

Actual Reading by *Hannah Ward, M.Ed.*

How to Teach
Your Child
to *READ* in
120 Lessons



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LESSONS

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actualreading.com

Introduction

This is a 120-lesson phonics curriculum designed to teach your child to read. Reading isn't easy, but it is essential. You are your child's first and best teacher. You've already taught them so many things, and now you will help them learn to read. By the end of this curriculum, your child will know all the major phonics rules - the rules that help them read. They'll go from reading simple words like "am" in the first lesson to more complex words like "gymnasium" in the final lesson, with hundreds of words in between.

I created this curriculum so that every parent can teach their child to read. This can't be a lost skill for this generation, and you are making a huge difference in your child's life by teaching them to read.

You can also find a free version of these lessons online at readtoyourkid.com, sherlockhomeschooling.com, or littlehousekindergarten.com, where you'll find many other free resources for home education and reading.

Happy learning!

Hannah Ward, M.Ed.

What You Need to Get Started

All you need to teach your child to read is this book and some simple books to read to them as they learn. There are recommendations in the following pages, but you can use any books you want. The important part is that they see that words are everywhere, and books are just one way to explore them. We want them reading everything as quickly as possible.

Who Can Teach a Child to Read?

Anyone who can read can teach a child to read using this method.

Who Am I?

My name is Hannah Ward. I'm a mother and an English teacher. I've taught English to students at every stage of education from children in preschool all the way up to adults at the university level.

I am a TESOL International Association-certified English teacher, and I hold a Master of Education degree in Education Technology and Instructional Design, where I specialized in both K-12 and adult learning experience design. I also have a Master of Science degree in Management and Leadership with a focus on global leadership education, and I'm currently pursuing a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership, specializing in English. I have served as the curriculum developer for Little House Kindergarten, Sherlock Homeschooling, and All-in-One Room Schoolhouse.

I created this reading guide to help empower parents as their child's first and best teacher.

Read Aloud Every Day

Before your child learns to read, they need to be read to. This is not optional. It is the most important step.

Reading aloud helps your child hear how words sound, understand what words mean, and build the knowledge they need to read on their own. We don't just want them sounding out letters—we want them to understand.

Read a mix of fiction and nonfiction. Read different kinds of books. Read every day. Aim for at least 20 minutes.

When you read, pause to check that your child understands. Explain new words. Talk about the story when you're done.

If you don't already read aloud daily, start now. Do this for at least one month before beginning this workbook.

Once you start the lessons, keep reading aloud every day. While you read, point to the words so your child connects the sounds with the letters. This is how this method works so fast.

Do not skip this step. Reading aloud is just as important as the lessons.

These books help build background knowledge and introduce a wide variety of vocabulary words. They are simple enough that your child will begin to recognize words as you point to them. Sooner than you think, they'll be reading along with you.

- Usborne Beginners series (Science, Nature, Our World, Animals) – Various Authors
- Henry and Mudge series – Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Suçie Stevenson
- Little Bear series – Else Holmelund Minarik, illustrated by Maurice Sendak
- Frog and Toad series – Arnold Lobel

Before You Begin These Lessons

Before starting these lessons, your child **needs to know the alphabet**. That means they should know their ABCs and be able to recognize both uppercase and lowercase letters, even when they are out of order. This is called the alphabetic principle—letter names stay the same, but their sounds can change depending on the word.

Your child should also be able to **recognize and read their own name**, even when it's mixed in with other words. This skill, called word recognition or word discrimination, helps children understand that words carry meaning and prepares them to track words as they read.

They should also know that in English, we **read left to right and top to bottom**. You can reinforce this by pointing it out frequently during your read-aloud time.

Once they've mastered these basics, they're ready to **try the first lesson** in this book. They will read their first words after the very first lesson! If they struggle with the lesson or it's just not clicking, that's completely normal. It simply means their brain isn't ready yet—their neural pathways need more time to develop.

If this happens, don't push too hard. Instead, give them another month of daily read-aloud time, making sure to point to the words as you read (at least for a few pages per book). Then try again next month. Reading readiness is a combination of skill, confidence, and physical development.

Don't compare your child's progress to others. Most children will learn to read fluently after completing a structured phonics program like this one, usually between the ages of 5 and 9 years old. Rarely does it fully click before then.

Most importantly, never stop reading aloud to them. It's crucial, no matter where they are in the process. **Keep reading to them even after they finish this program.**

Reading Readiness Checklist

Before beginning these lessons, your child should:

Know the Alphabet – My child can name all uppercase and lowercase letters, even out of order.

Recognize Their Name – My child can find and read their own name when mixed with other words.

Understand Letter Order – My child knows that letters in a word stay in the same order.

Know How Books Work – My child understands that we read words left to right and top to bottom.

Enjoy Listening to Books – My child has been read to regularly and listens with interest.

Follow Along with Words – My child can watch as I point to words while reading aloud.

Recognize That Words Have Meaning – My child knows that the words on the page represent spoken words.

If your child is struggling with any of these skills, continue reading aloud daily while pointing to words on the page. Revisit this checklist in a month and try again!

How to Use This Curriculum

This curriculum includes 120 phonics lessons. By the end, your child will be able to read anything. They'll still need daily practice reading books to build fluency and reading speed, but no word will be a mystery—they will know all the phonics rules.

As the teacher, you'll need to set aside about 30 minutes a day for 120 days to complete the lessons.

- The first 10 minutes are for the lesson. Each lesson includes one page for you and one for your learner. You'll read your page, and they'll read theirs. Before starting, read your teacher instructions carefully so you know what to expect. This should be done every day—phonics lessons require precise instructions.
- You'll be provided with a script to read to your child. What you read aloud is in bold. What you do is in parentheses. (For example, you may point to specific words.)
- Your child should look at their page while you give instructions. Encourage them to point at words and sounds as they read. Early lessons provide detailed step-by-step guidance, but as your child builds fluency, the instructions will become less structured.
- After the lesson, you must read aloud to your child. This should be from a book of your choice, but beginning readers with a mix of fiction and nonfiction work best. As you read, point to each word so your child can follow along. This step is crucial—do not skip it. Read aloud for 20 minutes daily.
- In addition to this structured reading, it's incredibly beneficial to read casually throughout the day. Picture books, bedtime stories, and chapter books help with background knowledge and vocabulary. During these casual read-alouds, you don't need to point to words—just focus on enjoyment. Choose books that you and your child will love to make reading a lasting habit.

LESSONS

Lesson Checklist

- [] 1: a, m, n, s, t, x
- [] 2: h
- [] 3: *practice*
- [] 4: d, w
- [] 5: *was, questions + statements*
- [] 6: l
- [] 7: b, c, g, f, j
- [] 8: p, r, v
- [] 9: k, y, z
- [] 10: *double letter endings*
- [] 11: ck, qu
- [] 12: *practice*
- [] 13: e, i
- [] 14: o, u
- [] 15: *practice*
- [] 16: *practice*
- [] 17: *practice*
- [] 18: ph
- [] 19: th, the
- [] 20: on, son ton, won, of, off
- [] 21: *practice*
- [] 22: s, es, 's
- [] 23: *practice*
- [] 24: u
- [] 25: *practice*
- [] 26: sh, wash
- [] 27: *practice*
- [] 28: ch
- [] 29: *practice*
- [] 30: wh, what
- [] 31: *practice*
- [] 32: *contractions*
- [] 33: *practice*
- [] 34: *practice*
- [] 35: all
- [] 36: *practice*
- [] 37: ng
- [] 38: *practice*
- [] 39: *practice*
- [] 40: *practice*
- [] 41: nd, nt, wand, want
- [] 42: *practice*
- [] 43: er, nk, nch, nc
- [] 44: *practice*
- [] 45: ct, ft, pt, xt
- [] 46: *practice*
- [] 47: sl, sp, st
- [] 48: *practice*
- [] 49: lb, ld, lf, lk, calf, half, talk, walk
- [] 50: *practice*
- [] 51: lm, lp, lt, mp, tch, halt, etc.
- [] 52: *practice*
- [] 53: dge, nge, nce, nse, one, once
- [] 54: *practice*
- [] 55: bl, br, cl, cr
- [] 56: *practice*
- [] 57: dr, dw, fl, fr
- [] 58: *practice*
- [] 59: gl, gr, gw, pl, pr
- [] 60: *practice*

Lesson Checklist

- [] **61:** sl, shr, sm, sn, sp, spl, spr
- [] **62:** st, str, sw, sc, sk, scr
- [] **63:** *practice*
- [] **64:** tr, thr, tw
- [] **65:** *practice*
- [] **66:** transforming e, are, have
- [] **67:** *practice*
- [] **68:** *practice*
- [] **69:** *practice*
- [] **70:** ai, said, again, against
- [] **71:** *practice*
- [] **72:** ay, away
- [] **73:** *practice*
- [] **74:** eigh, height
- [] **75:** *practice*
- [] **76:** au, aw
- [] **77:** *practice*
- [] **78:** a, ar
- [] **79:** *practice*
- [] **80:** ar
- [] **81:** *practice*
- [] **82:** ee
- [] **83:** *practice*
- [] **84:** been, she, he, be, we, me
- [] **85:** *practice*
- [] **86:** ea
- [] **87:** e_e
- [] **88:** *practice*
- [] **89:** *practice*
- [] **90:** ie
- [] **91:** *practice*
- [] **92:** y
- [] **93:** *practice*
- [] **94:** y, ie, uy
- [] **95:** *practice*
- [] **96:** i_e
- [] **97:** *practice*
- [] **98:** igh
- [] **99:** *practice*
- [] **100:** *practice*
- [] **101:** ough, augh, gh
- [] **102:** *practice*
- [] **103:** o_e
- [] **104:** *practice*
- [] **105:** oa, ow, old
- [] **106:** *practice*
- [] **107:** contractions, oo
- [] **108:** *practice*
- [] **109:** ow, ou
- [] **110:** ou, doubt
- [] **111:** oy, oi
- [] **112:** *practice*
- [] **113:** ue, ui, u_e
- [] **114:** *practice*
- [] **115:** ew, eu, through, sew
- [] **116:** er, ir, or, ur, ear
- [] **117:** le, tle, ph, su, ssu
- [] **118:** ci, sci, xi, si, su, tu, ti
- [] **119:** kn, mb, bt, wr, h
- [] **120:** st, ft, ch, ps, y

Lesson 1

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.



Today, you will start to learn how to read. You already know the letters of the alphabet. You know they can be uppercase or lowercase. Now you will learn that letters don't just have names like **A, B, C, and D**. Letters also make sounds.

(point to the *a*)

a is the first sound in *apple*. Say the *a* sound three times: *aaa, aaa, aaa* (point to the *a* each time)

(point to the *m*)

m is the first sound in *muffin*. Say the *m* sound three times: *mmm, mmm, mmm*. (point to the *m* each time)

(point to the *n*)

n is the first sound in *nest*. Say the *n* sound three times: *nnn, nnn, nnn*. (point to the *n* each time)

(point to the *s*)

s is the first sound in *sand*. Say the *s* sound three times: *sss, sss, sss*. (point to the *s* each time)

(point to the *t*)

t is the first sound in *toad*. Say the *t* sound three times: *t, t, t*. (point to the *t* each time)

(point to the *x*)

x is the last sound in *fox*. Say the *x* sound three times: *x, x, x*. (point to the *x* each time)



Practice your letter sounds. Point to each letter and say its sound.



When you put sounds together, they make words.

This is the sound *a*. This is the sound *m*. When you say them together fast, they make the word *am*.

This is the sound *a*. This is the sound *n*. When you say them together fast, they make the word *an*.

This is the sound *a*. This is the sound *x*. When you say them together fast, they make the word *ax*.

This is the sound *s*. This is the sound *a*. This is the sound *m*. When you say them all together fast, they make the word *Sam*.

Sam is a name. That is why we use an uppercase **S** as the first letter. We do that with all names. Even when a letter is uppercase or lowercase, it makes the same sound.



Practice reading these words. Remember, when you say sounds together fast, they make a word.

Point to each word as you read it.

Great job! You can read words now!



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 1



a m n s t x



a m n s t x t n m a s x



a m am



a n an



a x ax



S a m Sam



am an ax am ax an Sam



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

____ / ____ / ____

Lesson 2

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.



(point to the *h*)

h is the first sound in *hat*. Say the *h* sound three times: **hhh**, **hhh**, **hhh** (point to the *h* each time)



Practice your letter sounds. Point to each letter and say its sound.

Practice reading these words. Remember, when you say sounds together fast, they make a word.

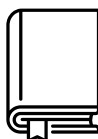
Point to each word as you read it.



Let's review, when you put sounds together, they make words.

Say each sound one at a time.

Then say the sounds together fast to read each word.



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 2



h



h a m n s t x

Sam am an Tam

tax at sat mat



h a m ham



h a t hat



h a s has



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

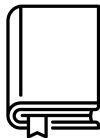
____ / ____ / ____

Lesson 3

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.

Today is a practice day. Read this page three times.



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 3

tax Tam has hat ax
am at as an ax sat has
hat ham man Sam Max

Max sat.

Tam has ham.

A man has a hat.

Sam has an ax.



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

____ / ____ / ____

Lesson 4

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.



(point to the *d*)

d is the first sound in *door*. Say the ***d*** sound three times: ***d, d, d*** (point to the *d* each time)

(point to the *w*)

w is the first sound in *water*. Say the ***w*** sound three times: ***w, w, w*** (point to the *w* each time)



Practice your letter sounds. Point to each letter and say its sound.

Practice reading these words. Remember, when you say sounds together fast, they make a word.

Point to each word as you read it.



You are reading your first sentences!

A sentence is a group of words that work together to share an idea.

These sentences start with an uppercase letter and end with a period. (point to the *uppercase letter* and the *period*)

Point to each word as you read the sentences.



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 4



d w



d w h w d h w d h

had dad and sand hand

sad mad wax Dan Max ad



Dad had a hat.

Max had wax and sand.

Sam had an ax.



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

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Lesson 5

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.



The word ***was*** is a memory word. That means it breaks the rules and you need to remember it.

(point to the *w*)

The ***w*** doesn't break the rules.

(point to the *s*)

The ***s*** doesn't break the rules.

(point to the *a*)

But the ***a*** does break the rules. What sound does *a* usually make? (pause for your child to answer)

That's right! *A* usually makes the sound *aaa* like the first sound in *apple*.

But in the word ***was***, the *a* makes the sound *uuu*, like the first sound in *umbrella*.

Was. Was. Was. (point to the word each time you say it)

Because it breaks the rules, you can remember the word ***was***.



Practice reading these words. Point to each word as you read it.



Remember, a sentence is a group of words that work together to share an idea. You have read sentences that start with an uppercase letter and end with a period.

Now you will read two types of sentences.

One is a sentence you've already read that ends with a period. (point to the *period*)

This type of sentence is called a statement.

The new sentence you will read ends with a question mark. (point to the *question mark*)

This type of sentence is called a question.

Here's a question:

How many legs does a dog have?

Here's a statement:

A dog has four legs.

Point to each word as you read the sentences.



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 5



was



was wax ad had and hand
as sad mad Dan Max was



Was Max sad?

Max was sad.

Was Dan as sad as Max?

Dan was as sad as Max.



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

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Lesson 6

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.



(point to the *l*)

l is the first sound in *lemon*. Say the *l* sound three times: *l, l, l* (point to the *l* each time)



Practice your letter sounds. Point to each letter and say its sound.

Practice reading these words. Remember, when you say sounds together fast, they make a word.

Point to each word as you read it.



Let's review, when you put sounds together, they make words.

Say each sound one at a time.

Then say the sounds together fast to read each word.



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 6



|



l d w d l l w d l

was land lad Hal Al Sal lad



Hal was a lad. Sal was
a lad. Hal had land.

Sal had sand. Hal and

Sal had land and sand.



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

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Lesson 7

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.



(point to the *b*)

b is the first sound in *bear*. Say the ***b*** sound three times: ***b, b, b*** (point to the *b* each time)

(point to the *c*)

c is the first sound in *cat*. Say the ***c*** sound three times: ***c, c, c*** (point to the *c* each time)

(point to the *g*)

g is the first sound in *gate*. Say the ***g*** sound three times: ***g, g, g*** (point to the *g* each time)

(point to the *f*)

f is the first sound in *fish*. Say the ***f*** sound three times: ***f, f, f*** (point to the *f* each time)

(point to the *j*)

j is the first sound in *jump*. Say the ***j*** sound three times: ***j, j, j*** (point to the *j* each time)



Practice your letter sounds. Point to each letter and say its sound.

Practice reading these words. Point to each word as you read it.



Read these sentences.



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 7



b c g f j



b c g f j f g c j

bad band bag cab gal gas

jab jam Jan fan fat nab



Dad had gas and a cab.

Jan was a jam fan.

Dan and Sal had a band.



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

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Lesson 8

Teacher Instructions

Read the words in **bold** out loud to your learner.



(point to the *p*)

p is the first sound in ***p**ants*. Say the ***p*** sound three times: ***p, p, p*** (point to the *p* each time)

(point to the *r*)

r is the first sound in ***r**ain*. Say the ***r*** sound three times: ***r, r, r*** (point to the *r* each time)

(point to the *v*)

v is the first sound in ***v**egetable*. Say the ***v*** sound three times: ***v, v, v*** (point to the *v* each time)



Practice your letter sounds. Point to each letter and say its sound.

Practice reading these words. Point to each word as you read it.



Read these sentences.



After the Lesson:

Read a book aloud to your learner.

Point to each word as you read.

Lesson 8



p r v



p r v r p v p r

pad pal pan pat rat ran

rag vat van tap tar rap



Pam was a pal.

Pat had a bad tap.

Dad had a van and a cab.

A rat ran at a pad.



COMPLETED ON THIS DATE:

____ / ____ / ____