



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 1

Blue Circle: Sledding



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

- 1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:

- go, so, no, be, he, me, we, ball, call, staff, fall, small, squall, bang, hung, fang, fling, sting, bush, put, full, squish, flush, champ, think, thing, bringing, running, tossing, pulled, pushing, slipping

- 2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:

go → so → no → not → net → met → me →
he → we → she → be → bet → bat

- 3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. A good opportunity arises to address syntax if the resulting sentence is not grammatically correct (e.g., *You was going on the hill.* → *You were going on the hill.*)

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
the small chimp	was going	in the spring
the fun staff	had no fun	to me
you	will be running	on the hill
Jo's fast sled	had so much fun	at the rink

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *the small chimp* can just be *the chimp*).

Comprehension Corner

Sledding (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- What happened to Dad when he was sledding?

Inferencing

- What do you think happened after the boy went over the jump?

Making Connections

- Have you ever been sledding? Did you sled on a big hill or a small hill?

Retelling/Summarizing

- What is your favourite page in this book? Why?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 1

Blue Circle: Sledging



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 1

- <o>/ō/ and <e>/ē/ in open syllables (e.g., “me”, “go”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- open syllables are often described as syllables ending in a single vowel grapheme, where the vowel represents its “long” sound (e.g., *no*, *she*)

Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalizations — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 1

- long vowel sounds in open syllables

Key Concepts to Understand

- open syllables are often described as syllables ending in a single vowel grapheme, where the vowel represents its “long” sound (e.g., *no*, *she*)

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 1

Blue Circle: Sledding



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

High-Frequency Words — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 1

- “you”

Key Concepts to Understand

- *you* is best taught alongside *your(s)*, *our(s)* → these words are connected in meaning and spelling
- *you* → refers to the person/people the speaker is addressing
- *your* → belonging to/associated with the person/people the speaker is addressing
- *our* → belonging to/associated with the speaker and one or more other people
- these words are connected with <ou>
- pronunciation of the <ou> is not consistent within these three words
- spelling prioritizes meaning over phonics



Refer to the Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 2

Blue Circle: Fishing



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

- 1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:

• sly, fly, cry, spy, dry, fry, try, sky, spy, shy, flying, crying, trying, going, no, she, by, we, drying

- 2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:

my → shy → by → be → me → met → mat → bat →
bet → wet → we → she → he → hen → den

- 3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. A good opportunity arises to address syntax if the resulting sentence is not grammatically correct (e.g., *Your ducklings was flying.* → *Your ducklings were flying.*)

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
the shy fox	was flying	on top of the wall
your ducklings	quacked	by the hedge
the witch and her wand	was trying to spy	off the bridge
my pal Madge	pulled them	at the ledge

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *my pal Madge* can just be *my pal*).

Comprehension Corner

Fishing (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- What are the different ways that fish were caught in this book?

Inferencing

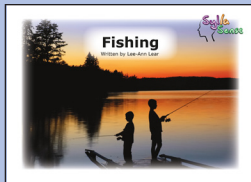
- Do you think all fish get fooled by the bait?

Making Connections

- Which way would you want to catch a fish?
- What would you do with the fish if you caught one?

Retelling/Summarizing

- Can you retell the story?
- What was the most interesting way to fish?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 2

Blue Circle: Fishing



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 2

- <y>/ī/ in stressed open syllables (e.g., “by”, “my”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- complete English words do not end in <i>
- a <y>, as a vowel, often represents /ī/ when in final position in single syllable words (or in a stressed syllable)



Refer to the Grapheme/Phoneme Background Information Sheets.

Co-author cloze sentences:

- 1 write focus words (e.g., *sly*, *fly*) on board
- 2 teacher creates sentences (e.g., *The ____ is full of clouds.*) → increase complexity as needed
- 3 all students point to the word that fits (e.g., *sky*)
- 4 one student identifies the target word on the board (e.g., *sky*)
- 5 student spells out word - one tap (finger/arm) per grapheme → <s><k><y>
- 6 rest of class echoes the “spelling out”

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 2

Blue Circle: Fishing



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

High-Frequency Words — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 2

- "your"

Key Concepts to Understand

- *your* is best taught alongside *you*, *our(s)* → these words are connected in meaning and spelling
- *you* → refers to the person/people the speaker is addressing
- *your* → belonging to/associated with the person/people the speaker is addressing
- *our* → belonging to/associated with the speaker and one or more other people
- these words are connected with <ou>
- pronunciation of the <ou> is not consistent within these three words
- spelling prioritizes meaning over phonics



Refer to the Grapheme/Phoneme Background Information Sheets.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 3

Blue Circle: At the Creek

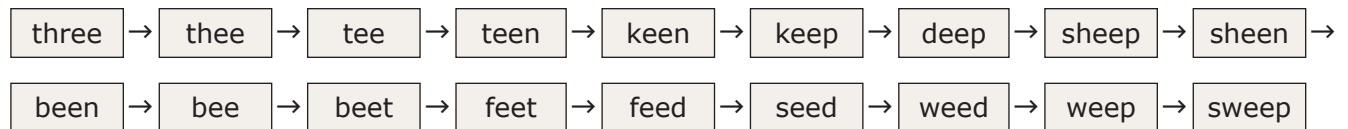


IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

- 1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:
- jeep, speed, sheet, steep, tweet, tree, see, bee, three, seed, feel, weed, speech, sleep, meet, need, deep, keep, queen, green, screen, greet, sweep, cheek, teeth

- 2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:



- 3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. A good opportunity arises to address syntax if the resulting sentence is not grammatically correct (e.g., *Lee and the teen was feeling sad and crying.* → *Lee and the teen were feeling sad and crying.*)

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
Lee and the teen	will flee	on a spree
the keen kid	can sweep the deck	by your tree
my big feet	got the seed	at the meeting
the queen bee	was feeling sad and crying	on your street

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *can sweep the deck* can just be *can sweep*).

Comprehension Corner

At the Creek (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- What did Lin spot on her visit to the creek?
- What is the difference between a *creek* and a *pond*?

Inferencing

- What else could Lin have been watching for in the creek?
- What do you think Lin liked most about the creek?

Making Connections

- What is a *bank* (by the creek)?
Is there another kind of *bank*?

Retelling/Summarizing

- What is your favourite page in this book? Why?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 3

Blue Circle: At the Creek



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 3

- vowel digraph <ee>/ē/ (e.g., “tree”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- in reading, <ee> is always pronounced /ē/, whereas /ē/ can be represented many ways in spelling
- <ee> is a digraph, and students should understand <ee> as one unit (therefore one tap when spelling, one Elkonin box, etc.)
- <ee> can be found in initial, medial and final position
- students should be explicitly told that they will be working on the <ee> spelling of /ē/ and they will be learning other ways to spell /ē/ later
- it is very important to practice spelling and reading <ee> (when first introduced) before including other /ē/ graphemes (e.g., <ea>, e_e) into a lesson

Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalizations — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 3

- vowel digraph (two letters that represent 1 vowel sound)
- flexibility with vowel sounds in v/cv words (e.g., “focus”) and vc/v words (e.g., “visit”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- rather than teaching complicated syllable division rules, it is more efficient to teach students to toggle between long and short vowel sounds (see “toggling practice” below)

Activities to Try

- provide words for toggling practice (e.g., *robot*, *topaz*, *tripod*, *mascot*) → words without a schwa are an easier starting point than words with a schwa (e.g., *bacən* and *pencəl*)
Note: if you provide words with affixes, students should be directed to find the base before “toggling” (suffixes are units of meaning, and are not to be sounded out)
- every syllable has a vowel phoneme — ask students to note how many vowels are in the base and therefore how many perceived syllables there are
- ask students to cover the section they would like to read first (e.g., with *robot*, students may either choose **ro**-**bot** or **rob**-**et**) → they should try both



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 3

Blue Circle: At the Creek



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 4

Blue Circle: The Play Day



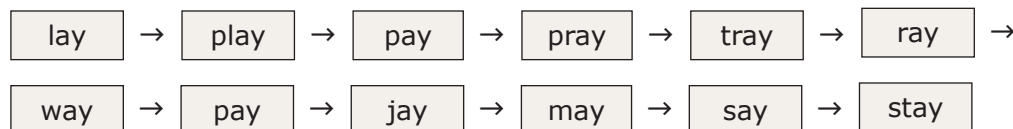
IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:

- spray, jay, okay, sway, tray, day, lay, clay, playing, stayed, straying, bay, hay, may, play, hay, ray, staying, gray, pay

2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:



3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. A good opportunity arises to address syntax if the resulting sentence is not grammatically correct (e.g., *They all stays still by the tree.* → *They all stay still by the tree.*)

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
they all	sprayed the trees	in May  explicitly explain that May is a proper noun and therefore uses a capital at the beginning
the gray tray	stays still	at the play
my pal Jay	played with clay	on the way
Fay	was straying	by the tree

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *the gray tray* can just be *the tray*).

Comprehension Corner

The Play Day (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- What activities did Tray and his friends create for their play day?

Inferencing

- What other games could the children play on this hot day?

Making Connections

- Have you had a play day? Where?
- Which activities would you like to do?

Retelling/Summarizing

- Can you retell the story?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 4

Blue Circle: The Play Day



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 4

- vowel digraph <ay>/ā/ (e.g., “play”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- <ay> is pronounced as /ā/ and is usually found in final position of a base (**Note:** *rayon*, *crayon* and *mayor* do not fit this pattern)
- there are many ways to spell /ā/ (e.g., <ay>, <a>, <ai>, <ea>, <a_e> etc.)
- <ay> is a digraph, and students should understand <ay> as one unit (one tap when spelling, one Elkonin box, etc.)
- the default spelling is <ay> when /ā/ is the final phoneme

Punctuation/Text Features — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 4

- contraction “let’s”

Key Concepts to Understand

- a contraction is a **word** or **group of words** resulting from shortening an original form
- an apostrophe often replaces a single vowel, but not always (e.g., *we will* → *we’ll*)
- teaching children the definition of contraction will deepen their understanding → “to shorten/make smaller”
- you may want to begin with simple contractions where only a single vowel is replaced by the apostrophe (e.g., *let’s*, *it’s*, *that’s*, *didn’t*, *there’s*)
- quickly introduce more complex contractions (e.g., *won’t*, *we’ll*, *can’t*) where more than one grapheme is replaced by an apostrophe so students have flexibility in their understanding



Scratch Garden’s video clearly illustrates this concept: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gubPH3WEurg

Activities to Try

- Use grapheme cards, magnetic letters/tiles, and online blending boards to provide students with opportunities to physically replace graphemes with an apostrophe.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 5

Blue Circle: Recess

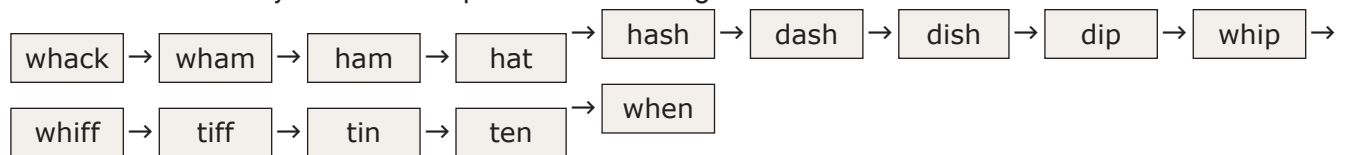


IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

- Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:
 - whisk, whip, whiff, wheel, wham, whack, cell, cent, dance, chance, since, fence, when, why, lance, mince, wince, whisking, whim, have, live, give

- Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:



- Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences.

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
May and Fay	whacked the ball	by the wheel
Clay and Chance	whizzed	at the dance
my softball	whisked the eggs	into the sandpit
his backpack	can prance	at sunset

You can differentiate for students by dropping some words in these phrases (e.g., *Clay and Chance* can just be *Clay*).

Comprehension Corner

Recess (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- What activities did the children do at recess?
- Is there another word for *whack*? What does it mean to *whack* something?

Inferencing

- Do you think children in other countries get recess?
- How does recess help you to focus at school?

Making Connections

- What is your favourite activity to do at recess?

Retelling/Summarizing

- What is your favourite page in this book? Why?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 5

Blue Circle: Recess



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 5

- consonant digraph <wh>/wh/ (e.g., “when”)
- <c>/s/ (e.g., “recess”, “dance”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- with the exception of *how*, <wh> is used for question words that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no” (interesting fact: who used to be spelled *hwo* and pronounced with an initial /h/)
- <wh> words often suggest a sense of blowing or movement (e.g., *whack*, *whistle*, *whip*, *whine*)
- <c> when pronounced as /s/ is often referred to as “soft <c>”
- in complete English words, <c> is usually pronounced as /s/ when followed by an <e>, <i>, or <y> (e.g., *cello* is an Italian loan word and *soccer* was slang created by abbreviating: Football Association → Assoc. → soccer)

Word Sort

Provide students with the following (unsorted) words:

<c> /s/	<c> /k/
cell, acid, cent, dance, cider, cinch, chance, cement, fence, since, wince, prince	call, cabin, cup, cut, cub, cusp, cot, cash, cast, cost, comic, combo

Ask students to sort the following words based on these two categories. Have them investigate when <c> is soft vs when <c> is hard.

Prompt: “Circle the grapheme that comes after the <c>.”



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 5

Blue Circle: Recess



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 5

- Compound words

Key Concepts to Understand

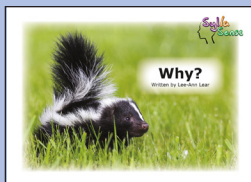
- compound words contain two or more bases (e.g., *sandpit*, *softball*)

Activities to Try

- Give students a list of bases that can be combined to make new words — *play & day*, *soft & ball*, *sand & box*, *in & to*, *up & hill*, *him & self*



It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 6

Blue Circle: Why?



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:

- rain, aid, aim, gain, main, paid, pain, wait, braid, chain, claim, drain, faith, brain, paint, plain, stain, train, terms, river, butter, under, jerk, ever, enter



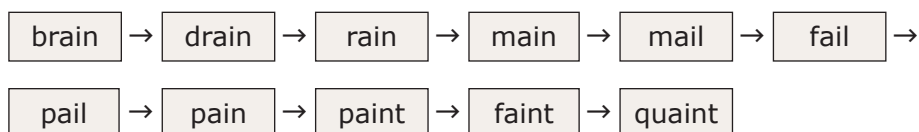
Note: students may perceive an extra syllable when reading <ai> bases that end in <l> or <r>; reading these words is easier than spelling them until the pronunciation changes that can occur with these “liquids” is explicitly taught

- liquids are consonant speech sounds where the tongue creates a partial closure - the air flows either to the side of the mouth (/l/) or still forward and over the tongue (/r/) — this creates a vowel-like sound
- liquids tend to be among the later-developing speech sounds in children — can be difficult to pronounce and spell
- List of words for reading only: *chair, snail, tail, fail, pail, fair, hair, pair, trail*

The Homophone Principle → Where two or more words have different meanings, but identical pronunciations, there will usually be different spellings to reflect the different meanings when possible.

- Studying homophones is an excellent way to demonstrate that meaning is the primary focus of spelling. As students may not have practiced reading/writing words with “marker <e>” you can ask them orally if they know another kind of *pail, fair, hair, tail*, etc. You can show them how these words are spelled differently.

2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:



3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. **Note:** there are some “liquids” in the following phrases.

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
the train	painted the stain	on the runway
a pair of snails	strained his leg	off the main path
the quail	can wait	next to the rail
a big rain	drained the bathtub	by the train track

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *painted the stain* can just be *painted*).



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 6

Blue Circle: Why?



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Comprehension Corner

Why? (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- Which living things were discussed in this book?
- What does it mean to *flex*? Can you think of another word for *flex*?

Inferencing

- Why do you think humans don't have tails?
- Why do you think humans have toes?

Making Connections

- Did you learn anything new about living things in this book? What new information did you learn?

Retelling/Summarizing

- What is your favourite page in this book? Why?

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 6

- vowel digraph <ai>/ā/ (e.g., “tail”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- <ai> is pronounced as /ā/ and can be found in initial and medial positions
- there are many ways to spell /ā/ (e.g., <ay>, <a>, <ai>, <ea>, <a_e>, etc.)
- <ai> is a digraph, and students should understand <ai> as one unit (therefore one tap when spelling, said quickly together, one Elkonin box, etc.)

Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalizations — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 6

- complete English words do not end in <v>, so a “marker <e>” is added

Key Concepts to Understand

- “marker <e>” has many uses
- one use is to ensure that <v>s do not end complete English words → this explains the spelling of *have* and *give*



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 6

Blue Circle: Why?



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.

High-Frequency Words — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 6

- "do"

Key Concepts to Understand

💡 *do* is best taught with *to* and *who*

- students may treat *do* as an open syllable, and pronounce the <o> with a long sound
- clustering *do*, *to*, and *who* together can help students remember the <o> pronunciation in all 3 words



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 7

Blue Circle: River Otters



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

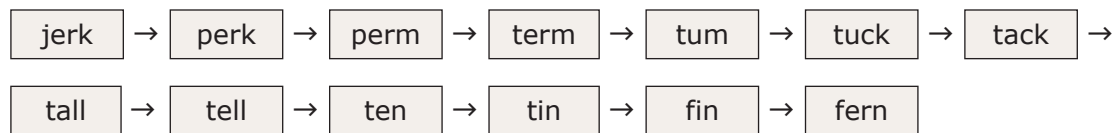


Review the Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalizations section before trying these words and phrases with students.

- 1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:

- her, germ, fern, herb, herd, perk, perm, term, verb, love, glove, shove, cover

- 2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:



- 3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences:

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
her pink gloves	watered the grass	on the covers
the clerk	loves the rain	next to the train tracks
a herd of sheep	lives	by her hedge
Fern's truck	bumped	in the dry ditch

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *in the dry ditch* can just be *in the ditch*).

Comprehension Corner

River Otters (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- How long do you think the pups stay with their moms?

Inferencing

- What do river otters love to do?
- How do you think river otters can smell fish under the water?

Making Connections

- Do you like to do any of the things that river otters do?
- What do river otters and human children have in common?

Retelling/Summarizing

- Can you retell the story?
- Which part was your favourite?



Teacher Tip Sheets Blue Series: Step 7

Blue Circle: River Otters



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 7

- <er>/er/ (e.g., “otter”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- the phone /r/ can change the quality of the preceding vowel (e.g., *cat* vs *car* and *her* vs *hem*)
- the <er>s in “River Otters” are not suffixes (they are graphemes that are part of a base)
- <-er> as a suffix is introduced in the Purple Series

Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalizations — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 7

- r-controlled vowel
- <o> is often pronounced as /ʊ/ when followed by <v> (e.g., “love”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- rhotic vowels are often referred to as “bossy r’s” or “r-controlled vowels” **Note:** not all English speakers are ‘rhotic’ (e.g., pronounce the /r/ in words with <ar>, <ir>, <er>, etc.,)
- historically <u>s were written as <v>s and therefore are often not found beside each other (e.g., *love* would have looked like *lvve*)
- One job of marker <e> is to ensure that complete English words do not end in <v>s

Word Sort

Provide students with the following (unsorted) words:

/ʊ/ represented by <u>	/ʊ/ represented by <o>
bump, bunk, budge, fluff, clunk, shrunk	love, glove, shove, cover, hover, above

Ask students to sort the above words based on these two categories. Have them investigate when <o> is used vs when <u> and pronounced as /ʊ/. **Prompt:** “Circle the grapheme that comes after the /ʊ/.”



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 7

Blue Circle: River Otters



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 7

- suffix <-ed> attached to a noun to form an adjective (e.g., “webbed”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- suffix <-ed> can be attached to nouns to form adjectives
- students need to be aware of the difference between <er> as part of a base and suffix <-er> (will be introduced in the Purple Series)

Activities to Try

These can be done orally as the focus is not on decoding the base but rather attaching the suffix

- 1 generate nouns with students (e.g., *shock, thrill, disgust, hood*)
- 2 students create word sums to build these adjectives (see the **Morphology Background Information Sheets**) e.g., *shock + ed → shocked*



Refer to the **Morphology Background Information Sheets** when creating word sums with suffixing changes.



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 8

Blue Circle: Sports

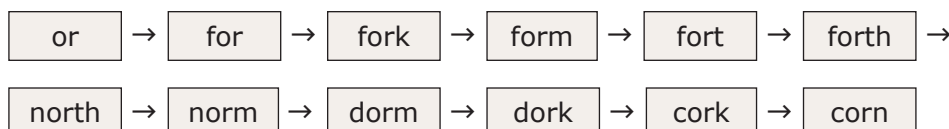


IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

- 1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:
- for, orb, or, born, cord, cork, corn, dorm, fork, form, fort, horn, port, sort, torn, thorn, porch, short, forth, north, scorn, snort, sport, storm, torch

- 2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:



- 3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. A good opportunity arises to address syntax if the resulting sentence is not grammatically correct (e.g., *Norm and Faith was born.* → *Norm and Faith were born.*)

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
a torn dress	are snorting	in the hailstorm
short Doris	played back and forth	under the porch
the horned herd	was born	with her fork
Norm and Faith	are sailing	at the fort

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *played back and forth* can just be *played*)

Comprehension Corner

Sports (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- Have you ever heard of *cricket*? Do you know of another type of *cricket*?

Inferencing

- Can new sports be invented at any time? Explain your thinking.
- How do you think these sports came to be?

Making Connections

- Have you played any of the sports the children were playing in this book?
- Do you participate in a different sport?

Retelling/Summarizing

- What were all the sports mentioned in this book?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 8

Blue Circle: Sports



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 8

- <or>/or/ (e.g., “sports”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- rhotic vowels are often referred to as “bossy r” or “r-controlled vowel” **Note:** not all English speakers are ‘rhotic’ (e.g., pronounce /r/ in words with <ar>, <ir>, <er>, etc.)
- <-or> can also be a suffix, but is not introduced at this time

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.

High-Frequency Words — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 8

- “are”

Key Concepts to Understand

- there are many variables that may have influenced the spelling of *are* over time — the final <e> in *are* could mark *are*’s relationship to *were* and *be* — making students aware of this relationship can help them remember the spelling of all three words



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 9

Blue Circle: In the City



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

- 1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:
 - empty, city, plenty, envy, daisy, dairy, ivy, glory
- 2 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. A good opportunity arises to address syntax if the resulting sentence is not grammatically correct (e.g., *Six empty subways travels at sunset.* → *Six empty subways travel at sunset.*)

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
her city	will pass	from her cart
one cob of corn	got stuck	between the trails
Kenny's ticket	travels	under a tree
six empty subways	can dance	at sunset

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *six empty subways* can just be *six subways*)

Comprehension Corner

In the City (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- What does *tend* to mean when the author writes, "Trains *tend* to run at street level."

Inferencing

- Why are the streets never empty in a big city?
- What is the difference between the trains in the story and a subway?

Making Connections

- Have you ever been to a big city? Gone on a subway?
- What do you like/dislike about the city?

Retelling/Summarizing

- What are all the ways you can travel in this city?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 9

Blue Circle: In the City



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Step 9

- <y>/ē/ in unstressed open syllables (e.g., “city”)

Key Concepts to Understand

- <y> can be pronounced many ways so ensure that you avoid absolute language such as “<y> says /y/”
 - /ē/ in final position of multisyllabic words (*baby*, *city*) when syllable is unstressed
 - /y/ in initial position
 - /ī/ in final position (*try*, *my* — usually in single syllable words or stressed syllables)
 - /ĭ/ in medial position (*gym* — from Greek origin)



Note: When producing /t/ between two vowels and the first vowel is stressed (e.g., *button*, which is found in this book), the tongue can quickly and briefly make contact with the ridge behind the upper front teeth, which results in <t> being pronounced differently (called a flap). Explicit teaching of this concept can support spelling.

Word Sums

Provide students with the following (unsorted) words:

<y> as /ē/	<y> as /ī/
empty, city, plenty, envy, daisy, dairy, ivy, glory	dry, cry, why, fry, sly, try, pry, sky, comply, reply

Ask students to sort these words based on these two categories. Have them identify reasons the <y> may be pronounced differently in these particular words.

Prompt: “Where is the stress in these words?”



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 9

Blue Circle: In the City



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.

High-Frequency Words — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Step 9

- “from” and “one”

Key Concepts to Understand

- from* is an Old English word where it had a sense of “forward” which eventually led to a sense of “moving away”
- as a function word, *from* is often pronounced with a schwa
- the initial phoneme in *one* was originally pronounced as it is in *only*
- it is beneficial to teach the spelling of *one* alongside *only*, *alone* and *once* as all of these words have a sense of “oneness” and are therefore related in spelling

Activity to Try

- students often spell *from* as “form” so have them brainstorm other <fr> words (e.g., *friend*, *front*, *frisbee*) while paying close attention to what is happening in their mouths



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 10

Blue Circle: Bobcats



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Words and Phrases for Reading and Writing

- 1 Here is a list of words that can be used for phonemic awareness activities, reading, dictation, game cards, etc.:
- kind, mind, blind, find, grind, old, cold, fold, hold, gold, sold, told, host, most, post, bolt, colt, jolt, roll

- 2 Here is a word chain you could complete with blending cards:

old → cold → fold → hold → gold → sold → told

- 3 Here are phrases that can be used for reading and/or dictation practice. These phrases can be combined to create sentences. A good opportunity arises to address syntax if the resulting sentence is not grammatically correct (e.g., *The teens in the dorm was so cold.* → *The teens in the dorm were so cold.*)

Noun Phrases	Verb Phrases	Prepositional Phrases
the kind old king	hid the gold	from the city
the host	was so cold	under the porch
a wild baby colt	bolted	by her folded socks
the teens in the dorm	rolled the most basketballs	in the old tray

You can differentiate for your students by dropping some of the words in these phrases (e.g., *the teens in the dorm* can just be *the teens*).

Comprehension Corner

Bobcats (● Blue Circle)

Vocabulary Development

- How did bobcats get their name?
- What is a baby bobcat called?

Inferencing

- Why do you think bobcats would not make good pets?
- Why do you think bobcats love trees?

Making Connections

- How are bobcats and house cats similar and how are they different?

Retelling/Summarizing

- What is your favourite page in this book? Why?



Teacher Tip Sheets

Blue Series: Step 10

Blue Circle: Bobcats



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH BOOK PRIOR TO READING!

Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalisations

Key Concepts to Understand

- many words that have <-ild>, <-ind>, <-old>, <-ost> are pronounced with their “long” vowel sound (this is unexpected as they contain a single vowel and do not end in marker <e>)
- the words <roll>, <stroll> and <troll> are also pronounced with their “long” vowel sound, as well as words with <-olt>
- “Bobcats” introduces <-ild>, <-ind>, <-old> and <-ost>, however we have included <-oll> and <-olt> words in the practice below
- a picture (the students can create them) of “kind, old, wild ghosts bolt and roll” can be helpful for students to remember this pattern

Morphology – Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important to ask students to cover the suffix with their finger in order to focus on the base when consonant clusters are in final position and have an attached suffix. When reading *drifting*, ask students to cover the <-ing> and read *drift*, ask them to release their finger and reread the entire word with the <-ing>, *drifting*.

References

These sheets are being offered as a free download because the more we understand our language, the more powerful decodable books can be for our students. Each tip sheet provides Key Concepts to Understand and Tips and Activities for Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence, Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalizations, Morphology, and Phonetically Irregular Words. It is essential to pre-teach the concepts using this tip sheet prior to reading the book. There is nothing inherently decodable about a book. Decodability is a relationship between the student and the book. If the concepts in a book have been taught, the book is decodable.

The information for these sheets has been compiled from a wide variety of sources. Many thanks to those in the field who have researched, practiced, and shared their knowledge with educators. Please note: these sheets are based on our current understanding, both from our studies and from our personal experience. As we continue to learn, our understanding will evolve. If we reach a point where we feel these sheets need to be adjusted, we will do so and provide updated versions for free download

Here is a list of the resources we have used and courses/workshops we have completed:

Source	Details
www.funlearning.ca • O-G Fundamentals/O-G Associate Practitioner • O-G practicum • SWI Workshop • Grammar Workshop	Liisa is an OG Fellow and teacher trainer based in Toronto. I highly recommend her courses, and cannot thank her enough for getting me started on this journey! Liisa provides OG training with supervised practicums, as well as a range of general workshops.
www.rebeccaloveless.com • Teaching Real Script • SWI for Early Readers • Beyond the Intro • The High Frequency Word Project - Rebecca Loveless & Fiona Hamilton	Rebecca is a Structured Word Inquiry Coach based in California. Her courses are practical, informative, and inspirational — a great way to see how morphology can be explored with young learners!
www.learningaboutspelling.com • Beneath the Surface of Words – Sue Hegland	Sue Hegland is the author of “Beneath the Surface of Words”, which is a fantastic resource that has significantly broadened my understanding of morphology. Her attached Youtube video is also very informative.
www.tbox2.com • Real Spelling Toolbox – Real Spelling and Pascal Mira	This book is our go-to reference for Orthographic Phonology, Orthography and Morphology. We would highly recommend getting a lifetime subscription!
www.etymonline.com • Etymonline By Doug Harper	This is a free Online Etymology Dictionary that gives explanations of the history of words.
www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Home.html • Peter Bowers	Peter Bowers is a Structured Word Inquiry Coach extraordinaire. His courses are practical, informative, and inspirational — a great way to see how morphology can be explored with young learners!