. Sometimes she would point to a word beginning with H--a perfectly simple word like "hat" or "hen" with which she'd previously had no trouble--and ask me, "Is that 'the'?" This is frustrating, as you feel like you've harmed your child's phonics impulses. This is all the more reason to minimize the use of connecting words that contain unfamiliar phonics concepts or exceptional letter uses. (And the early introduction of such words is a problem with the Bob Books, which are otherwise quite good tools for teaching reading.)

When your child forgets and starts, bless him, faithfully sounding out "the" beginning with the initial sound of "turtle" followed by the initial sound of "hat," just remind him that the "th" here says ____ and is the beginning of the word "the."

The next word length

The next word length is four letters with different sounds. You should already be including words of four letters with a doubled final consonant such as "will" or "fuzz." At this point you will be making a big jump to words like...jump! You can now start to combine any of the letter sounds your child knows into words of four letters long, or even five letters where there is a doubled final consonant or a final ck. This will greatly expand his reading vocabulary to plurals like "cats" and "bugs" and words beginning with all manner of so-called blends--words like "spot," "drop," and "clip."

A word here about the notion of blends. For the most part, I think it is important to distinguish between two-letter combinations that simply involve the sounds the child already

knows and combinations that create an entirely new sound. This is why I dislike the term "blend" when it is applied to both "cl" and "th." The latter is a much more sophisticated phonics notion than the former. To put together "st" or "dr" at the beginning of a word is just to use the known phonics sounds and put them together, exactly as your child has already been doing for three-letter words. There is really nothing new here except the need to remember more sounds and put them together properly when making the entire word. And it is, in my experience, no harder for a child to put together the word "clip," which does begin with a so-called "blend" than for him to put together the word "cats," which does not. In fact, he may have more trouble putting the S on the end of a word to form a plural in a natural-sounding fashion than putting together the letters "cl" at the beginning of a word. But "th," "sh," and "ch" involve the notion that two letters together make one sound that is not the sound either of them makes alone. That is why those single-sound blends really should be regarded as a distinct phonetic stage. But you don't need to be especially cautious or make such a big deal about your child's reading words beginning with "sp" or "cl."

The one exception to this rule of thumb--that regular phonetic initial consonant blends need not receive special treatment--arises where experience shows that a child or children in general seem to have difficulty "hearing" the way some such regular blend should be pronounced when sounding out a word. In my experience, this is most likely to be the case with regular consonant blends beginning with S but not with those beginning with C or D. So I have some extra lists especially emphasizing S blends ("sl," "sk" and "st"), but I put words like "drop" and "clip" in with other four-letter words and give them no special treatment. You can change this if your child has special trouble with some other consonant blend.

A note on the final letter-group "ck": Flesch teaches this separately in list 11. My experience has been that it can be regarded as in the same class as a doubled final consonant like "ll" in "spill" or "ss" in "mess." Once the child gets the idea that he is supposed to pronounce a final sound only once when there are two letters at the end of a word that make that sound, he will probably pick up the final "ck" very quickly. The only difficulty I have run into is that occasionally the child will try to read the K as an X on the assumption that it must be a letter that makes a different sound. But this is easily corrected. So in the model word lists, final "ck" is introduced without special treatment and quite early. The inclusion of these words also makes for a much greater variety of words your child can read. If there is any special trouble, Flesch has more practice words in his list 11.

You will now probably want to start introducing words that your child doesn't know the meaning of, in order to have a greater variety for practice. Once you're trying to get him to read words with more sounds, it's probably too much of a restriction to limit yourself to words he understands, though those will still be the most exciting for him. You will probably get a lot of questions like, "What does 'zest' mean, Mom?" This can be tedious. You can answer them for a while, taking it as a chance to expand his vocabulary. But you don't always have to answer them, and later when he is reading much more difficult words, you probably won't want to stop at every one to explain its meaning. Remember that reading the word off the page and knowing what it means aren't the same thing and need not come at the same time. Right now we're working on being able to decode the sounds of English words from the letters. It's a great motivator for the child to get meaning from the words as well, and he will do so for the majority of them that he

reads at this early stage, but you don't want to confine yourself forever to the vocabulary of a five-year-old, much less a three-year-old, even in teaching that very child how to sound out words. This is probably a good time to start moving beyond that.

New model word lists for this stage are 3 and 4. The font varies in these word lists and sentence models. If necessary, re-format for the font that is best for your child. Print only as much as you think he can read without becoming tired. These files are meant to cover several lessons each, and you may need to break them down into even more lessons.

Chapter 4 Two-syllable Words and True Blends

The materials for this chapter cover a lot of ground. They are lists 5-12, model sentences with ag and ang, and model sentences with qu. The reason for the smaller number of model sentences files is quite simple: Most of the time from now on the model sentences are interspersed with words in the word lists. I find that interweaving sentences and words in this way provides variety and a break for the child and parent, and since I in fact teach this way, it would be artificial to pretend to you that I do not by continuing to separate sentences and word lists.

List 5 includes two-syllable words. If you find that your child is having trouble with two-syllable words this soon, feel free to reduce the number found in List 5. There are advantages to introducing two-syllable words early with the phonics concepts the child already knows. First, it will expand vocabulary for sentences later and make them more interesting. Second, it stretches the child's ability to hold sounds in his head at once and put them together. You can show him how to do this by sounding the words out and putting them together. When the word is "kitten," I advise simply sounding it all the way out from left to right and then putting it all together, as with a four-letter word from the last chapter. When the word is a compound word like "hatbox," I suggest showing the child that each part of it is a word and starting to teach him to see it that way. There is not much more to be said about two-syllable words per se. They are just longer phonetic words, and that's about all.

In fact, after this chapter, my commentary will become much less important in your reading pedagogy than the lists--both the ones I give you and the ones you make up yourself. But there's one big new thing here: True Blends, and nk words are a bridge to true blends.

NK words

With the introduction of "nk" words, we start sliding towards true blends. I say "sliding," because you *can* think of a word like "pink" in more strictly phonetic terms, since every letter is pronounced. Just as you have done with "dog," you can "morph" the word into its true sound with an "ing" inside it from a more rigid sound that comes from saying the sounds p-i-n-k.

In my experience, this works pretty well with "ink" and "unk" but does not work well with "ank." I'm not quite sure why. But it became necessary fairly early on simply to *tell* my children that "nk" blends have a special sound, that "ink" says "ingk," "ank" says "angk," and so forth. (The spellings are meant to show how you pronounce the sound for the child.) After that there is nothing for it but practice, for which I have provided some lists, and you may want to provide more. "Ank" words seemed to be the most difficult, for some reason, but they came after practice.

You'll notice that I intersperse words like "lick" with words like "link." This is an important motif. Children are inveterate guessers, and a bright child will inevitably try to use a short cut, noticing most but not all of the letters in the word. It's therefore important with each new blend first to teach it and then to mix words with the blend with words that look superficially similar but really do not contain it. You will find this motif throughout the lists. In

this way you try to fend off any confusion about words the child could read before by the introduction of new uses of the letters. You also continue to make sure the child is noticing all of the letters when he reads, which will help him to become a good speller.

When you first teach a new blend, I suggest strongly that you have a short lesson in which you sit down without any of these lists but just with pencil and paper. Write out the blend, tell the child what it says, and then illustrate by sounding out several words for him. Then write a word using it for him to sound out, then another, and so forth until you can tell that he has a rough idea of how it works. Many of the lists given here presuppose that the blend has already been introduced to the child in a short lesson before and that the child is now ready to practice it and to practice distinguishing words that use the blend from those that do not. In the case of "nk," I called these "ink," "ank," "unk" words when talking with my child and illustrated "ink," "ank," and "unk" on paper for her.

OO Words

In the order given here, the first true blend is oo. It's relatively easy, because it involves a repetition of a single letter. There isn't a whole lot to be said about oo (and indeed I won't always have notes about new blends as this book goes on). Don't worry too much about the fact that it has two different sounds. Show your child this and then teach him to try each of them. Here it is fairly important for the words to be ones the child knows the meaning of, because this will help him to figure out whether to use the sound in "book" or in "root." Have him try each one if he's having trouble, and it's fine to tell him which sound a given word uses if he is unfamiliar with the word and tries the other. Some, like "roof," can go either way depending on regional accent.

[End of book-like sections]

Faith phonics teaching notes

My own order for teaching Faith phonics concepts is approximately given both by the lessons in the book chapter files and by the lists through "model lists 5." At that point, I set aside writing book chapters for a while, and I am simply saving the lists I make for her. I will keep here a list showing the order of the phonics concepts as actually taught after list 5.

ink, ank, unk works (she had some trouble with these)

oo words (she was excited to do these, so I did them next)

th words

sh and ch (taught at the same time)

ing, ang, ung--Took lots of work and extra review, usually tendency not to notice whether there was a g or an n and hence to confuse "in" with "ing," "an" with "ang" "ag" with "ang," etc. All of the children have had some trouble with ing, ang, ung and needed extra practice.

qu, wh--very easy and painless, only problem was a tendency to try to say the "u" of the u in addition to the "kw" sound or to get confused and forget to say the vowel sound following the qu. Required review later.

ee, ea

review oo (Flesch 26) since we learned it early

er (because Flesch has already introduced it as an ending in two-syllable words, list 23). Introduced it by itself rather than with ir and ur at first.

y as a final letter--Ignored Flesch's insistence on learning "ies" at the same time. Introduced first with the names of the Seven Dwarfs. Then incorporated it into other lessons. She learned it very quickly.

ir, ur (she had a lot of trouble with distinguishing ir from ri. Tended to confuse "girl" and "grill" and to have trouble noticing whether it was ir or ri in words like "drip" and "grip." Drill took care of the problem.)

ow, ou (Was already reading ow in some lessons by sounding out the short o sound and the w sound. That's why I already had a few ow words in some earlier lists. But it helped a lot to make it official that those letters make the "ow" sound.)

or (Went very smoothly.)

ay and ai (It's pretty arbitrary at this point whether you teach ai before ar. Flesch has ar already, but I brought ai earlier in the order because it allowed her to read her name.)

About this time (actually a few lessons ago) I started giving her foil stars on a small calendar for good attitude during reading lessons. It's made a big difference and enabled us to move faster and learn more efficiently. If I ever continue the book chapters, I should mention this way of motivating the child.

ar and a as in mama, father, etc. Her one problem with this, which has shown up with other combinations, is a tendency to confuse "ar" with "ra." For instance, she began having trouble with perfectly ordinary words like "drag" and "brat" after this, because she would switch the letters and assume it was an "ar." Drill is helping, but this is the same problem that came up with "ri" and "ir," and it appears that left-to-right order just isn't well established at the age of four.

oi, oy

Pretty smooth, but a tendency early on to assume she was seeing "oi" when she was just seeing "o"--as in "point, pond."

aw, au, all--She tends to forget what au says.

alt, alk (with silent l as in walk)

Idea at this point that has become very helpful: Reading her kids' books together. I read the words she doesn't yet have phonetically, and she reads often whole sentences for which she does have the phonetic concept. To some extent she is helped by having heard them so often, but this is more a matter of helping her really to read than of her simply pretending to read while quoting the book from memory. It's easy to see her hesitating and sounding out the words in her head, and if she tries to guess from her memory of the book, I stop her and make her read it. She can now read a fair proportion of *The Cat in the Hat*. This is no substitute for word lists and sentences written by me. They are far more of a workout than children's books as she doesn't have expectations, memories, and large amounts of context to help her out and must do them by pure phonics. But reading her books together is a fun thing to do and is good practice for her, especially since I am careful about not letting her guess or skip or add words.

List order from list 25 on reflects actual learning order of concepts. I don't have time to make notes on each one.

Review becomes very important at this point. She tends to forget concepts, because we have had so many.

Review became easier in November '07, at about my list #29, when she was three months past her fourth birthday, because she suddenly began to be able to read the Flesch lists herself without

my having to type new lists in a bigger type font. I still am writing my own lists in a larger font for introduction of new phonics concepts.

Flesch does not do enough tricky mixing of things as drill. Even when he is teaching long and short vowel sounds, for example, he doesn't have whole lists where "pin" and "pine" appear randomly and the child is forced to notice the e on the end. My lists do that. He also has no way (because he is doing just word lists and no sentences or phrases) of teaching the child the way that context is a guide to the different pronunciations and meanings of "bow" and "wind." I also stress things like "children" vs. "child"--the ild is long when the word is a single syllable. But for review, I can now go to a Flesch list for any phonics concept she is suddenly forgetting and use his list without having to print out a list of my own. His lists also cram in more words than mine which makes them good drill in their own way.

By Christmas of '07, Faith is beginning to read many of her own children's books. This has now gone beyond the point where I read the words for which she has not had the phonics concepts. It is no longer possible to stop her from simply saying what she knows the word is in a familiar story. However, I prevent her from simply quoting the book from memory when I am with her. First, I watch for skipping and guessing and always make her stop and read what is actually there, or help her if the word is phonetically too hard. Second, from time to time I will point out the phonics aspects of words she reads by memory. For example, in one book she read the word "head" correctly, despite the fact that so far she has formally learned only the sound of "ea" as in "tea." I said to her, "Look at that! It looks like 'heed', but really, it's pronounced 'hed.'" This trick of showing the child how a word would be pronounced phonetically according to the concepts he knows thus far (and making it seem funny) is excellent for reinforcing spelling and getting the child to notice the letters in words, especially those that have partially non-phonetic aspects or for which he hasn't yet learned the phonics concept. I told her that "bread" is spelled the same way. You can do this with many words, including, for example, "Wednesday"--Wed-nes-day.

At this point, Faith is also picking up actual phonics concepts on her own just from having had stories read to her aloud. She has taught herself the sound of -ight as in "night," though we are not near that yet in the order of the lists in Flesch. I immediately discussed it with her when I saw her reading these words correctly to herself. "Hey, look--it looks like -igt [short i sound, hard g]. The gh must be silent, and the i is saying its name!" Then I would question her, "Why isn't it pronounced 'igt'?" She didn't give the answer right away, so I prompted, "Because the gh is..." and she supplied "silent." In this way, her self-taught phonics is reinforced and made explicit.

The notions of silent letters and long vowels have been introduced in the recent lessons where we have been learning long vowels. I have told her, e.g., that in "cake" the E is quiet but it tells the A to say its name. That is how you introduce the long vowel sounds.

I had put aside the Bob books for quite a while and have made little use of them with Faith. They seemed too artificial, too easy and boring, and yet also early on too inclined to use "sight words." But I have now jumped back in with them at "Bob Books Pals," which is one of the highest levels

and "Bob Books Wow," which is the highest level. They are in some ways far too easy for her but are occasionally using phonics concepts she hasn't had yet. That was where I learned that she knows the -ight. It makes a nice light reading exercise for her, though it is no substitute for continuing with lists and the systematic teaching of concepts.

At this point she pretty much has picked up all of the words commonly thought of as "sight" words, such as "one," "my" "come" (not phonetic, because the o is not long), "of," "they," "was," and so forth. She also has picked up on her own the way a final -ed is pronounced, as in "slipped," "called," and so forth, though this does not officially come up until some lessons later in the order of formal lessons.

(12/30/07) At this time we have just formally finished my list 37--long and short o. We have finished all of Flesch's concepts through his list 45, though we have not actually done his lists 44 and 45 yet. We will do those as review.

After the short and long u sound (his list 46), many of the concepts in the next few lessons will feel like review to her.

The one concept in his list 48 that will be rather hard and that I do not intend to press too hard as yet is the idea that a vowel remains long when you drop the silent e and replace it with -ing. For example "filing." He apparently expects the child to pick up the idea that a doubled consonant keeps the vowel short, so he contrasts "tilling" with "tiling." I am going to see how this goes. I don't recall how well it went with the other children this early. I will probably do a lot of correcting of the long and short vowels for that lesson. It will clearly require more drill and review later to teach the doubled consonant rule, which has many other applications (before -ed, before -en, before -ing, and before -y).

I have (as the notes above show) already taught her the final y as in happy. This comes up in Flesch's list 49. She hasn't yet formally learned to pluralize such final y words and make the ie sound like a long e as in "candy--candies," but she seems to be picking it up osmotically. Other than the one possible glitch on Flesch 48 (noted in the previous paragraph), I expect us to fly through to his lesson 54. Then I will have to reconsider the proper order with which to continue. I may very well just write and throw in a lesson of my own on -ight since she is already learning it by herself. This doesn't come up in Flesch until his lesson 61, where he teaches it with many other instances of silent gh (as in "though").

We did recordings of Faith reading some fairy tales early in January of '08, before actually getting back to formal reading lessons. It went well, and she was enthusiastic about it and pushed for it herself once she had the idea, though the fairy tale versions in the large fairy tale book we have were hard for her. Each tale has been practiced at least once (twice in a couple of cases) before recording. One recording of the first two tales was destroyed (by Faith, who pulled on the tape until it broke when I wasn't watching), which meant an extra "practice." "The Ugly Duckling" was quite hard for her. Good practice for her, though. She did amazingly well on

phonics and words she would not have been expected to know. I was especially struck by her sense for soft c and g, which we have not studied. But we will study them explicitly later. Children often have more trouble with those than one would think, trouble that pops up later. (Clara just turned nine, and I found her pronouncing "prodigal" with a soft g. She had entirely forgotten the principle that g is always hard before a.)

When we began formal lessons again early in January, Faith had a bit of trouble with long u. It turns out it has two sounds--oo as in duke and strictly long u as in mule, where the u says its name. More than I'd expected or remembered from the other girls, teaching her long u involved telling her whether the u actually says its name or whether it says oo. Rather like the two sounds of oo in book and mood. The child just has to memorize which of the two sounds the long u says, especially for words with which he's unfamiliar, like "mute."

No trouble with the long and short letters in Flesch lesson 48. She picked these up quite quickly. Some teaching was necessary; I would explain to her that the word "used to be" something different, but they "took away the e and put -ing instead." So, the word "filing" used to be file, but they took away the e on the end and put -ing instead. When she would forget and say "taping" as if it were "tapping," I would simply say, "I know, it looks like 'tapping,' but it's really 'taping' because, see, there's only one p." She picked this up with remarkable speed. My model list 39 reviews this concept. (Note: She needed more review on this later. It's actually rather hard for a small child to remember the two consonant rule--the vowel in the middle of a word is short if i is followed by two consonants. Hence--baking-backing, tapping-taping.)

Next -ies as in bunnies. There was no problem here. She has previously learned ie as in pie, but here the long e sound in the ending is clearly connected with the word it came from and with pluralizing that word or making a comparative form ("sunny--sunnier"). She is already familiar with some of these through reading and picked them up quickly. Occasionally she tried to do a short o in "pony," but that was also quickly resolved when I pointed out the single n after the o. I have made a lesson to mix up ie as in pie and ie as in babies. This list also contains "field" and "yield," although Flesch doesn't press these until some lessons later. But it is actually the same concept as the ie in "babies"--ie saying a long e sound.

(Note: Burned a CD for D & V and for Max and Liz with lessons through the previous paragraph and with my model lists through list 40.)

The next really new concepts were soft c and g. The fact that c is soft before i, e, and y she picked up fairly easily. She had already osmotically picked up some soft c words from being read aloud to, and telling her *when* the c is soft was very helpful in systematizing this. I taught her explicitly when c is soft.

But...

the soft g presented more problems. These were not actually the problems I'd anticipated. I was

more concerned about the fact that soft g before e is inconsistent. For example, forget and budget. But for these her excellent memory came into play. As usual, I just told her that the g is hard in the one case and soft in the other, and after some practice, she has it. I also told her that g is *sometimes* soft before i, e, and y, and in a hand-written teaching lesson showed her some examples of well-known words where it is hard and soft before e so that she could learn these. So far the only problem there has come with "stingy" vs. "singing."

But...

what she did have a lot of trouble with was the short vowel sounds in -dge words. It's very understandable that she should find this difficult. She has just recently learned that final e makes the vowel in the word long. No sooner does she master this than along come words like badge, bridge, and nudge in which this isn't so. For some reason the short a in badge and Madge has been especially hard, more so even than other vowels. We've had to do a good bit of drill. I've done some explaining, too, with hand-written lessons, showing her that the dg together in the middle "get in the way" so that the e does not make the vowel say its name. This is actually another instance of the two consonant rule, and I've tried to communicate that this is the same principle as with "tapping"--two consonants in the middle of a word (often) keep the preceding vowel short. But that really is rather abstract for her at her age. Only drill will do, although when she makes a mistake I do have her stop and explain why it is this way rather than that way: "Because there's a d and a g together," for example, or "Because the d is all by itself." You can see in model lists 44 the drill showing the differences among words ending in -ade, -age, -adge, -ide, -ige, -idge, and so forth. After several days of work, often doing the same lesson a couple of days in a row, she is getting it.

It's interesting to note that her experience with being read to aloud, her good vocabulary, and her good memory have helped her to have no trouble with the oddities that do occur in Flesch's lists at this point and in high-frequency English words generally. Parents should recognize the possibility of problems here, though: There is an inconsistency phonetically between the long a in a single-syllable word like "cage" and the unaccented schwa sound for the a in the second syllable of words like "garbage" and "manage." Something similar applies to the long i in "rice" and even "advice" and the unexplained short i in "service" and "notice." These things simply are phonetic inconsistencies in English and have to be memorized. My own experience with these words as with the "sight" words mentioned above is that a child's having heard these words and having them in his vocabulary helps a great deal. The familiarity of the word in daily speaking helps it to get burned in very rapidly once he has seen it on the page. It isn't always necessary to explain explicitly that the a is *not* long at the end of "garbage" (appearances to the contrary notwithstanding), so long as the child realizes this implicitly. If he reads words like "service," "garbage," and "manage" with no problem, once you help him realize that the g is soft, then you may not need to say anything about the final vowel. I very often do call attention to phonetic oddities (see the discussion above) for the sake of cementing the spelling of such unusual words in the child's mind. But in this case I have let it go, given the trouble Faith has already had with -adge as in "badge" and -age as in "cage." Since "garbage" is not a problem word for her, I'm

disinclined to raise the issue.

We flew through the silent g, k, b, and t list (Flesch 60) without a pause. She's still unsure about "badge," though, so we keep reviewing that.

At about Flesch list 61, he starts cramming way too much into the lists. I'm not quite sure why. Maybe he thinks that students are by this time able to handle getting many different phonics concepts all in one list, but I think it's a bad idea. Sometimes there is no rhyme nor reason for the inclusion of various concepts together. Why is silent l taught along with ight? And sometimes he's just wrong, as when he categorizes "palm" and "half" as both showing a silent l, when in fact the l in palm is not silent. The lists suddenly become hasty, and many concepts are not taught clearly at all. In list 61 he doesn't even bother to introduce expressly the unusual vowel sound of the ei in "weight," even though this affects many words and features in a famous spelling rule. ("I before e except after c, or when sounded like A as in neighbor and weigh.") He just includes the many words in the list with that sound (eigh says long a) as examples of the silent gh. He never gives sufficient space to teaching the various oddities of vowel sounds before gh. For example, the problem isn't only that the gh in rough says an f sound but also that the ou has a short u sound, in contrast to its sound in brought. It has still another sound in though and the ordinary ou sound in bough. And so forth.

In addition to introducing all these things explicitly and separately, I have the child do a physical exercise that involves sorting various -ough words according to what they rhyme with. Which word rhymes with cow, which word rhymes with taut, which rhymes with blue, and so forth. I actually write the words on slips of paper and teach the child to sort them according to what word they rhyme with. I have done this with all three children, and it is very helpful.

Note: Lessons get much harder from this point on in Flesch and in my own lessons.

I taught the various sounds for ough. (Note that this includes some from Flesch's 61 and some from his 62.) You can see these in my Model list 49, separated out with rhymes. I then wrote them on slips of paper and cut them up. I wrote "rhymes with shout" and so forth separately on larger pieces of paper and had her practice sorting the word slips properly. The only problem she had was with understanding the concept of rhyme, not with reading the words. For example, she finds it hard to remember that "off" and "taut" do not rhyme, and that "cough" rhymes with the first of them and not with the second--the final consonant sound also must match. The only word she messed up on at all as far as reading was "cough." Oh and "drought" once. She's reading them all very well, but a younger child would have trouble, and even some older children who did not have as good a memory might need a lot of drill.

When moving on to the next Flesch lesson (his 62), I made no bones about telling her what vowel sounds were correct--long i in triumph, long o's in photo, long first o in phonograph, and the au saying a short a sound in laugh and laughter. This is an important difficulty that arises at this point. The vowel sounds become more irregular as the more complex consonant rules are

introduced. Ph says f is absolutely regular, but there is no particular reason why the i should be long in triumph whereas it has a long e sound before other vowels in so many other words (etc., experience, happier). And the short a sound in laugh is quite irregular. These things have to be memorized. There are at most very loose rules--e.g., that o after ph is often long. But these rules are not worth teaching, because they are so loosely applied. Words like photograph are fortunately familiar to the child already. Have no hesitation about saying to your child, "The i is long" or "those o's are long." This is why it is important already to have taught the concept of long and short vowels as part of the earlier lessons. I make sure to make a big deal about laughter and slaughter, showing that the latter is like daughter. Both of my older girls have had trouble with this later on in life, even though I tried to teach it to them when they were young. Hopefully Faith will remember. She's having very little trouble with the ph saying f. She just needs perhaps one more review of Flesch's list 62 to be all set.

At this point I fell behind in making notes on Faith's progress. As I recall it was largely uneventful as we moved gradually through the rest of Flesch's concepts. As before, I expanded his concepts with my own lists. My procedure was to teach the concept first using my own list. Once I had her well-taught in the concepts Flesch would be introducing in a given lesson, I used his lessons as review. If she had trouble on a given list--his or mine--we repeated it until she could do it smoothly.

At my list 54 I introduce Mr. Sound-It. Mr. Sound-It will be invisible to you on these electronic documents, because you have to draw him on by hand yourself. He is a rabbit and becomes the child's "teacher" for many of the lessons. All my girls have loved him, and you can see that he speaks directly to the child. One of the advantages of having these lists in "soft" form (word processing files instead of PDF) would be that then you could add your own child's name. I have tried to cut out Faith's own name from the Mr. Sound-It lessons, but you will want to add your child's own name anyway. Originally, it said, "Hello, Faith," whenever Mr. Sound-It was there. Of course, you will already have seen that many of the sentences use my own children's names and even situations in our own family. Anyway, when I am teaching one of these lessons I print each one out and hand-draw a small picture of a bunny. Sometimes I give him glasses to make him look more like a teacher. At this point she can read well enough that I put many of the explanations that I would otherwise be giving to her verbally into the mouth of Mr. Sound-It, and she reads them for herself as part of our lesson. Often I have to explain them, too, especially if she doesn't seem to be getting the concept. All of the lessons until the end of the numbered lists can feature Mr. Sound-It.

The ci and ti having an sh sound was a rather hard concept for her. Be prepared to go over this one several times.

We have now finished all of Flesch's 72 lessons, as of May, 2008. Faith is nearly 5 now. Flesch actually leaves out, accidentally, a number of phonics concepts, and in any event the child will need a great deal of review to cement the material. (My list 60 shows that Faith had suddenly forgotten her final e and long vowel sound! All of these weirder recent phonics concepts had

driven it out of her mind.) Some concepts Flesch does not teach include the d with a j sound before u, as in educate and residual, the re with a long e sound at the beginning of a word, as in repair and release, and various unaccented final syllables in which the vowel simply has a schwa sound ("uh") like the -al at the end of animal or the -ard at the end of awkward.

My next move in Faith's reading education is to move on to material that, unfortunately, I do not have in electronic form at all. Ten years ago, when my eldest daughter was Faith's age, she was my only child, and I had much more time, energy, and creativity. At that time I created a huge amount of material on a very old computer, as well as much that I printed by hand. (I must have been crazy!) The lessons written on the old computer have fortunately been saved in printed form, but I cannot find the old disks on which I saved them electronically. These lessons actually start again from the beginning. They are the actual lessons I wrote for the older child, much as these lessons are the ones I wrote for Faith. But they become hard fairly rapidly, and I think the reason for this is that my older daughter was able much sooner than Faith was to start using Flesch directly, so I wrote fewer supplementary lessons early on. In this batch of older materials I am skipping the earliest, easiest lessons with Faith and going straight on to the harder ones that review things like the two consonant rule for words like filling and filing, soft and hard c and g, and so forth. There are also many stories, some quite long, in which I worked in various phonetic concepts. For example, a story about a kitten named George works in many words with soft g. My plan is eventually to have this material scanned and turned into a single, large, and very messy PDF, which I will be able to be sent to people electronically, for what it's worth. (It will be unindexed and massive, so I don't know how worthwhile it will be.) I mention it here only so that I do not give the impression that once the child has gone through all of my lists and all of Flesch's lists, he's done and needs no further phonics reading lessons. That actually is not true, but for the time being the ones given here are the only ones I can provide in electronic form.

Good luck!

Early sentences

Max got wet.

Tim had an egg.

Mom will zip it up.

Bob fell in mud.

Bill is in bed.

Jen did run.

Ken sat up.

Kim is hot.

Ben will get in bed.

Jazz is fun.

Pig is sad, and fox is in bed.

Dan and Don can run.

Max and Liz had a cat.

Bob has a big tub.

The cat did get the big mess.

The dog will dig and wag.

The man is mad. The dog is sad.

The cat has a red hat.

A red hen sat in the box.

Six men get in the van.

The big dog did not sit. It
got Jim wet.

The man has a gun.

Set the tin can in the box.

Bill is a tan cat.

The pig is in the mud.

It is wet up on the hill.

Jill got up and had an egg
and ham.

Dad can fix it.

Mom will hug Dad.

Spot digs in the mud.

Max fills six milk cups.

Jill sets the cups on the mats.

Mom gets stuff in a pan.

The dogs and the ducks will jump in the pond.

Dad has a belt on his pants.

Sam has a black belt.

Mom has a dust pan.

The man is mad. The dog felt sad.

Mom will dust the lamp. The lamp has a

bulb.

Tim has ten cups. Milk is in the cups. The cats must not jump up and spill the cups. Stop, cats!

Bill will step on the cans and get the cans flat. Bill will not slip.

1

mom

cup

up

sit

bat

cap

hen

Bob

bag

nap

pup

rat

sun

rug

Sam

bib

cut

Ben

rag

Tim

dad

bug

big

get

mud

fat

mop

sip

run

fix

wet

fox

zip

vet

Max

tap

van

hug

cat

hot

jet

Jim

2

cab

Ned

rub

dog

lid

six

fox

and

mud

at

rag

sun

had

has

log

him

got

bad

on

is

in

cab	tub	mud	ham
fox	Ted	Rex	hen
van	Max	Liz	sin
ill	and	egg	end
buzz	on	in	an
fat	mop	log	ran
leg	bag	fix	Dan

fan

ant

tap

is

lip

zip

run

has

yet

sun

hill

tub

lap

yes

zap

fuzz

cub

as

tag

bun

can

sin

up

ran

fuss

dog

top

doll

red

Ned

ten

fix

Mac

bib

fit

nap

fill

pop

and

Max

Bob

fox

jam

six

tell

log

van

jug

3

nest	pond	send	milk
land	best	bump	must
desk	belt	just	steps
fist	ask	went	sis
bent	dust	dump	sits
pond	vest	end	mask
sand	left	list	clip
jump	last	melt	sick
fast	drip	spin	back
crib	stem	west	sets

help
fast
damp
bulb
mend
band
hunt

melt
mint
rest
self
felt
lamp
cats

cups
next
step
vans
drop
pond
spill

clap

melt

spot

lamp

spin

slip

milk

stop

step

cans

skim

fans

pups

tell

flat

flap

stop

slip

spin

skid

slam

next

pots

tops

stem

self

trip

step

cats

skip

scat

stop

kids

trick

tops

stick

rag	sis	bats	bit
jam	fits	kits	sis
sad	sits	pots	kiss
Dan	rags	spots	sass
sun	fans	spot	hats
run	bags	bits	bugs
hits	ham	hum	spam
sled	caps	scat	scab
black	block	bled	band

next	nest	bend	hump
kept	just	went	self
camp	gulp	dusk	mist
fond	rest	elf	mint
lisp	sulk	kept	elm
pest	hunt	fact	zest
sick	Jack	yell	beds
kick	cuts	send	stick

4

skip	scab	scat	stop
scam	step	top	cat
spot	pot	skid	kid
spill	spit	ant	flap
slip	slam	slap	step

Stan

lamp

cats

spot

stop

still

skip

lap

skid

pots

must

cups

fan

scat

kids

step

fuss

up

5

napkin

exit

truck

helps

swig

wept

hatbox

tomcat

wicked

flap

rabbit

catnip

mitten

smack

kitten

hint

pants

flock

address

dentist

wigs

glad

biggest

robin

jacket

smock

stack

tent

dusts

drift

bucket

upset

swept

snap

unfit

vivid

hatrack

sunset

goblin

blocks

twin

tub

clump

plot

flint

flip

mistress

lapdog

tempest

mastiff

lipstick

basket

padlock

bellhop

unzip

gulps

unjust

Stan gulps his milk. Bob stacks his blocks and sets the blocks in a big basket.

A rabbit runs and jumps on a log. The kitten did not get him.

A robin flaps and gets up in his nest.

The sunset is a vivid red.

Mom swept and got the mess in the dustpan.

6

rack	skunk	sunk	tank
rank	pink	sank	link
trunk	lick	pick	pink
truck	drunk	sink	vivid
wink	rabbit	blanket	stink
dunk	exit	hatless	drink
bank	basket	spank	drank

Bob sat and drank his milk.

Jill has a pink pig bank.

Dad winks at Mom.

The black skunk has a bad stink.

Mom sets the cups in the sink.

Ken must not get black ink on his hands.

stink	ink	sank	buck
stick	ick	sack	wink
sink	black	blink	bland
sick	blank	duck	sand
truck	suck	dunk	sank
trunk	sunk	bank	band
tack	pink	back	bank
tank	pick	bunk	rink

duck	ink	pick	drank
dunk	ick	prank	stinks
sink	mink	plink	pranks
sick	bland	stick	bank
dank	blank	stink	band
Dick	black	sand	bunk
rink	stank	sank	wick
rack	stack	sink	wink
rank	pink	and	wind

7

Book	cock	roof	sank
broom	cook	too	mink
hood	foot	tool	trunk
took	moon	hook	cool
moo	stood	zoom	
Good	hoof	food	
God	room	stool	
look	rook	hood	
lock	boots	food	
soot	shoot	black	
sot	zoo	blank	
woods	woof	sink	

Tom looks at the moon.

Jan took a spoon and set it in the sink.

The food is not hot but cool.

The dog is not at the zoo.

A dog went woof, not moo.

Jill has boots and a jacket with a hood.
Soon Dad will pick up the rook and put it
on the rank.

Sam has a rook, too.

Ted stood on his step stool.

Ted has a broom and dust pan.

A hoof is a foot.

The man has a tool.

8

then	with	Bethel
ten	bath	Beth
hen	bat	this
think	bathroom	his
thin	bathtub	them
tin	Seth	that
tooth	Set	thump
the	than	hump
thank	tan	thick
tank	hand	tick

cloth	Franklin	sink
clot	thankless	thin
moth	with	this
smith	wit	bath
broth	sixth	than
Bet	then	thick
Beth	think	thin

Beth will cook with Mom.

Mom cooks in a big, red pan.

Then Beth dumps milk in the pot and sets the mats.

Ted sits with sticks on the back step and looks at a truck.

Mom tells him that an egg is in the pan.

Ted sets his stick on the step and sits with his cup.

Ted has eggs and milk.

Jan got a foot stuck. It sank in the mud. Jan thinks that Spot the dog can help, but Spot is at the vet. Then Spot runs up. "Woof!" Jan sends Spot to get Mom. Soon Jan can get a bath and good food. Thanks, Spot.

Beth gets a thin stick. Then

Beth thinks that it is not
good to dig up the grass.

The rabbit thumps on a
stump with his foot.

Sam cuts this thick grass.

Spot is good for his bath.

Tim will kiss the dog.

9

ship	fish	sank	bishop
shop	flush	shrink	wish
sip	check	thrill	shell
chop	catch	Pooh	shelf
chip	witch	oops	toothbrush
shin	chill	soon	fresh
thick	flash	book	disk
this	then	scoop	stop
chin	sash	rash	stink
chess	dish	rook	this

lunch	chipmunk
chunk	children
ranch	shut
sandwich	hut
check	hush
chess	
cash	
shall	
munch	
pooch	

Chad had a sandwich at lunch.

In chess a rook sits on a rank.

Mom went to shop and get fresh
salad and chips.

Oops. Tim bumps his shin and his

chin.

pink	trunk
thank	truck
tank	wink
sink	dunk
spank	bank
skunk	sunk
ink	think
drank	rank
drink	

I think that is a pink dog.
Fish swim in a big tank.
Mom will thank Bethel.
Bob drank a cup of milk.
I think I will not pet the skunk.
The skunk has a bad smell.
Dad can wink at Mom.
The rook sits on the rank.
The ship is sunk.

Jim is hot and gets a good drink.

Mom sets the dish in the sink.

Big Mac at the zoo has a big trunk.

If Bill is bad, his mom will spank him.

thin	wish
ship	thump
then	shell
sip	that
fish	shelf
fist	bath
with	bash
wit	thick
wish	
stick	

The man got his tooth brush.

Bethel had hash on the dish. Then Bethel had milk, too.

Beth has a bath. Beth will not bash the bad dog.

Max tells Dad that Liz has a shell.

Pooh and Piglet went in the woods.
Roo went, too.
Roo will jump.
His mom tells him not to bump his shin.
Pooh had food.
Rabbit will sit with them on stools.
Piglet will boost Roo up.
Roo got a pot on the shelf.
The food is good. Yum!
Pooh has six pots himself.
Pooh is fat, not thin.
The food stuck on Piglet.
Piglet went back and took a bath with
shampoo.

10

sing	hang
bag	hand
bang	hag
ring	things
sang	sing
sag	rang
thing	swing

It is sin when children do bad things.

Beth will sit on the swing and sing. It is a lot of fun.

A wig is not a wing.

I think it is good to thank God.

The kitten is thin. He will bat a bell. It will ring.
The kitten has fun with that thing.

This is red.

Stan thinks it is fun to look at red.

Ned and Ted will whack with the bat.

Then Ned will catch a whiff of the broth Mom has for lunch.

When Ted runs in, Mom tells him to hang up his jacket. Ted drops his bag and shuts the closet with a bang.

Mom tells them that soon it will be good to get in the van and get to the bank.

hag hang

The wicked hag hangs a hat on a hook.

Thin thing

A pen is a thin thing.

bin

bing

ban

bag

sing

sin

sun

sung

Don

long

song

lung

ran

rag

rang

bangs

things

thin

rig

ring

hangs

hags

hands

win

wing

winning

which

witch

quack

quick

quit

quitting

bang	sitting
sing	hugging
lung	banging
sink	dragging
bag	ringing
ring	big
sung	rag
hitting	rung
singing	rig
hanging	ring
clang	rang
bring	rug
link	dig
drank	ding

hoof	thing	rang
sing	skunk	hanging
bank	moon	hag
God	bag	drag
dogs	bang	singing
bang	stood	sinning
big	hang	king
ring	sink	clang
soot	wing	hung
thank	rag	sang

Jan stood at the sink on the step stool.

Mom got the dishes wet.

Mom has a ring. Dad got Mom the ring.

I can hang up the dress.

The moon is getting big.

Mom will ask us not to bang.

The kids stand up and sing.

I am sitting on the rag rug.

Bethel will ask Dad to get a thing that will help
Bethel swim.

Ted went bang, bang, bang on the wood box.
Mom will not drop the ring in the sink.
Jim has ink on his hands. The pen ink is black.
The tank has fish.
A man rang the big bell.
I think the thing on the step is a bug.
Jill can spell “think.”

left	plum	then	ing
dish	sink	that	ang
ask	sick	with	ung
bangs	stick	wit	
hush	stink	sandwich	
ink	scrub	test	
thank	sing	stop	
hump	hand	skip	
vest	hang	thing	
sunk	hums		
bent	drink		
flap	spring		
spill	drip		
stub	bring		
flash	sting		

sing	sang
ring	hanging
hang	giving
bring	long
bang	banging
thing	singing
song	sitting
songs	howling
sings	

The children bring a gift.

Sam rang the bell.

The wind can sink the ship.

Bethel sings songs.

I will not bang on the bed.

Jim is hanging on the swing.

king	hugging
standing	jumping
hopping	gang
sitting	rung
thumping	run
sting	bag
lung	bang
band	
bang	
sung	
spring	

Mom is thumping Jim on the back.
Sam has a chess king.

Piglet is sitting on a log in the woods. Piglet is thinking that jumping with Roo is fun. The wind smells good. A skunk sits on the log with Piglet. Piglet asks it to scoot. Thanks, skunk.

11

quit quick quiz
quack quill

Mom tells us to look at the quick
rabbit running in the grass.

The man can shoot the crook with a
gun.

I will not quit singing until the end
of the song.

Bethel must finish the quiz.

smith	win
rank	thank
this	quill
with	whisk
squint	them
that	bag
quit	thump
then	that
quick	bang
this	quill
thick	hand
think	sin
thing	ban
when	hang
whack	quack
broth	hag
whiff	quill
thrill	moth
thin	hang
thing	wig
cloth	wing
hand	had

whip
whack
bang

squint
quiz
sung

which
when
gang

quack
wing
quit

12

address	hatbox
bucket	exit
mustang	bath tub
unfit	dishpan
quicksand	dustpan
kitchen	shopping
lobster	tomcat
dishpan	lapdog
buckskin	topnotch
hamster	mistress
winning	goblin
locket	chicken
lemon	frosting
vanish	tempest
catnip	crossing
dustpan	tinsmith
shopping	quicksand
bucket	chicken

biggest mustang

fishpond	stocking
longest	ringlet
hanging	crossing
sunset	vivid
upset	mustang
biggest	hatrack
goblin	mastiff
padlock	banging
handbag	gobbling
singing	dentist
wicked	robin
rabbit	napkin
redskin	basket
whisking	chipmunk
lipstick	sunset
windmill	lungs

13

dear

beef

bet

seat

I will sit on a seat.

we

wet

tears

sleep

met

meat

sang
meeting
Is Jed sleeping?

fear
free
beads
sledding
hag
hang
win
wing
beating

He is beating me at chess.

beast

best

dream

seed

sent

beads

beds

seal

sell

stream

tea

Dad drinks tea when he is

not sleeping.

He is thanking God that we
had good food to eat.

then	feel
fell	bang
hanging	steal
self	bank
winking	wing
winning	beast
bees	jeep
sell	seal
rank	sang
deals	needs
resting	reading
real	redness

steal	then	hen
peel	cheap	he
dear	yes	when
be	yeast	speed
bet	creep	step
Ben	clear	steep
seek	me	cheek
east	heat	check
gear	green	wet
street	beak	Jean
sets	rest	Jen
feel	sling	team
rang	sheep	ten
ran	bang	sink
wheat	tank	drank
speech	leaf	weep

years sweet hang

He

She

we

be

me

shed

wet

bed

men

hen

Shep

We got wet.

Mom got food for the men and me.

He has a hen.

Jen will be on the bed.

Shep is in the shed.

She is good.

sheep

bee

keep

need

feed

tree

green

teeth

Ned

then

Kep
well
shell

The sheep is in the shed.
She has ten teeth.
Ned can see the green tree.
She will keep the shell.
Kep and Shep will help with sheep.
Then Pooh sees the bees.
Well, I can feed the dog.

bean

mean

read

eat

meat

hear

ear

I can read!

It is fun.

We hear Mom yelling.

She has 2 ears.

The men had meat at lunch.

Poor Bethel feels sick.

Things bloom in the spring.

I shook the things in the box.

Roo will scoop them up in his net.

Hang the hat up in that room.

When we went to the zoo, we did not see
a cow.

Tom Kitten got soot on his jacket.

We got food at Chicken Coop.

Mom will boost Jean up to brush her
teeth.

He did not see the bee. Then it stung him on the foot.

She can hear the drum go "Boom."

14

butter	Fred
summer	Fern
better	thing
her	lobster
herself	then
hers	blister
he	we
Bert	enter
fern	seems
hen	sent
jerk	bang
herd	letter
perch	boost
peach	scoop
Ben	shook
Bean	thanking
Bern	ringing

quick
squeal

queen
squeaking

Be	dinner
Ben	trend
bead	stern
bed	fisher
bet	splashing
beat	finger
miller	bang
Fred	tatters
Fern	sending
blend	seems
blot	dog
black	hotter
blister	whiskers
pitter-patter	sister
ringing	trotting
Hen	
we	
weed	
wed	

Fred can get better at his reading.

Tom Kitten is shedding buttons in the ferns.

Mister Fisher can eat peaches and cream when he gets up. Then he can get his rod and basket for fishing.

A lobster is red. It can nip a finger with its pinchers.

The rat has whiskers. We can hear it running pitter-patter in the attic.

Fred's sister thinks it feels too hot. She wishes she had a pool. The children can run in the sprinkler.

Ben is a rabbit. His sister is Jean. Jean and Ben eat green beans in the summer. Ben steals them from Mister Macintosh. Mister Macintosh has a cat. She runs and jumps to stop Ben. She went "Bang!" Ben had to drop the beans and run. He got under the bushes and hid. Then the cat hears a ringing bell. It is Missus Macintosh with her food. Leaving Ben, the cat runs to get lunch. Ben is quick. He grabs the beans, slips into the woods, and runs back to Jean. The cat and the rabbits get a good supper.

15

girl	curly
grill	ugly
Bert	yummy
better	burn
matter	skirt
dresser	squirmy
curb	twirly
dirt	fussy
squirt	yucky
thirst	yappy
first	church
perk	hut
sheet	hurt
Shep	birth
bird	furry
her	funny
help	silly

If Pooh got fatter, then it did matter.

The bird is sick, but he will get better.

Jan feels thirsty. She is the first girl to get a drink.

"Brid" is not a real thing. A bird is a real thing. It has wings.

She will run in the park with Shep the sheep dog.

A man cooks meat on a grill and hands it to the girl.

Dan can squirt his sister with the sprinkler and get her wet.

Bert tells the children not to run off the curb into the street. Bert has dirt on his hands. It is black soot.

hanger

banging

finger

keeper

hood

bursting

chirping

third

Chippy

bust

burst

bun

burn

turning

chilly

stirring

drill

hear

bring

tank

stinker

witch

sketching

handy

dolly

brown

cow

clown

howl

16

brown	down
howling	how
chirping	sow
bird	drown
brick	Billy
flower	
towel	
surf	
tower	
town	
trumpeting	
turning	
rang	
hanger	

dirty
singing
curling
-ou
-ur
-ow
-ir
-ing
-ang
-ung

our	rig	sour
flour	down	surf
spill	drowning	girl
sound	found	first
bangs	fund	fern

flower	fond	rang
fur	rug	cow
turn	big	bow
tower	fantastic	round

We put flour in good things to eat.

A red flower blooms in the spring.

The cat with black fur will sniff the
flower and bump the flour. What a mess!

A rook is a little tower.

It is our turn to sing.

He hears the sound of birds singing.

The lemon is sour.

The man jumps into the surf in the sea.

We had southwestern beef skillet for supper. But Mom did not get the sour cream. She asks Daddy to get it. He brings it in a bag. Oh, good! Mom rang the dinner bell loudly. I had lots of beef skillet with cheese and sour cream on top. Sis got a bit on her shirt. It is yummy! Dad had tea after.

17

sound	curl
shout	twirling
brown	hurls
bangs	birds
bags	town
rags	first
rang	third
fern	sturdy
dirty	hound
turning	
master	
girls	
singer	
clown	

cloud

minister

stern

drip

stretch

quack

dirt

fetch

her

grip

whack

rip

girl

jerk

grill

herd

grin

squirm

skirt

purring

squirt

perch

birch

clerk

brick

owlish

clerk

south

crown

spout

squint

thrill

thrash

spot

couch

now

The girl has a green chip bag. She eats loudly and crunches. Mom tells the girls not to squirt each other with stuff and get wet.

The clerk thinks it is fun to wink, but he really just squints.

Kirk got a whack with a bat on his shin. It hurt.

Dad grills fantastic hamburgers.

The kitty sits on her lap and purrs. The girl pets her, but then she squirms out of her grip and jumps

down off the couch.

18

or	chop
for	chin
pork	quench
storm	chilly
fork	hungry
short	ringing
corn	hanger
stork	lung
porch	long
born	punch
thorn	gang
quick	stream
squint	weeds
pen	sunbeam
torch	lantern

The poor dog got a long thorn in his foot.

His master took it out with tweezers. The dog had to sit still.

We had a story about a stork. He went to get things for the girl that was sick. He had to go between the rocks of Korsan.

Jean is hungry and chilly out on the porch. Mom gets her a better top and supper. The corn is yummy.

sort	born	story
shorts	bop	drop
perch	squirt	Ron
porch	freezing	trot
peach	slender	factory
order	trip	strong
fort	turn	
horn	torn	
storm	angry	
pot	sang	
port	song	
pet	quest	
pert	sneezy	

Mister Ken Horton is a man at our church.

The girls got shorts for when it is hot out.

The puppy trots happily down the street.
Oops. He has torn up a book that got left
on the grass. The man will be angry.

The cow has horns.

Dad orders books on the internet.

Mom forgot to get the peaches.

squirrel

when

wheat

fork

shout

short

shirt

pouch

porch

perch

Ron

room

gong

Don

sting

stormy

morning

storybook

interesting

tears

19

-ai

-ay

Faith

play

math

plan

pan

Ray

pain

ran

stay

rain

aim

Sunday

stair

born

day

hair

dad

say

aim

am

Faith went to church on Sunday.

Faith was born years back.

Owl runs upstairs and downstairs, but he
still cannot be upstairs and downstairs,
too.

Faith must not drop her fork.

She has fun playing in back on Thursday.

We wish for lots of rain to get the grass
green.

ran	said
rain	pen
pork	peal
prom	trail
pan	fair
pain	stream
cannot	
plain	
plan	
storm	
strum	
really	
Kelly	

Kelly cannot play out in the rain when we get a thunderstorm.

Mom said, "I really do not think it is good to play with the food."

On Sunday we will get the girls' hair cut.
Mom's hair is curly. She got a perm.

On Saturday we had pork chops and
green beans for supper.

Mom sits on the couch and tells a long
story.

Pooh said that his pot was empty. Oh,
bother!

pray	funny
chair	slipping
may	stings
furry	stinks
gripping	clank
girls	pans
stern	days
hurls	faith
clay	stairs
clap	mouth
press	mud
which	mop
said	Jan
quirky	hen
quitting	

Mister Jackson is sitting on a rocking chair. He is dripping wet.

We get down and pray and then get in bed.

Which way must I press the clay down so that it will look like a hand?

The girls hid without a sound under the bed.

On Sunday we put on our best dresses.

plain

plan

pan

pain

pail

pal

braid

Brad

hand

hail

grills

way

clang

mouth

moth

mother

cloth

south

spout

sloth

whirls

herd

girl

Dan

jay

20

cart	yard
mark	mama
part	papa
car	father
dark	llama
bank	ma
bark	pa
band	Clara
bang	bark
lark	sharp
Clark	hard
land	barn
darling	party
are	yay

far

Mark Clark went to the park in the dark.

We are running too far.

Mom tells Clara and Clark to get in the car.

The dogs will bark loudly.

I put the milk in the shopping cart when I went to Harding's.

Faith can read! It is not too hard.
If a thing is sharp, it can cut Jim's hand.

"Mama" means Mom.

"Papa" means Dad.

When Carl is running into the street, his Mama grabs his arm.

"Stay in the yard to play," said Mother Cat.

Yesterday, Faith and Mommy went to Harding's to shop. Faith kept singing loudly. Mom said, "Faith, that is too loud. You must stop." So Faith was not as loud in the cart. At the checkout, Mom asks the man to help them out to the car. He pushes a different cart and puts the bags into the trunk. Mom tells him, "Thanks! Good day!" Then Faith and Mom went back to the house. Bethel and Clara had a good morning, but now the girls are happy to help bring in the food from the car.

21

-oi

-oy

point	drag	growl
boy	dark	soil
toys	pond	cloud
join	point	hang
spoil	Jon	sulk
joy	join	quiz
coin	brat	witch
Roy	Bart	wheel
boil	burn	wheat
moist	bun	charm
toy	birch	chain
start	brick	play
chart	turn	
Carl	trust	

smart	squirm
spark	hurt

oink	honk	farm
Fran	press	rat
far	main	art
point	man	boil
pond	enjoy	brick
grab	cloy	birch
garb	play	
drag	raining	
dark	planning	
toil	hunt	
Jon	hurt	
Roy	morning	
joint	loudly	
hurling	Sparky	
print	Trusty	
fern		
sun		
soil		
hand		

Mom puts foil on the food to keep it hot.

Jon has a toy brick house.

The birds look for bugs when it is not raining. Mama bird drags the food back to the nest.

Soil means dirt. Roy got a lot of soil on his feet in the morning when he ran the sprinkler on the grass. He has to sweep the porch with a broom to clean it when he finishes.

scarf

hood

smooth

darn

bar

branch

girl

grip

birth

pins

pointer

ponder

grouchy

clown

queen

preach

dear

deer

lard

ray

maid

spray

coy

oily

scrap	how
scarf	hottest
brink	mirth
brick	happiness
birds	faithful
foil	squeak
loin	crunchy
hoist	forest
joyful	bars
art	braid
rat	hair
hens	brats
west	soy
east	noisy
north	quickly
south	dropping
brunch	
burns	

22

-aw

-au

-all

jaw

yawn

paw

launch

haul

all

raw

fraud

shawl

straw

tall

draw

balls

howl

foul

fall

pawn

down

yowl

yawn

Paul

lawn
drag

ball	our
Al	or
All	couch
God	coil
Good	coin
bell	corn
Call	bricks
well	born
wall	grill
will	gal
point	caw
fill	cow
fall	haul
fell	howl
Cal	Paul
shoot	pout
boy	paw
food	pow
stall	rang
hall	rag
hill	arch
flour	paint

Faith has a pink toy toilet from the doll house.

Al can draw a tall horse running from the barn. When it finishes running, it will eat hay in its stall.

Three girls in this house are very smart, with top-notch brains.

Paul catches the ball in the hall. Paul's mom looks unhappy about the banging noise.

Let's not set Howard on the toilet tank. If he were to fall in, we'd be upset.

Clara tells her little sister not to put the pawn in her mouth. Pawns are for playing chess.

Faith has a story about a puppy that gets rubbers to keep the rain off. But the rubbers pinch his paws.

We play chess with rooks. But I bet you never found out that a rook is a black bird. A rook has a noise that sounds like “caw.” It is very loud.

Now, a cow cannot say “caw.” A cow cannot bow. A cow has no paws. A cow just eats grass on the lawn. It pulls up the grass with its jaws.

A sow is a mommy pig. A sow can sleep with a bunch of little piglets.

And now you can say more about a sow, a cow and a rook.

All the cats get to be with Al.

Cal calls his dog out of the mud.

Will Jill be at her house or our house?

A leaf fell from the tree. Then all of them fell down. Soon it will be winter.

Hang that on the wall.

Dad is in the hall. He has coins in his pocket.

If the girl falls, she will get soil on her jeans. Soil is dirt.

23

-alk

-alt

hawk

walk

saw

salt

walk

talk

laundry

fault

thaw

chalk

barn

halt

drawn

malt

yelling

Walter

wettest

jaw

clown

crawl

bet

call

claws

crowd

cloudy

yet

clods

drank

squall

clang taunt
drawing Paul

Walter belongs to Clara. He never squalls.

It is important not to yell loudly when the girls are studying.

The kitten is falling off the couch. It is not his fault that he scratches the couch when he grabs with all his claws.

It is not very smart to crawl in a big crowd.

Taunting a person is not good.

On our walk we can talk.

Chalk can be messy on hands and pants.
So is salt, if you spill it.

Jimmy said it is not his fault if his sister spills milk on her shirt.

I can pull that string taut.

Paul plays with red chalk drawing on the back porch and gets his pants all messy.

Do not talk to Clara when she is on a speed drill.

Faith is not fussy on our family walks. She has fun with Daddy and Clara when she walks just in front of them.

The black cat stalks the bird in the tall grass. It jumps, but the bird gets away to the roof.

I think this dish needs salt. Yum! That's better!

Dawn means first thing in the morning. The birds get up at dawn and sing songs. We do not.

24

brat	salty	talk	sand
bark	yum	toil	church
bird	yack	stall	fun
brick	Cal	stock	fur
point	call	stand	witch
pond	mall	start	which
foil	malted	fort	stitch
yet	mat	corn	fetch
can	smell	con	chum
fell	small	wheat	chilly
fall	fault	ornery	cheese
grip	walk	wall	hang
grill	cook	charm	hamper
girder	spoon	wheel	handed
awning	spook	swam	rang
brown	book	harm	song
fawn	boost	bang	bring
fan	dream	ban	snout
faun	drip	long	star
Paul	Fred	Ron	ouch

Pal	filling	sing	birch
pan	mist	sin	leaf
brawl	moist	sang	stir

A mouse sat in his house eating peas. Suddenly a loud noise got him to jump up and look out. A cat sat waiting. It stuck its paw into his living room, and the lamp fell down. The mouse took his fork and stuck it at the big paw. The cat said, "Me-ow" and ran away.

25

-oa	no
-oe	so
-oll	go

boat	no	coal
toast	foe	throat
toe	coach	go
goes	coat	toad
troll	woe	hoe
strolling	oats	scroll
Joe	oar	float
roast	toes	croak
whoa	toll	road
oak	groan	so
doe	roar	coal
soap	roll	stroll
loaf	groan	goat

The three billy goats gruff went to eat green grass and get fat. But the troll was waiting for them and said, "I'm going to eat you up."

Mister Jackson is a toad. He gets the mouse's house all wet. But he gets rid of the bees.

A doe is a girl deer. A fawn is a small deer. A doe can also be a fawn. A mommy doe may have a fawn herself.

Daddy grills meat on coals in the backyard. It's yummy!

The three girls are floating in the swimming pool.

A dog cannot roar. It just barks.

26

Ow can have a long O sound.

row	glow	low
follow	growing	bow (in hair)
fellow	throw	
blow	grown	
shown	growth	
show	tow	

cow	throw
blow	brown
howl	Did the moon follow Owl?
show	
growl	
grow	

He took a bow.

She put a bow in her hair.

Faith is growing taller every day.
A dog growls when he is angry.

low	troll
slower	walking
blow	chalky
clown	crow (a bird)
flower	crown
growling	owl
growing	show
yellow	sail
hang	chair
brownish	
long	
Joe	
Hal	
hall	
haunted	
book	
throw	

The cat said with a bow, "I will show you a good trick."

The puppy is howling and growling at the black crow in our back yard.

The wind is blowing loudly during the storm.

Mom hung a yellow towel on the bar.

It is not smart to put a red bow on a cat. The cat will snarl and scratch to get it off.

We are going to launch a small boat in the bathtub.

Clara has a cross that glows in the dark. It looks a little bit green.

Sam is cutting the grass with a lawn mower.

The little girl is walking slower and slower.
Maybe she is looking for her pocket handkin.

At the end of Beatrix Potter's story, how small
the animal had grown, and how brown, and with
no dress on!

In the winter we get lots of snow in our town.
On a snowy day we must put on snow pants,
boots, and mittens.

Mister Jackson was rowing his lily leaf boat out
into the pond to catch fish. When the big fish
got him, he did not drown.

A long song is sung in church.

Mom has hung the dress up in the closet.

We get air with our lungs.

27

-old

-olt

told

colt

bolt

cold

molt

told

hold

jolt

gold

sold

dolt

bold

blow

foam

how

Joe

troll

holly

all

Sally

jolly

boat

goes

old

hold

Molly

cold

bolt

go	grown	doll	ball
brown	drown	bolt	hanger
low	jolt	stroll	doe

Molly is 5 years old. She got a gold star for her reading lesson.

Is it hard to remember that stroll has a long O sound but jolly has a short O sound? Doll has a short O sound, but that is easy. Troll has a long O, like toll and scroll.

Holly can be a girl. Holly visits us in the spring. Holly can be a plant. I have holly on a shirt.

The brown puppy has grown up into a big dog.

Look out for the cat's claws. She can scratch if she is angry.

The old dog gets cold in the winter. He will rest next to the air vent to get the heat.

Mom told me that she will get a bolt of cloth for a dress. I'd rather get a black colt.

Hold on! Do not drop the tool on the lawn!

28

A y at the end of a word can have a long I sound.

my

cry

sky

by

dry

spy

fry

why

shy

fly

try

apply

Now let's mix them up with others.

happy

Sneezy

howl

hurry

free

dolly

bowl

shy

fry
apply
happily

fly
chilly
dry

growly
sly
my

jolly
cry
story

Bashful is shy. He hardly ever talks.

If Faith falls down on a walk, she may cry.

I enjoy seeing the birds fly.

Mom put my jeans in the laundry, and I am waiting for them to get dry.

It is important to try hard in our reading lessons.

Pooh talks in a growly way. He thinks he has a sly plan for catching a heffalump.

Let's hurry and finish our work so we can go out and look at the sky.

You can fry eggs or boil them.

29

my	me	Sally	talking	lawn
salt	joyful	broil	snout	fortress
spook	flying	squall	cook	bark
tree	hoe	roar	boldness	flower
colder	quaint	Walt	Eskimo	widow
rain	droop	window	boy	understand
park	oar	doe	mower	kangaroo
halt	tower	skin	step stool	sulking
clang	bring	skip	strap	singing
pink	tank	slowly	slippery	dryer
pool	chalk	long	angry	sly

walk	clown	crying	splash
boar	blow	puppy	slinks
cool	blown	snatch	quiz
my	darkness	bulky	sulks
bulk	reply	hurt	wept
fly	complain	squirt	silk
sandy	lantern	sprout	pigs
Tammy	bank	booklet	asks
owl	be	roots	ax
widow	betray	Paul	rung
brains	soaring	sweetly	rang
song	chain	hencoop	ring
fool	grow	wettest	whisk
hulk	railroad	we	thank
paint	always	speaks	boldness
strip	hallway	saints	tower

30

-ie can say a long I sound. (We will hear about a different sound in another lesson.)

pie	stall
die	straw
tried	haul
died	clang
tie	hanger
tied	joint
fried	brawl
fry	ouch
cried	clay
cry	roll
lie	glow
lies	
died	

fly

flies

Paul reads the story of the pie and the patty-pan.
He points at the letters as he reads.

A bird can fly. He launches himself from a
branch and flies, soaring in the sky.

I tried to tie my left sneaker, but it did not tie. I
cried. My mom found me roaring with anger.

I enjoy french fries with my dinner. My tears
were dried when Mom said we were eating fries
and pumpkin pie.

It is always bad to tell lies. Good boys and girls
never do it.

We do not throw a die when we play Candy
Land.

31

wild

wilderness

child

children

bind

binder

window

wind up the clock

wind on my cheek

mild

grind

kindergarten

kind

kindness

rind

spy

happy

shy

mind

blind

find

finding

Billy
Sally
sky

The three children are lost in the wilderness. The oldest child may think of a way to get back.

Children that are 5 years old study kindergarten things.

It is important to be kind to my sisters.

I can feel the wind in my hair. Shut the window. It is getting cold.

Clara winds up her nativity set box for Faith. It plays a song.

A blind person cannot see.

In the morning, Mom grinds her coffee. Then she gets water at the sink.

We put the rind in the sink and grind it up to make the kitchen smell good. I hear the clink of dishes.

Mom's cooking is mild and not too hot, but it is yummy.

32

-ue

-ew

new

true

flew

blue

news

stew

newest

blew

chew

Sue

strewn

pew

hue

dew

glue

The bird flew down from the branch.

We all sit in a pew on Sunday morning.

Sue has toys strewn all around. It's a mess!

The wolf blew down the blue house.

In the summer the grass has dew in the morning. In the fall it has frost. In the winter it has snow.

Do not chew with your mouth open. It is disgusting.

Hal got sticky glue on his hands.

Paul threw a temper tantrum when he did not get his own way.

Mom cooks yummy beef stew.

Faith is hearing new stuff in her reading lesson today.

33

unties	pardon	tower
complain	teaspoon	smartest
around	sunbeam	repeat
raincoat	booklet	untrue
seaport	banjo	toaster
borrow	electric	Saturday
classroom	return	goodness
September	Jefferson	understand
gardener	confess	sheepish
mailbox	counter	birthday
always	Eskimo	Mexico
away	shortest	August
steamboat	Sunday	burglar
numbers	New York	mustard
jeweler	annoy	seagull
swallow	lantern	snowball
Herbert	kangaroo	herself
railroad	Monday	Columbus
Easter	yellow	agreement
belongs	November	Thursday

widow
reply
shadow
Tuesday
showers
awnings
cartoon
discover
scarlet
oatmeal
enjoyment
murderer
western
window

leapfrog
flowers
butterfly

yesterday
hamburger
punishment

34

cap	cape	back	bake	tap	tape
hate	drape	hat	plane	Jane	sale
tape	grave	tap	rate	waste	mate
rat	wave	quack	shake	mad	made
quake	slave	cave	cat	same	hal
gap	Sam	ate	fate	at	hale
fat	stack	lame	ape	stake	sham
came	ham	rake	snack	tap	cat
made	cap	mad	mane	sad	Kate
man	snake	gate	shame	rat	mat

We wave at the car.

Jan and Jane had the same dress.

Mom will go back to the kitchen and bake a yummy cake.

Clara stands on her stool and puts toothpaste on her toothbrush.

The ducks quack, and the fish quake. The ducks may eat them.

A lake is a big pond.

We came to the house and had ham for supper.

He hears tap, tap, tap.

Clara gets the tape from the study.

When the dog is playing in the yard, he sees a snake. He is afraid and thinks he will go in and get a snack.

mad	car	care	star	stare	square
mat	snack	fate	fat	far	fare
mate	quack	quick	sham	Jan	bar
bare	tape	Jane	at	glare	base
shame	pan	ate	hare	quake	Mark
mare	taste	plate	plan	lack	lake
ape	cap	care	bar	slate	dare

checkmate	careful	airfare	cupcake
barely	pancake	baseball	maddest

35

pet--Pete

met--mete

Eve	Pete	set	mete	quick
Steve	glade	glad	black	Blake
quack	Jan	rare	dad	spade
stare	tale	pan	Jane	Janet
met	share	star	male	mall
grape	grab	quack	squall	
Pet	quick	wade	pave	name
scrape	scrap	pale	pal	Paul

36

pin--pine	rip--ripe	rid--ride
lick--like	sit--site	
pick--pike	dim--dime	

Tim	quick	like
bike	flak	crime
time	flake	slid
pin	prize	chin
Mick	print	chime
while	hive	slide
Mike	wife	rip
Time	wit	sit
fin	wire	bride
fire	smile	ripe
fine	white	swipe
hid	lack	quit
will	stick	flick
hide	spike	quite

37

not--note		rot--rote	
mop--mope		chock--choke	
cop--cope		hop--hope	
slop--slope		smock--smoke	
more	rid	Sally	fault
cap	drew	Sal	chore
dope	slow	sale	cart
joke	froze	quake	hare
stock	Polly	claw	hate
store	pole	fall	hat
hot	stroll	fir	close
Ron	pal	fire	snack
shine	pale	stir	Jan
shin	care	tire	snake
quack	core	girl	closet
hen	rope	grill	bone
ride	mole	salt	cone
troll	Molly	haul	tide

I will not mope when I must mop the kitchen.

I hope you will not hop so hard that you make a hole in the living room. I like the word "quack." It is fun to say.

A smock is something you put on to keep your shirt clean when you do messy crafts. Smoke is what you get when you make a fire.

38

cut--cute
 tub--tube
 cur--cure

purr--pure
 duck--duke
 mull--mule

us--use cub--cube
 fuss--fuse

June	mule
cure	tune
crude	tube
flute	buck
cute	stuck
cut	brute
tub	rude
cure	lute
prune	us
pure	cute
rule	use
flute	
Luke	

A cub is a baby bear. A cube is something the shape of a block.

To mull something is to think about it. A mule is an animal like a horse. It has a horse for one parent and a donkey for the other parent.

A mutt is a dog. But if someone is mute, he cannot speak.

A brute is a big animal.

Crud is icky dirt. If something is crude, that means it is not pretty. Crude has the same sound as rude, and sometimes they mean the same thing.

A lute and a flute are both musical instruments. You can play a tune on a flute.

Something that is pure is completely clean.

To cure someone is to make him well when he has been sick. Prunes will not cure you of anything. They do not taste very good, but some people like them.

To be nude is to have no clothes on. You must not run around the house nude after your bath.

Put the cap on the tube of toothpaste when you get out of the tub.

June is the name of a month, but it can also be the name of a girl. June rode a mule to get the prunes from the store. The doctor thinks the prunes will cure Rube.

A fluke is something that happens for no reason. When Rube got better after eating the prunes, Dad said it was just a fluke.

A brute is mute. It can't talk.

A duck cannot be a duke. A duke is an important kind of man. We have no dukes in America. It is rude to refuse to speak to a duke. He will think that you are crude and have no manners.

39

licking--liking	tapping--taping	scrapping--scraping
filling--filing	hoping--hopping	winning--whining
mopping--moping	wiping--whipping	spinning--pining
care--caring	file--filing	cure--curing share--sharing

raking	flicking
sticking	nagging
stacking	caring
making	moping
liking	stocking
stirring	mopping
purring	sweeping
grabbing	tiling
scraping	filling
curing	liking
rubbing	singing
skipping	sobbing
hugging	crying
sharing	whirring
wiping	shopping
begging	coping
gazing	filing
hoping	
topping	
lining	
winning	
hopping	

naming
firing
stirring

dry--dried
pony--ponies

tied
hurried
flies
carries
pie
field
hungrily
blur
flurry
snuggly
loudly
chilliest
sunniest
dried
ladies
yield
fries
hurries
furriest
pies

Seven bunnies sat happily in the sun on the green grass. The mom bunny was getting lunch in the house under the sand bank by the big fir tree. But the little bunnies were enjoying the fair, sunny day.

Near the bunnies was the porch of a house. The tall man was on the porch with his dog, Sam. Sam was looking at the bunnies. Suddenly, Sam ran after the bunnies, barking loudly. “Woof!” went Sam.

The bunnies all scurried away fast. They ran into the woods. Sam ran after them. The smallest, funniest bunny was a little brown bunny. He got his poor foot stuck in the crack of a log. “Hurry!” shouted his sister. “The dog will get here soon! He is not far away.”

The small brown bunny shook from ears to tail, he was so afraid of the dog. But his foot was still stuck. All the other six bunnies went hurrying away.

Then the tall man went out into his yard to call Sam. “Sam! Lunch!” Sam went, “Woof!” He was telling the man about the bunnies. But the man was not interested in running after bunnies. He took Sam back to the house for lunch. Then the little brown bunny got his foot out of the crack in the log, and he went back to his mom. His mom was very happy to see him, and she got him a yummy lunch. He was the happiest bunny in the world.

And that is the end of this story!

angrily
fuzzy
fuzzily
happily
sneakily
hungrily
dizzily
easy
easily
cozily
creepy
cozy

41

backed--baked
hopped--hoped

filled--filed
wiped--whipped

staked--stacked
planned--planed

crawled
robed
smoked
blocked
sprawled
filled
tapped
baked
rugged
jagged
hoped
whipped
backed
slipped
filed
walked
nagged
fitted
liked
licked

biked
stopped
kicked
roped
taped
pal
padded
lined
wicked
skinned
staked
canned
planed
pointed
joined
gale
Hal
gal
angrily
drawled

filled
maned
filed
manned

42

canned	sinning	dote
sunnily	fining	site
planed	win	not
robed	rob	car
baked	robbery	mar
filled	mope	care
taped	PAL	note
biked	TIM	brine
skimmed	sin	skimpily
skinned	time	
roped	bit	
fined	Dan	
mad	bite	
gale	spit	
tap	Dane	
gal	gale	
cap	spite	
hal	matted	
cape	grated	
mop	hat	
cap	sale	
pan	paste	
hale	bat	
past	hate	
pane	wiping	
pale	sipping	
fin	planing	

sit
fine
pal

dot
gripe
skin

43

call	spruce	mince	Bruce	lack	lace	cell
cab	cent	city	kitty	citizen	cinder	
kindergarten	cant	prick	price	pricing		
lace	laced	face	faced	lack	camera	mice
spicy	black	cat	lancet	dancer	dancing	
catch	cinch	Blacky	racy	mice	Mick	
city	glance	glanced	mincing	race	raced	
braces	circle	cycle	cell	fancy	citadel	
pack	pace	camel	spruce	prince	spice	
scent	scuff	dances	difference	concert		
scissors	ace	icy	icky	rice	brick	
cider	circus	truck	truce	pace	cynical	
grace	braces	catlike	fence	peak	peace	
slices	mercy	officer	advice	victory	Bruce	
silliest	hungrily	ice cream	icicle	juice	lawn	
faun	caustic	cub	cube	cinders	splices	

44

bride bridge mad--Madge--made cage
 bad--badge--bade--badger--bag smudge
 big bilge gem Gene get hug--huge
 fudge budge budging plead pledge
 bulge stingy dog--dodge log--lodge gym
 wag--wage stag--stage energy egg--edge
 jug--judge--Jude cent gentle
 strange stranger strangers page sage
 bulgy ledge urgent damage garbage
 smudgy stingy dingy passage George
 ginger Gigi giving gills begin
 gentleman beget urgent prodigal
 comical regal scent age gift
 gadget fidgety budget bridge

badge

bade

wages

budge

Once upon a time there was a goat named Clancy. Clancy liked to get into everything. He would eat all the garments in the closet if he could get into the house. He would eat the gander's food. He would certainly eat curtains without any trouble at all. He had been known to eat the formica edge of a table.

So Clancy's people would incarcerate him in a stall in the barn. It was not gorgeous, but at least he could not get out and gorge himself on everything. (Clancy's master was named George.)

The regal peacock would sometimes giggle at Clancy, because the peacock did not have to be shut up. So one day Clancy chewed through the door of his stall and barged out. He found his way into a storeroom where he ate all kinds of things. He was just starting on a cardboard container of incandescent light bulbs when George came and found him.

"What are you doing here?" asked George. Clancy could not talk, because he was a real goat, not an imaginary goat, so he didn't say anything. He just went on chewing the cardboard. George decided to put him in a pen made out of stone and to give him some new food. Maybe that would keep him in. What do you think?

The End

madge	bride	gypsy
bridge	bade	gymnastic
lodge	intercede	wage
ledge	dude	badge
badge	slide	pigeon
dodge	page	Hodge
budge	huge	wedges
edge	oblige	sled
midge	madge	sledge
gadget	mage	nudge
budget	wedge	change
fudge	gene	engineer
midget	nudges	prodigal
badger	badge	gorge
fidget	abide	madge
widget	grade	danger
cadge	pledges	gadget
smudge	strange	gentle
bilge	bulgy	age
bulge	cadge	widget
bulgy	bridge	wide
badge	bride	ridge
bridge	magic	ride
Bridget	range	gander
hedge	ranger	gender
grudge	Marge	
grudging	formica	
hodge-podge	legal	
smudgy	ledger	

indulgent

crescent

45

silent gh
 ight as in night
 igh as in high

sight
 caught
 naughty
 daughter
 knight
 slaughter
 mighty
 high
 bright
 straight
 daughter
 lightning
 bright
 thigh
 naughty
 fight
 frightened
 gnaw
 Madge
 sigh
 taught
 slight
 caught

slaughter
 light
 naughtiest
 naughtiness
 rightly

straighten
right
goodnight

46

ought as in brought
eigh as in neigh

brought

weigh

weight

sought

freight

ought

eight

eighteen

sleigh

neighbor

neigh

thought

Exception: height

weight
brought
snout
fault
caught
height
neigh
mighty
mightiest
naughtiest
thought
sleigh
eight
thoughtful
naught
lightly
badge
shout
haul
ought
weigh
nigh
right
thigh
fought
pout
caught
knighthood
ledge

sought
shout
wrought
awl
growl
Madge
maiden
badger
bade

widget

silent l
alm as in calm

half
yolk
folks
calf
palm
calmest
alms
yolks
folk
calves
halves
calmly

Silent h
gh as in ghost
ch as in school
th in Thomas

honest
honor
hour
John
ghost
ghostly
ghastly
school
Christmas
scholastic
Thomas
christen
scholar
chasm
schoolhouse

49

rhymes with do

through

rhymes with tow

though

although

rhymes with puff

rough

tough

enough

rhymes with off

trough

cough

rhymes with cow

bough

plough

slough

rhymes with shout

drought

rhymes with taut

ought

brought

sought

Mix-up

drought
brought
through
though
bough
rough
caught
ought
plough
cough
enough
throughout
bought
daughter
taught
height
weight
although
chasm
chorus

The man had a rough climb up the hill. At the top he looked through a crack and saw a deep chasm below. He caught himself so that he did not fall. Then he sat down and ate the lunch he had brought along.

I had a tough day when I had that bad cough that I caught from my daughter. Although I knew I ought to be cheerful throughout the whole day, it was difficult.

50

ea as in break (It says a long A sound.)

break

wear

steak

tear a piece of paper (This is different from a tear in your eye. The word has a different sound depending on what it means.)

great breaking

swear wears

swears swearing

bear bears

pears greatness

bearing breakneck

pear greatest

steaks wearing

ea as in head (It says a short E sound.)

I read a book yesterday. (This is different from saying, "I can read." There the ea has a long E sound.)

death bread meant bedspread

dead health feather instead

deadly healthy spreading deaf

weather sweat sweating health

breakfast threads thread spread

wealth wealthy deafness sweater

head heaven dread dreaded

ready already heavy leather

tread

treads

steady

steadiest

51

ear as in heard

hear--heard

ear--earn

year--yearn

learn

yearning

earns

heard

learning

search

pearl

pearly

searches

And don't forget the old ea as in beak:

meal

beam

heat

ear

lean

reading

near

yeast

dreaming

leaf

clear

peach

bead

clear

veal

scream

Mix-up

wear

steak

meant

learning

ear

leap

mean

leaning

dead

heavy

pearl

clearest

beak

hear

bear

yearn

break

heard

beat

bead

lean

clean

search

bread

learning

swears

leather

pear

heaven

ready

leafy

pearl

beach

spear

greatness

earning

52

ie as in field

(This is like the ie in bunnies.)

field Charlie

belief fiend

thieves

brownie

thief

shield

fierce

shriek

yield

priest

niece

wield

piece

ponies

believe

brief

believes

grief

siege

chief

ui as in fruit

juice

fruit

juicy

bruises

suit

fruitful

Exceptions: build, guild, guilt

bruise

suites

u as in put

pull	careful
put	awful
bush	handful
pudding	grateful
bullet	bashful
bull	full
pushing	wasteful
pushy	pussycat
butcher	

Review

fiend	piece	hush
fie	shriek	full
ties	lie	building
push	Charlie	bruise
rush	die	juicy
thief	bush	learn
pie	puppies	ear
fruity	cries	bread
siege	magpie	read
hull	wield	belief
bull	chief	rushing
pull	shield	
priest	pushy	

54

Hello! I'm Mr. Sound-It Rabbit. I'm here to help you with some of the more advanced lessons in your reading. Today we are going to learn about strange sounds after w.

A after w is rather strange. Sometimes it says a short o sound, like the o in hot, and sometimes it says an aw sound. Here are a few words to practice.

water	want	wandering
wash	swan	
wander	watch	

After the letter w, the letters -ar sometimes sound like or, and that is a little unusual. Here are some words like this:

war	reward
warden	warmer
warm	warn
wart	warning
warder	warned
warrant	warmed
warp	

But when it comes after other letters, -ar has the sound you have already learned, as in “car.”

Now, just to make things really odd, after the letter w the letters

-or sometimes sound like er. One of the most common words like this is the word “word.” Here are some more:

worship worm work worry worst word
worse world

55

Hello! It's Mr. Sound-It again, here to teach you today about a new sound that the letters ou can make. You already know about the sound in the middle of "sound," which is part of my name. Ou there says the same sound as -ow in owl or wow. But sometimes the -ou can say a short u sound, like the sound in the middle of the word fun. Often it makes this sound in the ending -ous as in the word nervous. Sometimes there is an i before the -ous ending. Then the i has a long e sound, as in the word curious. Here is a list of words in which the ou has a short u sound.

enormous	trouble
curious	touchy
glorious	couple
country	cousin
marvelous	young
double	generous
jealous	younger
touch	nervous
furious	country
dangerous	

Some of these words have surprising vowel sounds earlier in the word. For example, in the word serious, the er sounds like ear. In the word famous, the a is long. In the word gorgeous, the first g is hard, because it is before the letter o, but the second g is soft, before the letter e. Gorgeous means very beautiful. See if

you can read these.

serious gorgeous famous

Mix it up! Let's have a review that mixes up the words you just read with others in which the -ou has its ordinary sound. There will also be review words from recent lessons.

George	cousins
gorge	country
gorgeous	county
famous	field
mouse	warrant
guilt	farming
fruit	counting
bullet	wandering
funniest	building
glorious	pushing
fiend	rushing
fie	serious
enormous	earning
youngest	earwig
wander	Charlie
washing	youngster
fasten	bruise
pieces	warp
touching	generous
pounded	enormous
war	jealous

car
furious
cloudy
priest
siege

lousy
worry
cough
tough
worst

56

Today we're going to talk about the sound the letter a has after the letters qu. Just like w, the letters qu sometimes change the sound of the a when it comes next. The a often has a short o sound after qu, like the sound in the middle of hot. Here are some words like that.

quality	quandary
squat	qualities
squash	squander
quantity	squall
qualm	quantum

Here are a few more words where the a has a short o sound after the letter w.

swan	swat	swallow	swap	swamp
------	------	---------	------	-------

57

Today we're going to learn about words that have the sound "shun" in them. But it won't be spelled like "shun." It will be spelled in some other way. For example, -tion is often pronounced "shun" as in the word "lotion." Here are some examples:

addition	fiction	mention
subtraction	attention	fraction
motion	reception	
question	station	
action	nation	
invention	additional	
speculation	exception	

Sometimes the letters -sion are also pronounced "shun." For example, the word "mission" ends with the sound "shun." Here are some more examples.

permission	impression
mansion	emission
expression	pension
mission	passion
expansion	session

But very often the letters -sion have a sound that is just a little different--the sound they have at the end of "television." We can spell this sound "zhun." Here are some words like this:

vision division
occasion
revision
incision
television
illusion
fusion

Let's do some sentences with the sounds we have just learned.

Addition, subtraction, and division are things we do in math.

A story that is fiction is made up. A story that is non-fiction is about something that really happened.

You have to ask permission to read some books that are kept up high on the shelves.

Sometimes we sing a song called "I've Got a Mansion."

People who have trouble with their vision may have to have glasses.

An incision is a cut.

We occasionally go out to dinner.

"Please give me your attention," said the teacher.

"This is an exception to the rule," explained Mom.

"That isn't real. It's just an illusion," said Dad.

They searched everywhere for the videotape to put in the television. "I can't find it at all," sighed Mary.

Mom must make a decision about whether Sarah will go to the party.

Action is more fun than inaction.

58

Today we're going to learn about a funny use of the letters ci and ti. Sometimes these letters make an sh sound. Isn't that strange? A very common ending where ci makes an sh sound is the ending cious, which is pronounced "shus." For example, the word vicious means very mean. A vicious dog is one you should avoid. I'll bet you already know the word delicious. See the "shus" ending spelled -cious? There is a similar ending with the ti, the tious ending, which is also pronounced "shus." The word repetitious means doing something over and over again. Its last syllable is pronounced "shus." Here are some words with the shus ending spelled -tious or -cious.

gracious
ambitious
delicious
repetitious
vicious
cautious
suspicious
spacious

Now, there are other ti and ci endings that are pronounced "shul." These are -tial and -cial. For example, you know the word special. See how it ends with "shul" spelled -cial? Another word like this is partial, which means not including the whole thing. I am giving you only a partial list of all the words that use -ti and -ci with an sh sound. Here is a list of shul words.

partial	initial
special	
facial	
official	
martial	
uncial	
spatial	
racial	

Finally, we'll learn about words that end with a "shence" or a "shent" sound, using -tience and -cience or -tient or -cient.

patience
 conscience
 patient
 omniscient
 efficient
 impatient

Note: Don't get confused from this about the word science. It does not begin with an sh sound. The c is soft, and the i is long. This word is the name of a subject that your sisters learn about

and that your daddy knows a lot about. It has to do with the way things work in the physical world.

59

We're going to put together a lot of the new words and phonics concepts you have learned lately into a review list. Remember to think of the fact that ci and ti sometimes say a sh sound. But not always. I will put in some words like comical to make you pay attention to whether the word ends in -cial or just -cal.

vision	glorious	suspicious	mission	intention
social	vicious	invention	special	spacious
victorious	incipient	gender	gender	gamble
gem	pension	uncial	action	gracious
permission	addition	subtraction	fiction	
Bengal	bangle	manger	dangerous	cousin
wand	swap	obedience		
suspicious	atrocious	patience		
division	revision	science		
wasp	conscience	partial		
omniscient	fractional			
facial	magical			
comical	expression			
quandary	wand			
efficient	fission			
radical	wasp			
official	envision			
quantity	swamp			

60

Here are some review words for you and also some new words. We are going to learn better how to read words that end in -ia, -io or -ient, like Maria and obedient, and we're going to review -ious, as in glorious. Remember that sometimes ci and ti make an sh sound, as in patient or precious. The idea in many of these words is that when i comes before another vowel, like a, e, o, or u, the i sometimes has a long e sound. Have fun!

Columbia	Philadelphia	Maria	Victoria
Zambia	Gambia	imperious	glorious
experience	gregarious	vicarious	obedient
obedience	victorious	chariot	Colombian
material	mysterious	imperial	Cheerio
polio	glorious	expedient	ancient
sufficient	ambient	obedience	lariat
efficient	atrocious	facial	Christian
precious	patient	Austria	hernia
Cheerios	Victorian	aquarium	

61

Here's a phonics concept that you already have some idea about. Look at the end of this word:

insure

What does the end of it look like? That's right, it looks like the word "sure." You know how to read that word already. Isn't it strange that it sounds like it has an sh at the beginning when it really just has an s all by itself? But sometimes s before -ur does sound like sh. Not all the time. Here's a word where it does not:

insurmountable

But here's another word where it does have an sh sound:

insurance

Let's look at some words that have that "sure" sound in them. Just occasionally, a word has a "zhure." That means that it starts with a sort of buzzy sh, which we have talked about before.

assure

measure

insure

assurance

pleasure

treasure

And here is one word with a buzzy sh sound before u:

usual

It's the same in all the words like it:

unusual usually unusually

insurance

Today we're also going to review an old phonics concept. The e at the end of many words makes the vowel in the middle say its name. Let's look at these pairs. We learned them some time ago, but recently it seemed that maybe you had forgotten.

hop--hope

pop--pope

tap--tape

hat--hate

fin--fine

win--wine

smock--smoke

And a few with a long e in the middle. The e at the end makes the e in the middle say its name:

mere

Eve

Pete

severe

62

-ture and -tur words

furniture	picture
mixture	future
fixture	
nature	
natural	
pasture	

A few -tion and -sion words

caption
 action
 pension
 mission
 prescription
 rational
 national

-i've words that end with the sound "iv." (They look like they should end with the sound in hive and five.)

active	native	detective
captive	attentive	
expensive	positive	

Words that end in -or where it says the "er" sound. It looks like

it should say the sound in the word for, but it doesn't. Hint: These words usually, though not always, refer to a person who does something. A janitor is a person who cleans a building. A doctor is a person who helps sick people.

actor	visitor
traitor	motor
favor	actors
sailor	doctor
elevator	flavor
tailor	captor
motor	razor