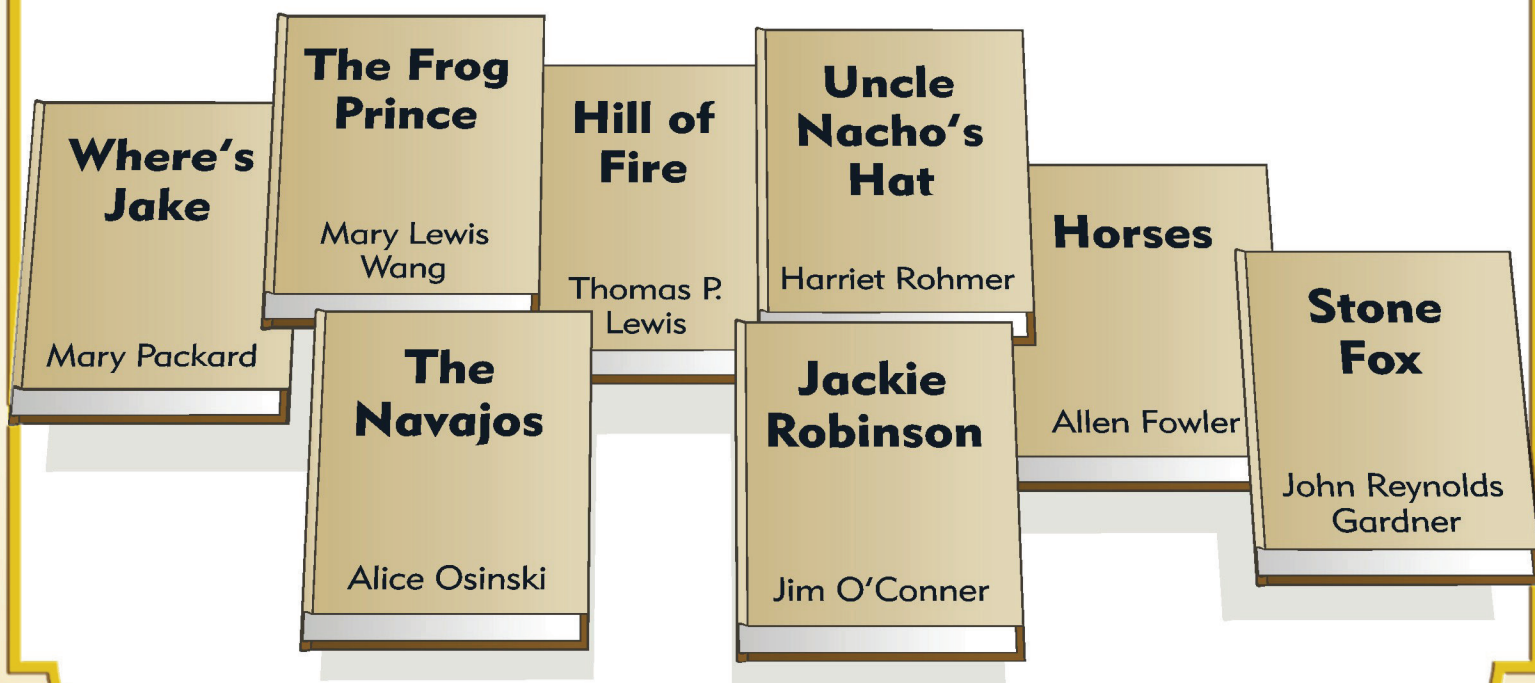


Why Can't Children Learn to Read with Real Books?

THEY CAN!

Learning to Read with **REAL BOOKS**



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LEARNING TO READ WITH REAL BOOKS PRE-PRIMER – GRADE 4

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PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Why can't children learn to read with real books?

They can!

The purpose for writing *Learning to Read with Real Books* is to share an exciting reading program. Years of teaching reading with real books, popular books by popular authors, with a variety of students, most of them struggling readers, has led to dramatic reading successes. The program shows that students can learn to read by reading books in a special way, a way that makes it possible for them to learn to read without explicit phonics instruction.

As a group, young and struggling readers tend to be more global than analytic learners. The global model of reading moves from the whole (the story) to the parts. Analytic readers can learn to read from the parts to the whole and usually do well with phonics (word parts and words).¹ Although analytic readers tend to do well with the global model of reading, most global readers do not do well with an analytic approach (phonics). *Learning to Read with Real Books* addresses both global and analytic readers.

Learning to Read with Real Books answers an important reading question. Can students learn to read by reading books (real books, not controlled readers) or are they only memorizing passages? Students in the program acquire word recognition skills while they practice grade leveled reading books. Some students begin to recognize words in other contexts almost immediately. Others take months, but word recognition happens naturally, automatically, for all students who complete the program.

Learning to Read with Real Books provides a structure for reading instruction using popular books. The reading strategies can be adapted to all students. The book explains the program and how easily it can be used in classrooms.

PROGRAM FEATURES

Learning to Read with Real Books:

- Is used for one-to-one, small group, and classroom instruction with normal readers and struggling readers,
- Develops sight word vocabulary, phonics in context, automaticity (reading with little cognitive effort)² and prosody (reading with expression). Prosody makes reading interesting and enjoyable,
- Builds vocabulary through story context, and
- Includes phonemics and phonics in real book context.

REAL BOOKS

The program is based on real books, popular books that readers enjoy reading. The books range from pre-primer to grade four reading levels. They are carefully sequenced to offer students the greatest opportunity for success. The books chosen have certain criteria. At early levels, the criteria include predictable stories with repeated phrases and rhyme patterns. Repeated phrases and rhyme patterns provide valuable language cues.

Most of the books are available in schools or public libraries.

Appendix 1 provides a complete list of the books and alternative titles. **Appendix 2** provides a second list of books which begins at a higher reading level. Only one set of books is needed for the program. Teachers have used both sets of recommended books successfully.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

LEVELED READERS

The program is built on books that are sequenced from easier to more difficult (leveled readers) with adequate practice for student success.

Teachers can use their own books if they are leveled and offer adequate practice. For young readers, teachers choose books with repeated phrases, repetition, and rhyme. They choose books that readers will want to read again and again.

Along with leveled books are special reading strategies. Although a specific structure is outlined, the structure can adapt to particular reading situations.

ORAL READING

In the program students learn to read while reading a book orally. They have advantages when reading orally. They use more than one sensory mode. They see, pronounce, and hear the words, which helps them remember words. And when students hear teachers read orally with expression, they have a model for meaningful, fluent reading. ³

PROGRAM READING STRATEGIES

With each book, students practice special reading strategies: Repeated Reading; Reading in Phrases; Phrase-Cued Reading; Timed Reading (after Grade 1); and Reading with Expression; all of which develop reading fluency and comprehension. Researchers agree that reading fluency is important for developing independent readers. ⁴

The reading strategies can be matched to individuals or groups. Teachers choose reading strategies that would best benefit students. For many readers, repeated reading of a book or book

part, while tracking and reading with expression are adequate to produce excellent reading success. All reading strategies are used for struggling readers.

THE READING STRATEGIES ARE:

- **Repeated Reading** is reading the same passage until students read the passage at a specific level.
- **Reading in Phrases** is reading words that go together to make phrases.
- **Phrase-Cued Reading** is breaking text into meaningful phrases to help reading expression and comprehension.
- **Timed Reading** is reading a passage for one or two minutes and recording the number of words read per minute.
- **Reading with Expression** is important for developing passage comprehension and for developing a love for reading.

A description of each strategy follows.

REPEATED READING

Repeated reading is students reading the same text until they read the text at specific levels. It begins with students listening as the teacher reads a book part, usually a few sentences or a paragraph. Then, after practice, students read the book part back to the teacher. In repeated reading, students learn to read by repeating the reading! Repeated reading in *Learning to Read with Real Books* also includes:

Limited Interruptions

Students do repeated reading of text with limited, if any, interruptions. Researchers have found that students with reading problems are more likely to be interrupted during reading and that the focus of the interruption is on sounding out words. The

student begins to anticipate the interruption and reads each word waiting to be interrupted. Without realizing it, teachers are developing word-by-word readers instead of fluent readers. Studies show that engaging students in repeated reading of text with limited, if any, interruptions is particularly effective in encouraging more fluent reading with struggling readers.⁵

Reading with Expression

In repeated reading, reading with expression provides students with a model of good reading. Expression is the ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and so forth. In oral reading, phrasing includes prosodic cues such as delivery, diction, intonation, inflection, and pauses.

Reading Slowly

For each book, teachers read the first repeated reading slowly, but not so slowly as to lack expression. For many students, reading slowly seems to make it possible for their brains to extract the letter sounds and to organize them into the brain's word form area to be used for decoding words. Reading slowly also helps students who have auditory discrimination difficulties.

Tracking

Being able to focus on letters and words is a beginning step in learning to read. While the teacher reads, students follow under the words with their writing hands. This is called tracking. Tracking insures that students focus on the words. When they start, the students often move under each word. As they develop, they track smoothly under the phrases. Tracking also coordinates students' eye and hand coordination.

READING IN PHRASES

Reading fluency involves learning to divide text into meaningful phrases. Reading in phrases is important because reading meaning is carried more by phrases than by individual words. A

common characteristic of struggling readers is word by word reading. Once they become locked into word by word reading, it is difficult for them to read in phrases.⁶ But when teachers read a book with expression and natural phrase pauses, readers are helped to read in meaningful phrases. With practice, this transfers to their other reading material.⁷

PHRASE-CUED READING

Phrase-cued reading provides visual cues to help students follow natural phrases and pauses in a reading selection. Phrase pauses help students who have difficulty grouping words that go together. Phrase pauses also help students whose reading lacks expression.

PHRASE-CUEING TEXT

Phrase-cueing text is easy. While teachers read a text, they add marks between the natural pauses that occur in and between sentences. Marking is based on the expression and phrasing they hear as they read. There is no right or wrong way to mark the phrases.

Teachers prepare the text with phrase marks, or slash marks. They use one slash mark (/) between phrases. They make a slight pause at each phrase marker. They use two slash marks (//) between sentences. Two slashes (//) are end-of-sentence markers. Teachers pause slightly longer at two slashes.⁸ Two examples of text with phrased-cued markers follow.

Bears

Bears / are big animals.// They
are strong.// They have thick
fur.//

Some bears / sleep all winter.//

They get ready.// They eat a lot
of food.//

EXAMPLE 2

A Lighthouse

It is / a cold night.// The fog / makes it hard
/ to see.// A ship / has lost its way.// The
people / on the ship / see a light.// The light
/ gets bright.// It is from / a lighthouse.//
Now / the ship / can find / its way.//

A lighthouse / helps ships.// It is on land /
near the sea.// It has / a very bright light.//

A lighthouse guides ships / to a port, / or
harbor.// Also, / it warns ships / of
danger.//

(See **Appendix 3** for additional examples of
phrase-cued text.)

TIMED READING (Above First Grade)

Timed reading helps students' reading become automatic. Putting too much energy into decoding (recognizing words) interferes with comprehension. For beginning readers, teachers type 50 words from a book or book part. For more advanced readers, they type 100 words from a book part. Teachers choose text from book parts that the student can read with few errors. For timed reading students should be reading above a first grade level.

READING WITH EXPRESSION

Expression brings out the magic of reading. From the program's beginning students hear reading with expression. The students respond. Soon they are reading on their own with expression, just as they have heard the book read to them.

THE PROGRAM START

Students' Starting Levels

WORKING ONE-TO-ONE

If teachers know students' reading levels, they start them with the first lesson at those levels. (In the Appendix 1 book list, the reading level of each book is next to the book title.) Students may read at higher reading levels but exhibit problem reading characteristics such as:

reading letter-by-letter, word-by-word, and exhibiting difficulties in expression and rhythm.

Teachers start students at the level where they exhibit the problem reading characteristics. It is better to start students at an easier level to insure success.

Teachers also can administer an easy-to-use reading inventory such as the *Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT)*.¹⁰

WORKING WITH SMALL GROUPS

For small groups, teachers choose students with similar reading levels and abilities. To determine the reading levels, teachers can review (Working One-To-One above.)

WORKING WITH THE WHOLE CLASSROOM

As teachers become familiar with the program and the reading strategies, they determine reading strategies that can be presented to the whole class. Reading strategies will vary with students and classroom resources.

Teachers can present books for the whole class by breaking into smaller groups as they identify students' different skill levels.

Students in different groups may be reading the same book but working with additional reading strategies and receiving more practice.

MASTERY LEVELS

Teachers determine reading levels required for mastery. Mastery levels will vary with groups. For struggling students, a 70 percent reading level is recommended. Students will see many of the same words again in further books, and a 70 percent mastery level offers success and motivation to struggling students who often anticipate failure.

EXTENDED READING

To reinforce reading skills students participate in extended reading with books of their interests and skill levels.

PROGRAM STEPS

The following steps include the program reading strategies. Teachers can add or delete steps based on student skill levels.

(FOR THE TEACHER:)

● **STEP 1. INTRODUCE THE BOOK**

For beginning reading books, go through the book's pictures and discuss what the book might be about. Link the book's subject to information the students know. For example, if there is a picture of a park, ask "Have you been to a park?" or "What kinds of things do you see in a park?" For higher level reading books, discuss pictures and chapter titles.

● **STEP 2. READ BOOK OR BOOK PART**

For short books, pre primer and primer read the whole book. For longer books, divide the book into parts. For the first reading, read at a slower pace, but not so slow as to lack expression.

Tracking

As you read to students, they follow under the words with their writing hands. This is called tracking. Tracking helps students focus on the words. When they start, the students often move under each word. As they develop, they track smoothly under the phrases.

Working One-To-One

For the first reading, read at a slow pace, but not so slow as to lack expression. To begin, sit across from the student, tracking on top of the words while the student tracks under the words. After the student is able to track, sit next to him or her. (For the second reading, read the same text at a regular pace with expression.) The student continues to track under the words as you read.

Working with Small Groups

For the first reading, read at a slow pace, but not so slow as to lack expression. Monitor students tracking under the words and phrases as you read. (For the second reading, read the same text at a regular pace with expression.) The students continue to track

under the words and phrases as you read. Students also can practice tracking while partner reading. In partner reading two students take turns reading.

● **STEP 3. READ A BOOK OR BOOK PART WITH THE STUDENT.**

Working One-To-One

The student reads the words and phrases with you and tracks under the words. After practice, the student reads alone. You read words that are difficult for the student and continue the reading. **Do not stop to sound out words.** For difficult parts of books or passages, read a sentence, and then have the student read the sentence right after you. Then read several sentences or more as the student is able.

Working with Small Groups

You read a short book part, a sentence or a few sentences. Students read the sentence or sentences aloud right after you while tracking under the words. Continue this procedure until the book or book part is completed.

Working with Partner Reading

Continue reading practice with partner reading, two students take turns reading. In partner reading, students continue tracking, and do not stop to sound out words. If a student has difficulty when reading, the partner says the word and the reading continues. Program progress charts are in **Appendix 4.**

Research about Sounding-Out Words in Reading Context

Research about Sounding-Out Words in Reading Context

Researchers have found that students with reading problems are more likely to be interrupted during reading and that the focus of the interruption is on sounding out words. Some readers pause after each word waiting for correction. The reader begins to anticipate the interruption and reads each word waiting to be interrupted. Without realizing it, teachers are developing word-by-word readers instead of fluent readers.¹¹ Sounding out words can be done when working on word development activities.

● **STEP 4. USING PHRASE-CUED READING**

Phrase-Cued Reading is for struggling readers and word-by-word readers. Phrase-cued reading provides visual cues to help students follow natural phrases and pauses in a reading selection. Phrase pauses help children who have difficulty grouping words that go together. Phrase pauses also help students whose reading lacks expression. Phrase-Cued Reading examples are found in [Appendix 3](#).

● **STEP 5. USE TIMED READING (Above First Grade)**

Working One-to-One

Timed reading helps student's reading become automatic. Putting too much energy into decoding (recognizing words) interferes with comprehension. For beginning students, type 50 words from a book or a book part previously read. For more advanced students, type 100 words from a previously read book or book part. When students are able to read a book part fluently, use that book part to check their reading rates in the timed reading.

Timed Reading Instructions

- Choose a 50 or 100 word part from a book.
- After practice, student reads the chosen book part, from the book or from a typed page.
- If student hesitates, stumbles, or reads the wrong word, you or a student read the word. Fluency is the goal, rather than sounding out words. Practice until student reaches 70% correct reading or higher.
- Do three timed readings. Between timings, student rereads text and practices difficult words.
- Record the number of words read correctly in 1 minute.
- Subtract 2 points for each word missed in a 50-word part, and 1 point for each word missed in a 100-word part.
- Have student choose best scores and fill in the Timed