



READING KINGDOM

Reading Kingdom is an online program that teaches students 4-10 to read and write to a 3rd grade level (Lexile 750)

**SCIENCE OF READING
PATENTED
ADAPTIVE
RESEARCH-BASED**

Reading Kingdom has transformed the teaching of reading...

The program is absolutely outstanding — not simply in teaching reading, but also in enabling children to master and expand their knowledge of English. It does so by steadily integrating spoken and written language. No other program is comparable in teaching these vital skills. Central to the program's success is: **1)** its steady integration of spoken and written language, and **2)** its unique incorporation of immediate interactive feedback. Research has shown that this type of feedback is critically important to engaging the student and thereby to enhancing effective learning. It regularly provides an immediate response to what the student does, and it offers clear, simple direction to overcome any errors that occur.”



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4

Overview:
What is the Reading Kingdom?

19

Reading Kingdom: Key Benefits for
Schools

33

Components of the Reading
Kingdom Curriculum

47

The Reading Kingdom Books

56

Reading Kingdom: Principles
of Word Selection

68

Appendix: How Phonetic Is
English?

14

How Reading Kingdom
teaches Phonemic Awareness,
Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency &

24

The Six Skills of Reading &
Writing

38

The Formats for Teaching Reading
and Writing

52

Key Principles of the Teaching

63

Testimonials



Overview:

**What is the
Reading Kingdom?**

“Reading is absolutely fundamental. It’s almost trite to say that. But in our society, the inability to be fluent consigns children to failure in school and consigns adults to the lowest strata of job and life opportunities.”

— Dr. Grover Whitehurst,
former Director, Institute of Education Sciences & Senior Fellow,
Center on Children and Families, Brookings Institution

Reading Kingdom is a patented, adaptive online program that teaches students 4-10 years old how to read and write to a third grade level (Lexile 750). It is fundamentally different from other reading systems available today in both the skills it teaches and in the methods for teaching those skills.



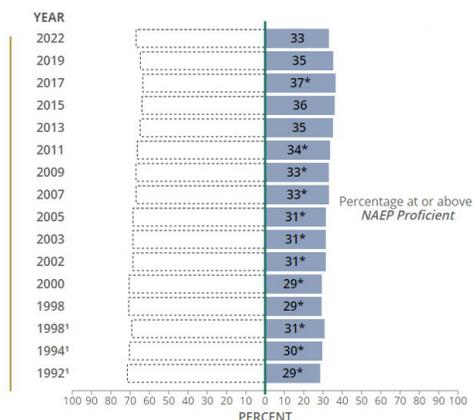
You may be wondering if we really need another reading program. After all there are many available already. The answer is a very obvious yes.

Reading is the gateway to knowledge and lifelong learning. It is the single most important skill a student learns in school. Shockingly however:

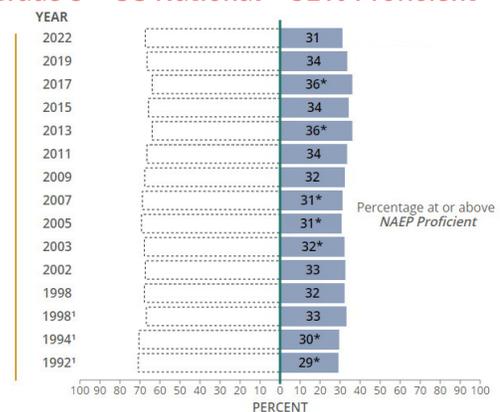
2 out of 3 students are failing to achieve proficiency in reading!

Here are the US national NAEP results for 4th and 8th grade reading:

Grade 4 – US National – 33% Proficient



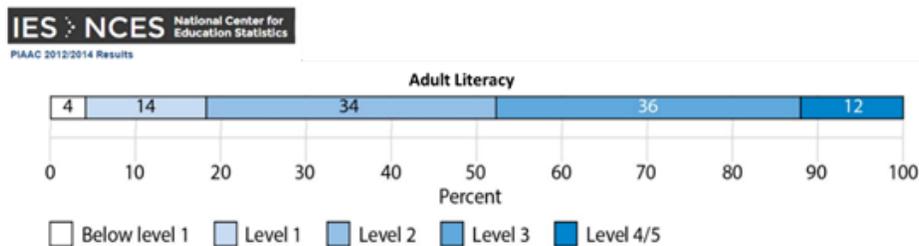
Grade 8 – US National – 31% Proficient



These are the national averages. Most states have similar statistics.

Students who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school than those who read well. Sadly, however, the vast majority of students who cannot read proficiently by 4th grade never will.

This is clearly reflected in the adult literacy statistics in the US:



Note that such a small percentage of adults – 12% – are in levels 4 and 5 (indicating proficiency) that they are combined.

So why are our students having so much difficulty learning the single most important skill they need to succeed in school and in life?

The answer to this question can be found in the way students are taught.

The history of English language reading education reflects repeated swings from a phonics approach to other methods intended to address the stubbornly high reading failure rate that each generation has encountered.

Phonics curricula have been the mainstay of reading instruction going back to ancient times. The Romans used it more than 2,000 years ago. But Latin is a very regular language that can be “sounded out.” When there is a perfect letter / sound correlation in a language, students can learn it very quickly. That’s why children in Italy learn to decode Italian, which is very regular, in a few months, whereas students in the US take years to learn to decode English - if they learn at all.

Throughout our early history, phonics was the dominant method of literacy instruction, but it did not work for many students. In an attempt to improve learning outcomes, during the 19th century, an approach called “whole word” or “look say” was developed.

Promoted by education reformer, Horace Mann, whole word teaching treated all words as “sight words” to be memorized. Whole word’s high failure rate caused educators to return to phonics instruction.

“Whole language” emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a reaction to the persistently high failure rate of phonics curricula. Whole language is a method of teaching reading that emphasizes literature and text comprehension. The idea is that learning to read and write English should be like learning to speak it -- a natural, unconscious process best fostered by unstructured immersion. Students are taught to use critical thinking strategies and context to “guess” words that they do not recognize. In the younger grades, children may use invented spelling to write their own stories.

But whole language provides very little organization for learning and consequently, children are often overwhelmed with unfamiliar words and sentence structures that cause unnecessary difficulties in learning. Without any formalized structure, children find themselves adrift in a sea of unrecognized words – and reading failure often ensues. That’s why whole language resulted in even worse outcomes than phonics programs.

In the 2000s, in response to the high failure rate of phonics and the even higher failure rate of whole language, some educators began endorsing the idea of “balanced literacy” programs that theoretically combine the best elements of both phonics and whole language. But the combination of two programs each of which has a high failure rate in decades of real-world use, has, unsurprisingly, not yielded improved reading outcomes.

Current reading education almost always relies on a phonics approach to teach decoding (the process of turning groups of letters into words). But there is one enormous problem with phonics instruction when it comes to the English language:

English cannot be sounded out.

The fact that English cannot be sounded out has long been studied and documented. For instance, Dr. Godfrey Dewey in his book “Relative Frequency of English Speech Sounds” (Harvard University Press) found that fewer than 1 in 5 of the most common words in English are spelled phonetically. And Professor Julius Nyikos of Washington and Jefferson

College found 1,768 ways of spelling 40 English phonemes – an average of 44 per sound! For instance, here are 21 ways to spell the “uh” sound (there are actually 60):

About	gorgEOUs	sOn
verandAH	gingham	cupbOArD
captAIIn	specIAl	dOEs
restAURant	patIEncE	porpOIsE
ocean	fashIOIn	blOOd
burEAUcrat	conscIOUs	tOUgh
lunchEOIn	criticisM	hUmble

English has evolved over the course of millennia, without any central planning. Words from Germanic Anglo-Saxon (woman, Wednesday) and Old Norse (thrust, give) were mixed with words from the Latin (annual, bishop), and Norman French (beef, war). Science, technology and the Enlightenment added words, often based on Greek (anthropology, phone, school), and wars and globalization added even more, like “verandah” from Hindi and “tomato” from Nahuatl (Aztec) via Spanish. Words from other languages typically carry their spelling patterns into English. So, for example, the spelling “ch” represents different sounds in words drawn from Germanic (cheap, rich, such), Greek (chemist, anchor, echo) and French (chef, brochure, parachute).

The result is that English spelling is too irregular to reliably sound-out. **Though** beautiful, English is **tough** because the spelling wasn’t **thoroughly thought through**. As an example, consider this one sentence where the very common “ea” vowel combination can be pronounced 13 different ways:

I knew in my **head** and **heart** that the **theater bureau’s** harsh **reaction** to the **great** and **beautiful Ocean/Earth pageant** was **mean** spirited – despite the **caveat** that their review was **changeable**.

That’s why English dictionaries (unlike the dictionaries for every other Latin based language) have a pronunciation guide. **A pronunciation guide is included because**

English cannot be sounded out.

English Dictionary



laugh verb \ˈlɑf, ˈlæf\
: to show that you are happy or that you think something is funny by smiling and making a sound from your throat

Spanish Dictionary



risa.
(De riso).
f. Movimiento de la boca y otras partes del rostro, que demuestra alegría.

How can you teach a student to “sound out” a language that requires a pronunciation guide?

Various intrepid people throughout history have attempted to reform English spelling, including Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Darwin, George Bernard Shaw, Andrew Carnegie, Isaac Asimov and the Duke of Edinburgh. But they all failed and we are still faced with the simple fact that there is simply no way to reliably “sound-out” or spell English. That’s why, no matter what is done, no matter how hard teachers work, no matter which program is used, a huge percentage of students fail to achieve proficiency in reading.

(This is, of course, an even bigger problem for ELL students since the phonics approach is predicated on the idea that students will “sound out” words they already know – and ELL students don’t know those words.)

Phonics-focused curricula all attempt to teach 5 skills:

Phonics-focused curriculum

- | Phonemic Awareness
- | Phonics
- | Vocabulary
- | Fluency
- | Comprehension



However, the 2 skills used to teach decoding (phonemic awareness and phonics) are a house of cards that collapse in the face of English’s idiosyncratic spelling. And though these programs attempt to teach vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, if a student cannot decode, it is extremely difficult to learn these other skills.

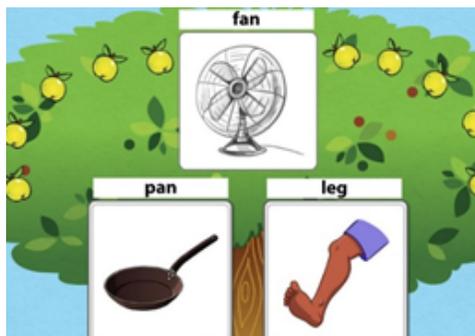
In order to overcome the problems inherent in sounding out, phonics asks children to memorize almost 600 spelling and pronunciation rules, such as the silent e rule, the double vowel rule, the consonant combination rule and on and on. Remembering nearly 600 rules is impossible for a child - or even an adult for that matter. What’s worse is that the rules themselves are riddled with exceptions. For better or worse, in English, irregularity is the rule. Put simply, if phonics worked as advertised it would be spelled “foniks.”

**i before e,
except when you
run a feisty heist
on a weird beige
foreign neighbour.**

Phonics-focused programs attempt to handle English’s irregularity by creating stilted texts where the teaching is based on sounds – not on meaning.

Here are a few examples:

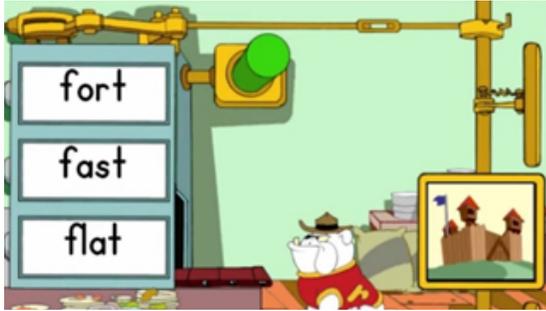
Lexia



Headsprout



iStation



Waterford



Here is a happy hog with hair.



Here is a happy hyena with hair.

Imagine Learning

"Meet the Phoneme"		Students practice recognizing phonemes by segmenting the initial sound and selecting pictures of objects that begin with the target phoneme.
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i-Ready

Words with Diphthongs and Digraphs						
This word list includes words with vowel diphthongs and digraphs. Choose words and levels of difficulty that match your students' needs and abilities.						
	blew	brew	chew	crew	dew	drew
ew /ōō/	flew	grew	knew	newt	screw	shrew
	shrewd	stew	strew	threw	yew	

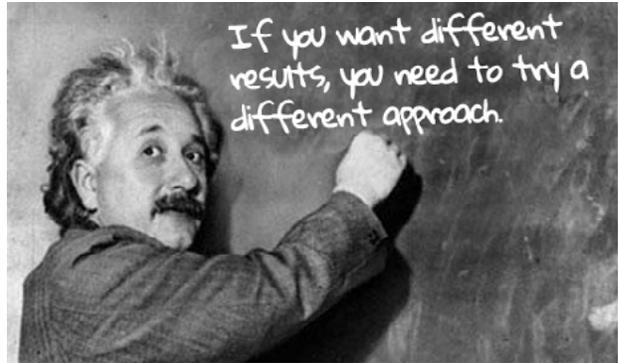
It doesn't matter which program you choose. They all use the same methodology - they organize words based on sounds - instead of meaning. In the world outside of phonics workbooks text is always organized based on meaning. Is it any wonder then that students are unable to read once they encounter a real book where all the words are organized based on meaning and not on sounds? Wishing for students to be able to decode English by sounding out the letters is doomed to high rates of failure.

If these methods worked, 2 out of 3 students would not fail to achieve proficiency.

As long as phonics-focused programs are used for reading instruction, a high rate of failure is guaranteed. Decades of real-world use have indisputably shown this.

So what needs to be done in order to teach students to become successful readers and truly open the gateway to knowledge and lifelong learning?

To paraphrase Einstein, ‘If you want different results, you need to try a different approach.’



Reading Kingdom presents a new approach to phonics instruction. It has achieved tremendous success in use by tens of thousands of parents who have been accessing the Reading Kingdom website for the past several years. Now we are making this innovative solution available to schools.

Naturally, schools are cautious. This is how it should be. But decades of results showing American students failing reading in very large numbers shows that it is time for change. If we keep doing the same thing, we will keep getting the same result.

Literacy requires mastery of a number of visual, auditory, cognitive and language skills. When students are taught the full range of required skills in a comprehensive and integrated fashion, they learn to read with fluency.

Six Skills of Reading & Writing

Sequencing	Motor Skills	Phonology	Syntax	Semantics	Text
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While Reading Kingdom teaches students how sounds work in English (phonology), it doesn't rely on students sounding out to be able to decode. Rather, it places sounds in the context of visual, auditory and written language skills, and it teaches literacy in an integrated fashion required for fluent reading and writing. When students learn all six skills they learn how to read and write with comprehension in a fraction of the time.

Reading Kingdom teaches students to read and write with comprehension at a 3rd grade level (Lexile 750) in only 12-18 months.

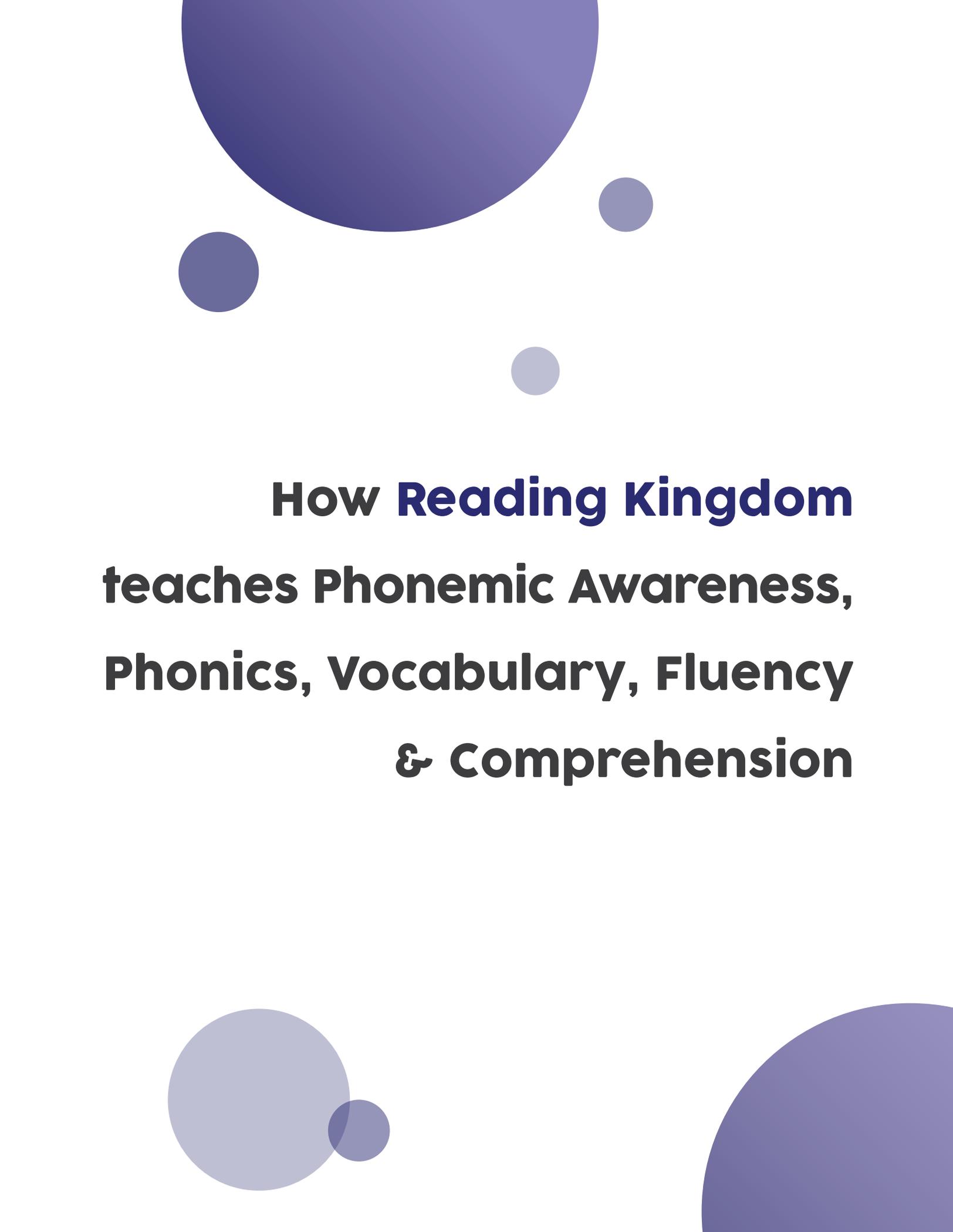
Reading Kingdom also provides:

- Immediate interactive feedback,
- Competency based learning, and
- Personalized adaptive instruction.

Moreover it's inexpensive, easy to use, and fun for students.

Key Benefits:

- The first program that uses the “Phonics plus” Method
Program is adaptive and is personalized for each student
- Requires minimal professional development to implement
- Students can use the program both at school and at home
- Works on any device with an Internet connection (including Windows, Mac, iPad, Android, Chromebooks, etc.)



**How Reading Kingdom
teaches Phonemic Awareness,
Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency
& Comprehension**

Phonemic Awareness & Phonics

Reading Kingdom teaches phonemic awareness and phonics throughout.

There is a specific format in the program known as “Savvy Sounds” that precedes the teaching of each word in the program. It teaches the sounds that letters and words make while teaching phonemic awareness (recognizing that words are made up of a variety of sound units) and phonics (sound-spelling relationships).

Moreover, Reading Kingdom uses two techniques not found in any other program that address some of the most complicated aspects of phonics instruction. These are:

Bit Blends Technique

This is a groundbreaking approach to teaching sound blending, typically one of the hardest phonics-focused skills that students must acquire. Instead of having a student do the complex but usual sound blend (e.g., “kuh” + “aaa” + “tuh” to make “cat”) Bit Blending is a process by which the program provides the initial blend (e.g., “ca” with the word “cat”) and has the student add only a single sound to create the word (“cat”). You can think of it like putting training wheels on the blending process. As students skills increase, the training wheels can be removed and their blending skills flourish. This simplification is of critical importance and exists only in Reading Kingdom.

Orthographic Phonemics

This is an ingenious method of using writing to teach students to see sound patterns. In this way they can discern the differences between the many homophones (to, two & too), homonyms (dog’s bark vs. tree bark), homographs (tell a lie vs. lie down) and heteronyms (ship’s bow, vs. archery bow) that make English spelling and pronunciation so confusing.

These innovative methods overcome the traditional problems associated with phonics-focused decoding instruction.

Vocabulary, Fluency & Comprehension

Reading Kingdom teaches approximately 700 words and includes 30 books divided into 5 levels (achieving a Lexile level of 750L by Book 30). Unlike traditional phonics-

focused systems, the books are not restricted to distorted texts composed of seemingly easy CVC words that can be sounded out (e.g., “The fat cat sat on the flat mat.”). Instead they are designed to convey key linguistic structures that provide the students with an understanding of how language is designed to convey meaningful messages. Here is a brief description of the way the 5 levels are structured:

| Level 1

Characters such as kids and animals are central to any story. This first level presents the simple, basic phrases and sentences needed to discuss these key “residents” of the story world. (Lexile level = 230L)

| Level 2

After being introduced, in Level 1, to characters (such as kids and animals) and key properties of those characters, Level 2 increases the complexity of the writing to introduce longer sentences, more sentences on a page and some unique features of text such as quotations and the punctuation they require. This level also offers pages of text unaccompanied by pictures--a key component of effective reading. (Lexile level = 350L)

| Level 3

In Level 3, the books systematically introduce the past tense - a form that is critical to effective retelling of events. In addition, the stories are longer and extend over two books. Comprehension activities are introduced aimed at teaching students the vital skill of knowing how to summarize stories. (Lexile level = 480L)

| Level 4

Non-story books such as books on science are critical to reading success. At this level, students are introduced to science-related texts such as the habits of animals and the manned space flight to the moon. Presentation of this material naturally entails more complex vocabulary and more sophisticated sentences. (Lexile level = 620L)

Level 5

At this level, the books offer richer, fantasy-based stories that contain characters who experience complex thoughts, emotions and experiences. This sets the stage for the students to independently and successfully read the wide array of appealing books that are aimed not at teaching reading, but at enjoying reading. (Lexile level = 750L)

In the teaching of vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, Reading Kingdom employs innovative techniques not found in any other system. These include:

High Frequency Syntax System

This method leverages the power of the 120 most common words in English (often called “little words,” “sight words,” “function words” or “non-content words”) to teach students the structure of English. These 120 words occupy 60% of every page of text in English from first grade through graduate school. Even more importantly, these 120 words form the structure of our language. For instance, they are used to identify nouns, verbs, singular and plural, and they also form questions, negate, indicate space and establish tense.

Identify nouns

the boy, **some** toys, etc.

Identify verbs

is running, **are** playing, etc.

Identify singular

a girl, **his** home, etc.

Identify plural

they ran, **these** boxes, etc.

Establish tense

is here, **was** here, **will** be here, etc.

Form questions

What is? **Did** she? **Are** they? etc.

Negate

but, **not**, etc.

Indicate space

in the corner, **on the** box, etc.

When students learn to decode and understand the way these 120 words work to form the syntax of our language, not only can they decode 60% of every page of text they will ever read, but they then understand the relationships among all the other words. No other program teaches these words the way Reading Kingdom does. This is an incredibly powerful and proven technique that creates students who read with

fluency and comprehension.

I Intensive Word Teaching Technique

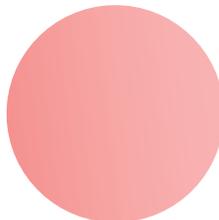
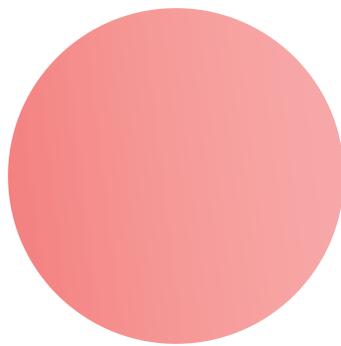
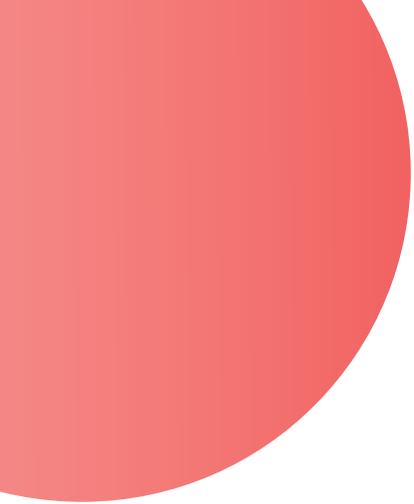
Before students are given a book, they are taught the 1) **spelling**, 2) **pronunciation**, 3) **meaning** and 4) **usage in context of all the words in the book**. This ensures they can easily decode and understand what they're reading.

I Visual Acumen System

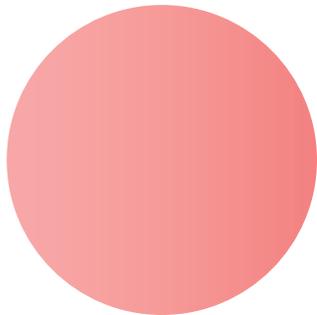
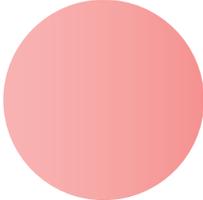
Reading Kingdom teaches students advanced visual skills that eliminate the tendency of many students to guess at words based on characteristics such as length and starting letter. These skills rapidly increase fluency.

I Comprehension Modeling Method

Reading Kingdom uses modeling, a very powerful teaching method, to help students to construct main idea summaries of what they are reading. This is a vast improvement over the traditional “passage with questionnaire” approach to comprehension instruction found in other programs.



Reading Kingdom:
Key Benefits for Schools



Cost effective

The cost for Reading Kingdom educational licenses start at US\$20/student/year (US\$300 minimum) and reduce to US\$10/student/year at 300 students (US\$3,000 minimum). Teachers and administrators may add, remove or switch students in and out of their account at any time. Our pricing includes rapid and responsive technical and program support available by phone, email and webinar.

Very easy to use

Reading Kingdom is designed for students to use on their own (under teacher supervision). All students need to do is click the big start button and the program takes care of the rest. This way one teacher can easily teach a classroom full of students, with each student receiving individualized instruction. Students can also use the program both at school and at home.



Customized Professional Development

We want you to succeed, so we provide you with professional development from knowledgeable people that is customized to your needs. We provide this via:

- Telephone
- Email
- Webinar
- On-site visits



Integrated Fidelity System

Automatically email usage and outcome reports to:

- Administrators
- Parents & guardians
- Teachers
- Other stakeholders

Reading Kingdom also automatically helps teachers keep track of how often their students are using the program and how well they are doing. If any student experiences difficulties using the program, teachers are emailed a note with details on how they should proceed.

The screenshot shows a web interface for generating a report. At the top, there are tabs for 'Download Report', 'E-Mail Teachers', and 'E-Mail Parents'. Below these are several sections: 1) A list of checkboxes for 'Include Expired Students (1)', 'Include Hidden Students (1)', and 'Include days/week usage report'. A 'Number of Students Per Report' dropdown is set to '10'. 2) A 'Default days/week view' dropdown is set to '30 days'. 3) A section titled 'The report contains charts that show overall progress of all students...' with 'Start Date' (08/14/2017) and 'End Date' (01/17/2018) input fields. On the right side, there is a prominent blue button labeled 'Download student report in Excel form', followed by the text 'Total Students:' and a description: 'This will download an excel file (.xls) with a complete report detailing all student(s) activity.'

Adaptive Teaching

Reading Kingdom has been designed to take advantage of students' strengths and to help them overcome any weaknesses. As students move through the program, the path is adapted to their particular needs. Because of this, each student's experience in Reading Kingdom is unique. This prevents students from wasting time learning something they already know (which leads to boredom) or being faced with tasks that are too difficult (which leads to frustration). The program begins with a placement test and then continuously and seamlessly determines whether a student should skip portions of the program or receive review when needed.

Reading Kingdom adapts to your students using

- Placement tests
- Word pre-tests
- Regular progress checks with review if needed



Engagement

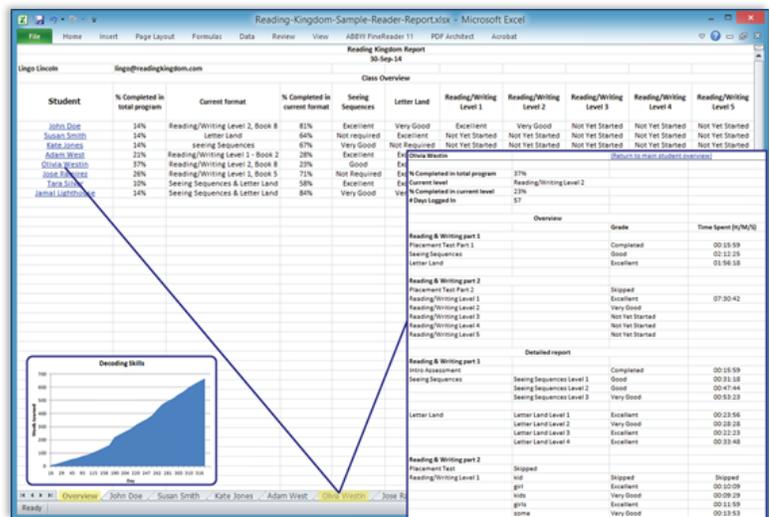
Students like their computer based learning to be fun. That's why the program uses principles of gaming such as points, levels, challenges and rewards to stimulate engagement.

Students also receive diplomas for each stage of the program that they complete.



Reporting

The program provides extensive reports that are available online and as downloadable spreadsheets. These show all student performance on all elements of the program. Reports show usage statistics, including time spent on task, as well as the results for each student on each lesson in the program.



Works Everywhere

Reading Kingdom works on any device with an Internet connection including Windows, Mac, iPad, Android and Chromebooks. The program can be used at school and at home, or anywhere else a student may be. All progress is stored online and students can always pick up right where they left off.



Works Everywhere

Reading Kingdom includes built-in modifications for ELL students and older students who are still behind in their reading ability. There is also an additional version available

(separate license required) for students with autism and other special needs.



- Robust backend, hosted by Amazon Web Services, that is scalable for any number of students.



- Teaches students to read and write with comprehension at a 3rd grade level (Lexile 750) in only 12-18 months.



The Six Skills Of **Reading and Writing**

The six skills of reading and writing are: sequencing, writing, sounds (phonology), meaning (semantics), grammar (syntax) and comprehension. Here is a little bit about how and why Reading Kingdom teaches those skills.

Sequencing (Letter Order)

When we are young children and see items that are grouped together, we learn that their sequence, or order, doesn't matter. For example:



Here are some puppies



& here are the same puppies...



& here are the same puppies...

Our experience has taught us that these are all the “same” group of adorable puppies. The order they appear in doesn't make any difference. However, when we learn how to read, suddenly, the sequence of the objects becomes essential.

Sequencing is what allows us to read the same letter combinations as different words by changing their order — as you can see in these words:

now . won . own / pale . leap . plea / eat . tea . ate

These differences in sequencing are obvious to us, but not to a young child who has not yet learned to read. Amazingly, children are not taught this essential aspect of reading. However, in the Seeing Sequences segment of Reading Kingdom, students easily and rapidly acquire the sequencing skills they need. Because Reading Kingdom is adaptive, only those students who will benefit from this format, will receive it.

Writing

Writing is reading's sister skill and is an essential part of reading education. Research shows that teaching writing and reading together is far more effective than teaching reading alone. For example, it has been found that **teaching a student to write a word accurately is 5 times as effective in facilitating word recognition as reading the same word once**. In other words, reading fluency is attained much faster via writing. That's why Reading Kingdom incorporates a lot of writing.

To write successfully, students need to have mastered the physical skills involved in creating written words. With paper and pencil material, this means handwriting; with computers, this means keyboarding. Fortunately, for young children, keyboarding does not entail their having to use all ten fingers. A single finger is enough. But the movements of that finger must be guided by teaching which leads the students to have a solid sense of the keyboard layout. With that mental map in place, hunting and pecking vanishes to be replaced by smooth, accurate movements on any keys they need.

The solution is provided in Reading Kingdom's Letter Land format which offers an integrated system for teaching students the skills for recognizing and selecting the letters they need to produce for effective spelling and writing. This segment teaches upper and lower case letters, as well as the beginnings of punctuation.

Sounds/Phonology

Phonology is the skill that allows you to take a set of letters (such as “c”, “a”, and “t”) and translate them into sounds that form real words (e.g. “cat”). Unfortunately, the current methods for teaching “sounding out” do not work for many students. As previously noted, English is highly irregular and there are 1,768 to spell 40 phonemes. For example, the sound “u” as in “nut” can be spelled 60 different ways (e.g. **a**bout, **o**cean, gorge**eo**us, **nati**on, **do**es, **pati**ence, **wome**n, etc.).

The “solution” that traditional phonics approaches offer to get around this obstacle is to have students learn “rules” about the way letters work. In fact, Phonics has developed almost 600 rules! But the problem with the “rules” is that they are riddled with exceptions.

Fortunately, there are easier and more effective methods for converting letters into

sounds without requiring students to learn complicated and error-prone rules. That's why Reading Kingdom uses two unique methods that lead to rapid sound and word identification and do not require students to memorize any rules. These are:

Bit Blends

This technique eases the demands of blending – which is very challenging for students – by providing part of the sound blend and requiring students to complete the other part. It's like putting training wheels on the process of blending. After a period of time, students learn how to blend on their own.

Orthographic Phonemics

Teaches the sounds of letters in words via writing so students learn to see sound patterns in numerous situations that can be very challenging for students, such as words where the same letters have different sounds (ie, play**ed**, paint**ed** and work**ed**) and words that sound the same but are spelled differently (ie, **their**, **there** and **they're**), etc.

Semantics (Meaning)

In early reading students are typically presented with pages of words that have nothing to do with one another except for sharing sets of letters. For instance, here is a typical phonics worksheet:

map	pot	mop	kid	get	ten
lap 	got 	top 	lid 	pet 	pen 
nap	hot	pop	did	jet	hen
hum	van	bug	ox	map	rug
gum 	can 	hug 	fox 	tap 	tug 
yum	ran	dug	box	rap	mug

There are very significant problems with this approach. For one thing, using this method students get accustomed to worksheets showing endless sets of disconnected words. In real reading material, of course, words never cluster this way. Even in the earliest readers, **words are always linked together on the basis of meaning – not sounds**. A story about a hungry animal, for example, might read as follows:

The bear was hungry. She was looking for some food. She spotted a tree with berries...

None of these words shares common letter patterns. To read this material, a student must be able to shift rapidly from one different word to the next. The sound-sharing words of worksheets do not prepare students to do this, leaving them at a loss when they have to do actual reading.

A second key problem is that in English there are many words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and pronunciations (sounds), or sound the same, but have different spellings and meanings. **The correct word and meaning can only be gleaned from context**. In fact, Charles C. Fries, author of “Linguistics and Reading,” found that the 500 most-used words in the Oxford English Dictionary have 14,070 separate and different meanings, an average of 28 each.

For example, consider the following words with multiple meanings:

- **bay:** a color, a tree, a part of a building, a body of water, a prolonged bark
- **fair:** good weather, impartial, an exposition, a light color

And these sentences:

Since there is no time like the **present**, he thought it was time to **present** the **present**.

They decided to **desert** their friends in the **desert** restaurant before eating **dessert**.

Context makes these distinctions clear. Without context, how is a student to know?

For students to become effective readers, from the start, they must learn to read words

organized to convey meaningful messages. The reading and writing materials in Reading Kingdom all pay close attention to meaning so that a student is always working with words and sentences that actually mean something – just like the words and sentences they encounter in real life.

Syntax (Grammar)

Intensive High frequency Syntax System: Reading Kingdom uses an Intensive High frequency Syntax System which takes advantage of the fact that while English contains more than one million words, out of that vast number, there is a very small, unique group made up of only 100 commonly used words. They are words such as “the,” “is,” “was,” “they,” “how,” “what,” “to ” and “does” and are often referred to as “non-content” words because they seem to lack any clear meaning.

Because these words cannot be sounded out, they are labeled as “exceptions” and they are given very minimal teaching time.

Although they are often overlooked, 100 or so of the non-content words form the majority of any page of text you will ever read in the English language – regardless of whether the book is for a child or an adult.

(In the sentence above, the **bolded** non-content words comprise 63% of the total.)

Moreover, these powerful words are essential to our system of grammar because they:

! Identify nouns

the boy, **some** toys, etc.

! Identify verbs

is running, **are** playing, etc.

! Identify singular

a girl, **his** home, etc.

! Identify plural

they ran, **these** boxes, etc.

! Establish tense

is here, **was** here, **will** be here, etc.

! Form questions

What is? **Did** she? **Are** they? etc.

! Negate

but, **not**, etc.

! Indicate space

in the corner, **on the** box, etc.

So if you teach students these 100 words, they can read 60% of every page they will ever read and even more importantly they will understand the relationships among all the other words on that page. The importance of this to reading instruction cannot be overstated.

Reading Kingdom is the only system that has been designed to leverage the power of this group of words by thoroughly teaching their meaning and usage in context (and not just as a list of “high frequency” words to memorize). As a result, students are provided with a potent tool that makes reading easier, smoother, and easier to understand.

Comprehension (Text)

Books represent the heart and soul of reading. Unless they have been beset by failure, young children have no deeper yearning than being able to read books on their own.

Unfortunately, motivation is not everything. Good books tell stories. To do that, they need to use a fair number of complex words, ideas, and sentences. These books are often too long and complex for many students, with the result that students find themselves adrift in a sea of unrecognized words. When this happens, the experience for novice readers is not pleasure, but rather pain as they experience repeated errors. And nothing is more devastating to learning than high rates of error.

Any teacher whose student struggles with the printed page will tell you the real story. With repeated failure, motivation is transformed into tension and misery. Students will love reading only if they can read the messages on the printed page easily and effortlessly and if they see the way ideas are put together to create meaningful stories. Without comprehending the main idea conveyed by the books, students aren't really reading.

Many other programs use the method of “passage with questionnaire.” For example:

The United States

The United States is a large country. It is the third largest in the whole world! It is located in a continent called North America. Parts of the United States touch three different oceans. The United States has tall mountains, wide plains, deserts, hills, rivers, lakes, volcanoes, and even rainforests! People from all over the world have come to live in the United States.

1.) The United States is the _____ country in the world.
A.) smallest C.) second largest
B.) third largest D.) largest

2.) Parts of the United States touch _____ different oceans.
A.) three C.) four
B.) two D.) five

3.) The United States does not have _____.
A.) 50 states C.) volcanoes
B.) mountains D.) continents

The problem with this approach is that it only teaches students to recall details. And a student can remember many details about a book and still have no idea what the main idea was.

Other programs use a whole language approach to teach comprehension. But whole language's concentration on "authentic literature" offers stories that are often too complex for beginning readers to decipher, and children are left to fend for themselves in attempting to figure out how written ideas are organized and what those ideas are designed to say.

Reading Kingdom offers two innovative methods for ensuring comprehension:

I Intensive Word Teaching Method

Before reading a book, students learn all the words using 4 formats that teach a word's 1) spelling, 2) pronunciation, 3) meaning and 4) usage in context. This way, students can be assured that they can successfully read and comprehend the program's 30 custom books.

I Comprehension Modeling Method

After reading a book, students are taught how to form "main idea" summaries of the stories they have read via the highly effective pedagogical method of modeling. It's like putting training wheels on the process. After a period of time, students learn how to grasp and recapitulate the main idea on their own.

The Special Ingredient - Our Hidden Abilities

Amazingly, some of the most critical skills for reading are ones we don't even know we have – our hidden abilities (sometimes referred to as 'knowing how without knowing why').

By the time a child starts to read, they have already mastered a great deal of spoken language and as a result, they have assimilated an incredible amount of knowledge that forms the basis for what we call their hidden abilities. For example, even a young child may know that the statement "I am looking at she" is incorrect while the statement "I am looking at her" is correct. While they may not know the technical reason why it's

correct, they just know what “sounds right.”

Consider the following examples:

We ought to **record** that he broke the **record**.

A large farm was used to **produce** the **produce**.

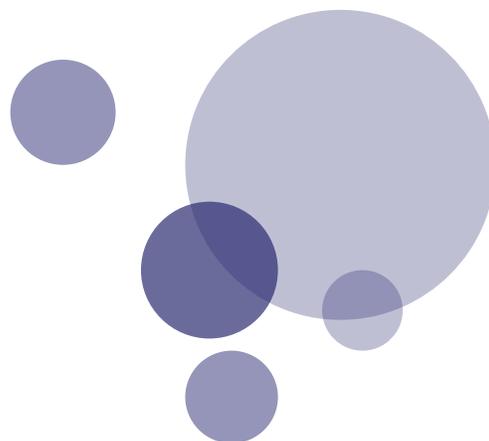
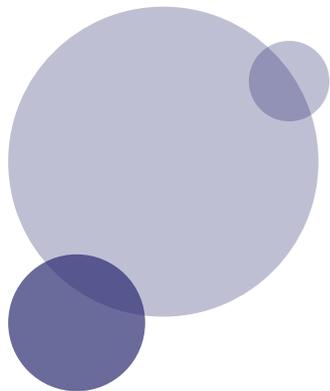
In each sentence, our hidden grammatical abilities lead us instantly and automatically to offer two different pronunciations for what appears to be the identical word.

George Bernard Shaw was a strong advocate for English spelling reform. He used to say he could spell the word “fish” as “ghoti” by using the “gh” from “rough,” the “o” from “women” and the “ti” from “nation.” He did this to make an important point about the irregularities of English spelling in a humorous way. We sense, however, that this made up spelling could never be. And the reason is that our hidden abilities tell us that

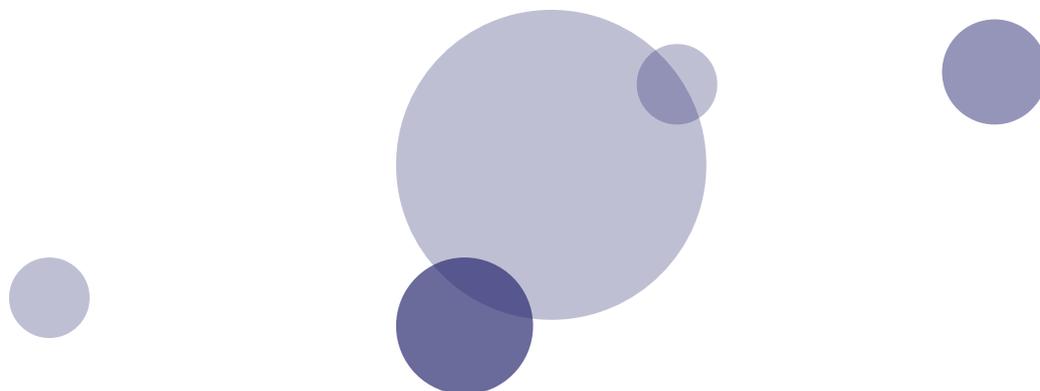
- the “gh” pair can have an “f” sound, but not when it starts a word – then it has the “g” sound as in ghost.
- the “o” can have the “i” sound but not in a one-syllable word.
- the “ti” can have the “sh” sound but not without an adjoining “on.”

The power of our hidden abilities is truly remarkable. They allow us to construct amazingly intricate sentences without knowing how we do it, or why they are correct. They are the key ingredient that makes reading smooth, effortless and automatic.

Reading Kingdom is the only system with activities to foster the smooth and rapid development of our vital hidden abilities and then to capitalize on these abilities to empower all students — even those who have been struggling — to become star readers.



Components of the Reading Kingdom Curriculum



Reading Kingdom is a comprehensive program that teaches a student all the skills needed for reading and writing success from Pre-K to approximately a third grade level (starting with a Lexile level of 80 in Book 1 and moving up to 750 by Book 30). Teaching has two key components: one is what is taught (the content), the other is how it is taught (the method). Reading Kingdom offers key innovations in both areas.

Reading Kingdom was designed for students to do one session per day, 4-5 days per week. However, students can, if they want, do more.

The program contains the following components:

Placement Test

I Goal

This portion of the program determines the reading and writing skills a student already possesses so that the teaching can start at the optimum level for success.

I Components

Students are assessed on their ability to read and write words and sentences that become increasingly complex.

I Length of time to complete

1 to 2 sessions (the Placement Test stops when a student's performance shows the best level at which to start the program).



Reading & Writing Levels 1-5

Reading Kingdom's reading and writing formats are divided into 5 levels with 6 books at each level (for a total of 30 books). Prior to reading a book a student learns all the words of that book using 4 different formats that teach a word's spelling, pronunciation, meaning and usage in context. In this way, once a student reaches a book, he or she can already read and understand the meaning of all the words in that book. As the levels

progress, the words and books become more complex and a format that reinforces reading comprehension is added as well. The books start with a Lexile level of 80 in Book 1 and moving up to a Lexile level of 750 by the end of the program.

** See below for a more detailed explanation and images of the formats used to teach reading and writing.*

Goal

This portion of the program teaches the skills of reading, writing and comprehension, starting with short, simple words and phrases and moving on to increasingly complex language.

Components

Each of the 5 levels offers the following in terms of new words and new books:

Level	New Words	New Words+ Variants	New Books	Lexile Level
1	36	63	6	230L
2	60	96	6	350L
3	62	177	6	480L
4	63	180	6	620L
5	62	151	6	750L

Many words are taught with multiple variants. For instance, a word like “park” will be taught along with “parks,” “parking,” and “parked.” Consequently, the total number of words taught in the program is considerably higher than the number of new words alone.

Each word is taught through a series of 4 fun and game-like formats that take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The word teaching formats have been scientifically designed to teach all the components in reading and writing including word recognition, spelling, comprehension and sentence construction.

Level 1 starts with simple words and phrases such as *a kid* and *Here are some toys*.

By Levels 4 and 5, the student is reading and writing sentences like:

One of the things in the sky is the moon. The moon does not look the same all the time.

There was a baby bullfrog. He was also very bullheaded. He liked to go to places on his own and did not stay with his mother.

At every point, the words are carefully combined to form relevant and meaningful sentences. For example, on its own, a word such as “they” has little meaning. It takes on meaning only if it is referring to a set of objects that has been noted. So, even in Level 1, in learning the word “they,” students read and write sentences such as:

The kids can jump, but they are not jumping.

As the program progresses, the concepts and the sentences increase in complexity. For example, in learning the word “just,” the content includes sentences such as:

There were two mice who wanted to eat. Just as they were getting near some food, a cat saw them. They did not like that at all.

As these examples illustrate, throughout the program, words and sentences steadily interact to both (a) teach the meaning of the words and (b) build a student’s linguistic knowledge.

I Length of time to complete

Typically one new word or one new book is offered in a session. As students become more proficient, they are taught two new words per session. Assuming a minimum of 1 session per day 4 to 5 days per week, each level takes approximately 10-15 weeks to complete. Students can do more sessions in a day (we recommend no more than 2) and more than 4-5 days per week, in which case they can complete the program even faster. Students do not necessarily have to do all the levels. Based on the Placement Test, they enter at the level that is appropriate to the skills they already possess. In addition, prior to teaching a word, the program determines if a student already knows

that word, and if so, the program skips that word and moves on to the next word.

Progress Check Levels 1-5

Goal

This portion of the program determines if a student has mastered the material after each level of the reading and writing formats.



Components

Using content appropriate to the particular level, a student is asked to read and write a range of words and sentences.

Length of time to complete

Each Progress Check takes one session. If the Progress Check shows that a student has mastered the skills of that level, he or she moves on to the next level. If the Progress Check shows that some review is required, the student is guided to the Review format for that particular level. Each review takes 1-3 weeks.

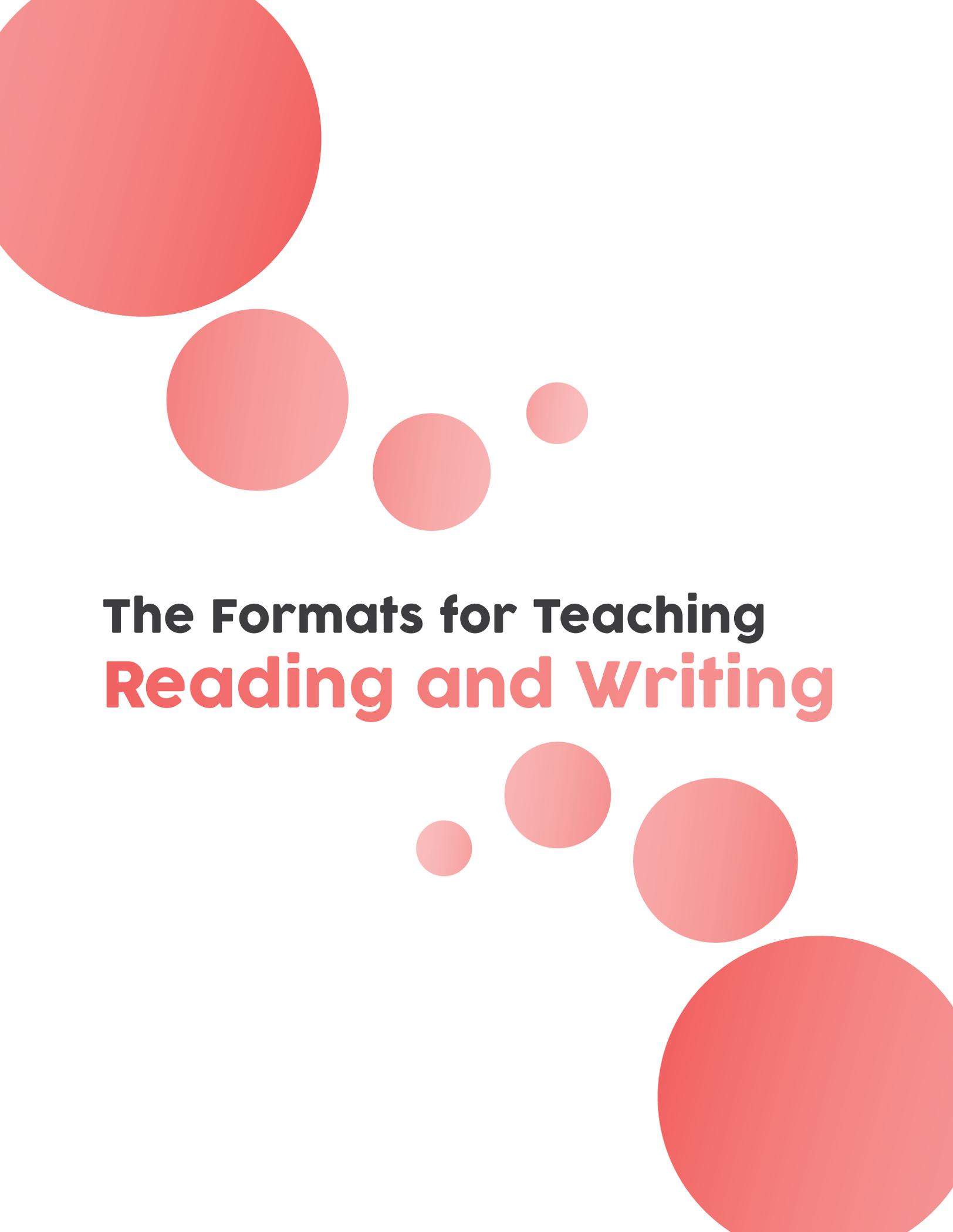
Post Session Options

At the end of each teaching session, a student has the option to re-do a range of earlier sessions. These activities are optional.

Recommended Usage

We recommend 1-2 new sessions per day, at least 4 days per week (5 or more is better). Individual logins for students can be created so students can use the program at home as well as at school.

At the beginning of the program (Kindergarten level), lessons are approximately 10-15 minutes long. By the end of the program (3rd grade level) lessons are approximately 30 minutes long.



The Formats for Teaching Reading and Writing

In reading, there is so much emphasis on letters and sounds that you might think that's all there is to learn. Reading, though, is much more than "sounding out." At a minimum, you need to be able to



- look at a word and instantly know what it "says".
- recognize the many different sounds that the same letters can make.
- blend sounds together to form words.
- keep track of the lines of print which carry the words.
- write words smoothly and accurately.
- know the meaning of the words.
- see how the words fit in with other words to create meaningful messages.

To achieve these skills, Reading Kingdom uses a unique set of formats that are clustered into two groupings: one is for content words - words like boy, car, go, happy, and fast which refer to concepts in the real world; the other is for non-content words—words like the, is, was, then and to which are essential to combining words into meaningful sentences.

Seeing Sequences

This format teaches the visual scanning and memory skills needed for reading words and sentences. It is important to remember that prior to reading a child never experiences situations where the identity of a set of objects



is determined by left-to-right order. With words, however, the left-to-right sequence is crucial. That is why Reading Kingdom teaches this key skill. Smooth sequencing skills prevent numerous reading problems later.

The Seeing Sequences format is comprised of 11 lessons and is only given to students who require it based on the results of the Placement Test.

Letter Land



The Letter Land format develops the smooth, efficient ability to type the letters and punctuation keys on the keyboard. This skill is essential for using Reading Kingdom, and it is important to note that while a student may already possess some reading abilities, if he or she is not yet comfortable in using a keyboard in a

smooth, steady manner, the student will be guided to this format.

The Letter Land format is comprised of 11 lessons and is only given to students who require it based on the results of the Placement Test.

Mini-Test

As part of Reading Kingdom’s customization feature, before each content word is taught, the program tests whether a student already knows the word. If he or she does know the word, the teaching formats for that word are bypassed and the program moves to the next word. If the student does not yet know the word, he or she begins the teaching formats for that word.

Savvy Sounds - an easy way to learn to blend sounds

In “sounding out,” it is not enough to put a sound on each letter. To arrive at words, the individual sounds have to be blended together—a difficult process for many students. Savvy Sounds overcomes these hurdles by having the program contribute

to the blending process using a unique method we call Bit Blends. For example, for a word like smile, the computer will show and say the first part of the word (e.g. “smi”). Then the screen shows a set of words and while the audio says the target word (e.g. “smile”) which the student has to select.



Since the beginning blends are already in place, the student has to deal only with the final sound in selecting the word.

Pick the Picture - learning the meaning of words



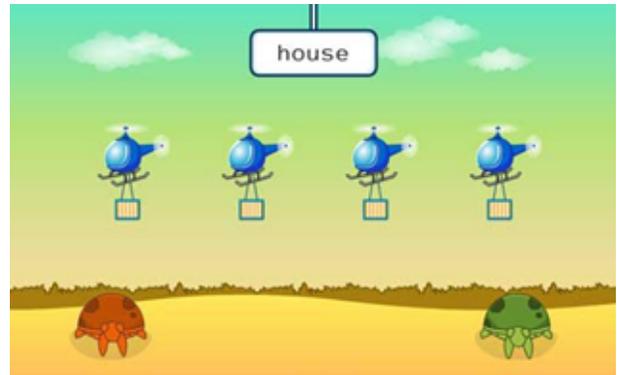
For some words, it’s easy to show the meaning of the word. For a word like girl, for example, all that’s needed is an appropriate picture. But for many words, this will not work. Carefully constructed language is needed to link the word to the visual information. That’s what Pick the Picture offers.

For example, In teaching the word “change” the student sees the following and is told “click the one who can change the place where it stays. Then the student writes the word.

Find and Fill - learning to spell

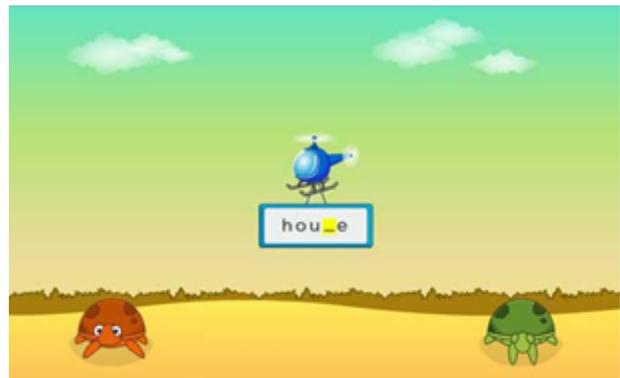
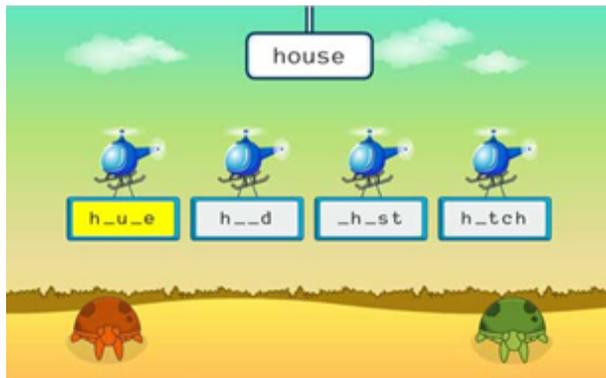
In teaching spelling, it’s common to ask students to write the same word several times in a row. Unfortunately, this tends to be ineffective. It’s important to get the student to focus in a more thoughtful manner. The Find and Fill format, which uses Reading Kingdom’s unique orthographic phonemics method is designed for that purpose.

For example, as you can see with the word **house**, the student first sees a model of the word.



Then a set of incomplete words appears and the student is asked to find the one that can become house.

Following that, the student has to fill in the incomplete word to make it into the target word.



Stay and Play – learning how words combine in messages

In learning to read, it's important to go beyond single words and deal with words as they appear in books; namely, when they are used in combination with other words. Stay 'n Play achieves this goal by teaching contextual decoding and sustained writing with punctuation.

First, in learning a word, in this case, the word **cold**, the student sees a set of words:

Based on the audio instructions, the student has to read and then click on selected words that then



form a meaningful sentence. The sentence is followed by a graphic that illustrates its meaning.

Then for the final step, guided by audio instructions, the student has to type some or all of the words in the sentence - including its punctuation.

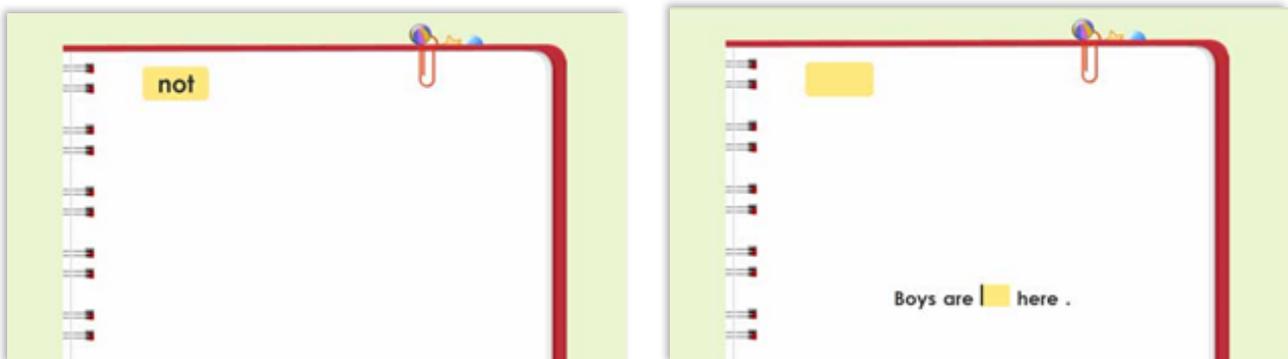


Write in to Read - learning the meaning of the “high frequency words”

The non-content words (such as he, was, be, the, does) are often referred to as “sight” words or “high frequency words.” Because they cannot be “sounded out,” they receive relatively little teaching time. Yet these words typically occupy 60% or more of any page of text and they are critical to meaning as you can see in the following sentences which differ by the single word “to.”

The boy walked the dog
The boy walked to the dog.

While it’s not possible to offer a student a definition of these words, it is possible to teach their meaning. Write in to Read does this by carefully pairing words and graphics. For example, in learning the word “not” the student first sees a sentence where the word has to be inserted.



The sentence is followed by a graphic that illustrates its meaning.

Then guided by audio instructions, the student has to type some or all of the words in the sentence—including its punctuation.

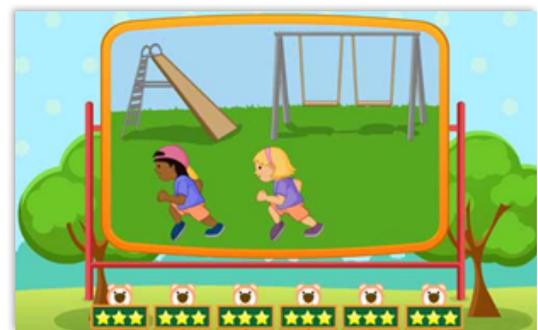
Replace the Space- extending the meaning of the “little words”



This format gives the student additional insight into the meaning and use of non-content words using Reading Kingdom’s predictive decoding and predictive comprehension methods. It offers the target word (in this case, the word both) and embeds it in a sentence where several of the other words have missing letters.



After the words are filled in, a graphic appears that illustrates the meaning of the sentence.

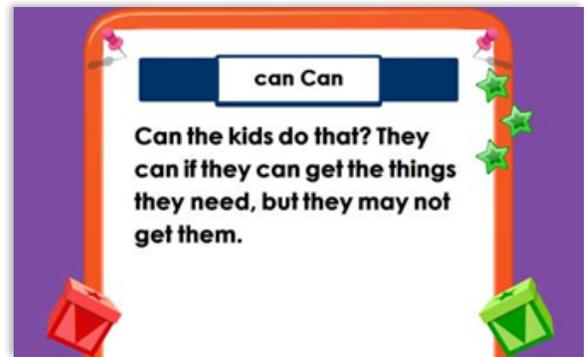


Detect and Select - learning to scan lines of print

Successful reading requires a steady scanning of words from left-to-right. For example, the same words (**can fly they**) convey very different messages depending on their order (e.g.,

they can fly vs. can they fly). To help students achieve smooth scanning, the Detect 'n Select format shows lines of text. For the word **can**, for example, they see the following:

The student's job is to scan the lines and click on each instance of the target word.



Sentence Maker - learning to write

Spoken and written language share many of the same properties and benefits. But there are also many differences – differences that make the mastery of reading more challenging than its spoken counterpart. One key difference is to be found in the area of writing. While most students can verbally express ideas smoothly and automatically, writing requires far greater attention and reflection.

The traditional teaching of reading provides relatively little guidance in helping students master the processes of writing. Sentence Maker has been designed to address this important issue by teaching students, using highly effective modeling techniques and carefully designed text, the key skills that lay the basis for the more advanced writing they will eventually be doing as their schooling progresses.

At the outset, the sentences are short, containing only words they have already learned such as **Here is a bird.** and **A bug can rest.** Within a few months, the students have moved on to producing complex single sentences such as **The dog is sad because he has nothing to eat.** and **That boy uses a computer all by himself.** as well as connected multiple sentences such **Ants also live in earth. They make nests there.**



Gleaning Meaning - getting the gist

Starting with book 13, there is a comprehension format at the end of each book called Gleaning Meaning. This format uses Reading Kingdom's "Comprehension Modeling Method" to teach students how to formulate main idea summaries of the books they are reading. Capturing the main idea, is the essential aspect of reading comprehension.



One of the things in the sky is the moon. The moon does not look the same all the time. Sometimes, it looks big. Then it starts to look smaller and smaller. Then some days, you can't see the moon at all. For a long time, people have wanted to go to the moon, but they had no way to get _____. Then people started to make _____. The rockets did take some people to the _____. When they were on the moon, they saw some _____. Now some of those rocks are here on our _____.

her it **there** this



The ●
Reading Kingdom Books



The books are divided into five levels with six stories at each level (for a total of 30 books), achieving a Lexile level of 750 by Book 30.

Level	New Words	New Words+ Variants	New Books	Lexile Level
1	36	63	6	230L
2	60	96	6	350L
3	62	177	6	480L
4	63	180	6	620L
5	62	151	6	750L

Level 1

Characters such as kids and animals are central to any story. This first level presents the simple, basic phrases and sentences needed to discuss these key “residents” of the story world.



Book 1



Book 6

Level 2

After being introduced, in Level 1, to characters (such as kids and animals) and key properties of those characters, Level 2 increases the complexity of the writing to introduce longer sentences, more sentences on a page and some unique features of text such as quotations and the punctuation they require. This level also offers pages of text unaccompanied by pictures--a key component of effective reading.



Here are some things. One is a thing that can fly. It is not a plane, but it can fly like a plane. What is it? It is a bird.

Book 9

Are there other things that can also do that? Yes, other things can fly and swim. Which things can do that? Some bugs can do that. Water bugs can do that. Like birds, water bugs have wings that are good for flying.

Book 12

Level 3

In Level 3, the books systematically introduce the past tense - a form that is critical to effective retelling of events. In addition, the stories are longer and extend over two books. Comprehension activities are introduced aimed at teaching students the vital skill of knowing how to summarize stories.



This frog was not like other frogs. He only liked to jump. The frog did not stop jumping. He jumped all the time.

Book 13



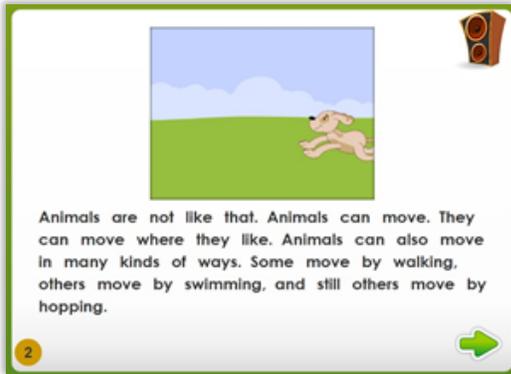
There was a park that was very dirty. Some kids wanted to get out of the park. But some other kids wanted to stay. They wanted to fix all the _____. All the kids did stay and they did clean the _____. They put all the dirty things into _____. Then the park was a nice place for _____.

bags dolls rockets things

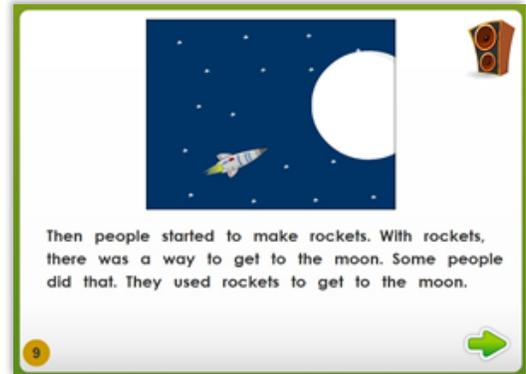
Book 18 – Gleaning Meaning comprehension exercise

Level 4

Non-story books such as books on science are critical to reading success. At this level, students are introduced to science-related texts such as the habits of animals and the manned space flight to the moon. Presentation of this material naturally entails more complex vocabulary and more sophisticated sentences.



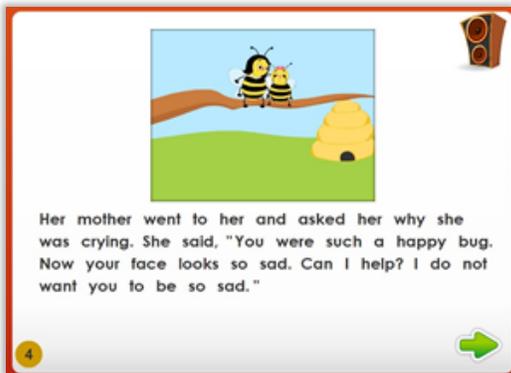
Book 19



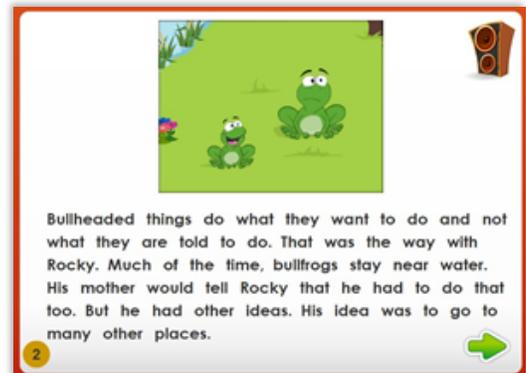
Book 24

Level 5

At this level, the books offer richer, fantasy-based stories that contain characters who experience complex thoughts, emotions and experiences. This sets the stage for the students to independently and successfully read the wide array of appealing books that are aimed not at teaching reading, but at enjoying reading.



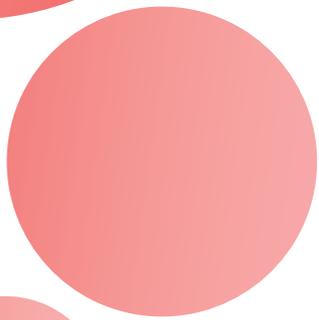
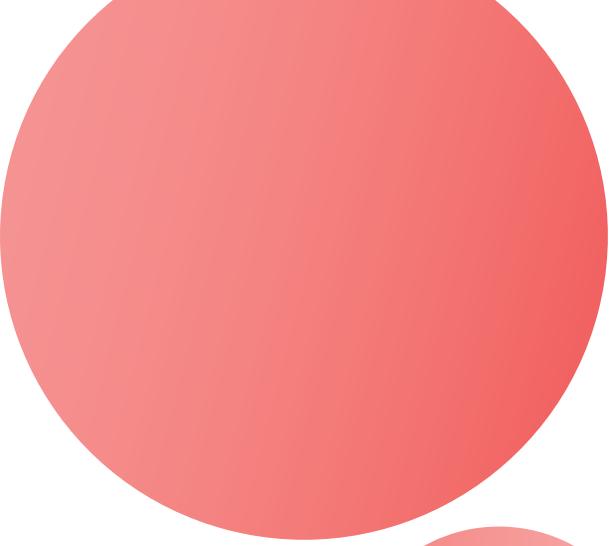
Book 27



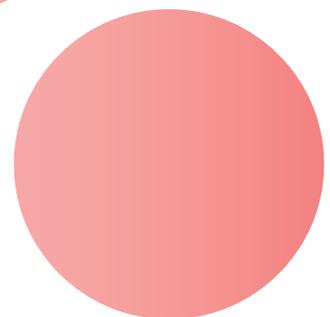
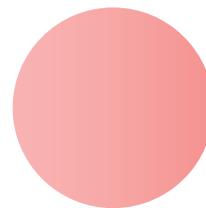
Book 30

Key features of the books

- All the books have engaging graphics, animations, sound effects and music.
- Students are taught all the words in a book before reading it via 4 different formats that teach each word's spelling, pronunciation, meaning and usage in context. This way students can always read each book successfully.
- A student can click on any word to hear the word said aloud.
- The even books are fill-in books that require students to select and type words to complete the missing spaces.
- Starting with book 13 students are given a comprehension section at the end of each book called Gleaning Meaning. This helps students to capture the “main idea,” a critical aspect of reading.



Key Principles **of the Teaching**



A Lot of Varied Repetition

There is an old saying that “practice makes perfect.” This has long been known to be a key to success. But repeated practice can be dreary - unless it is enlivened by interesting devices. Computers are ideal for this purpose. Throughout the teaching, the formats offer multiple trials involving the same information. But the variation in the presentation (via different graphics, animation, reinforcements, music and sound effects) makes the practice fun and appealing.

For example, here are four sentences from the Stay n Play format used in teaching the word “clean” (and its variants cleaned, cleaning, cleans).



This variety gives the student multiple opportunities to write the words and to see their meaning in different contexts.

The Power of Feeling Competent

Though rarely discussed, the phonics demands of traditional reading programs lead many students to experience a great deal of failure. Despite trying hard, these students

often have great difficulty remembering the sounds, doing the required blending, and recalling the letter names. This sets them off on a path of failure that leads many to feel that reading is a skill they will never master.

Reading Kingdom has been designed to minimize the range of difficulties that students experience. For example, throughout the program, this speaker symbol appears on the screen. When it is present, it means that it's possible to click on any word and hear what the word is "saying."



Design features like this lead a student to know that success is always within reach.

Moving Beyond Error

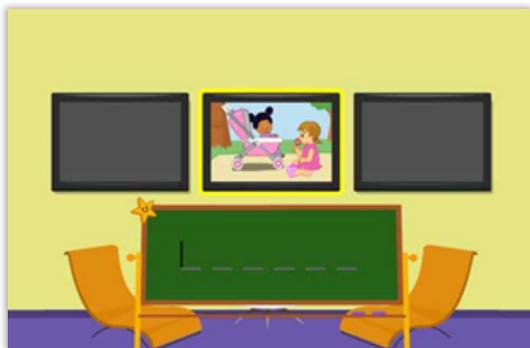
No matter how well designed material might be, some mistakes are inevitable. But if their numbers are few, the negative effects are kept to a minimum. That is why throughout the program, techniques are offered to help students move past wrong responses to correct responses.

For instance, if a student fails to write a word correctly, the computer offers appealing characters that, via simple actions and sounds, tell the student that a mistake has been made.

An amazing feature of using software for education is that it can tell a student that a mistake has been made and it will lead to none of the dismay or shame that can result from an adult communicating the same information.



Further, the program is designed to then immediately help the student by offering a correct model of the word which the student can copy.

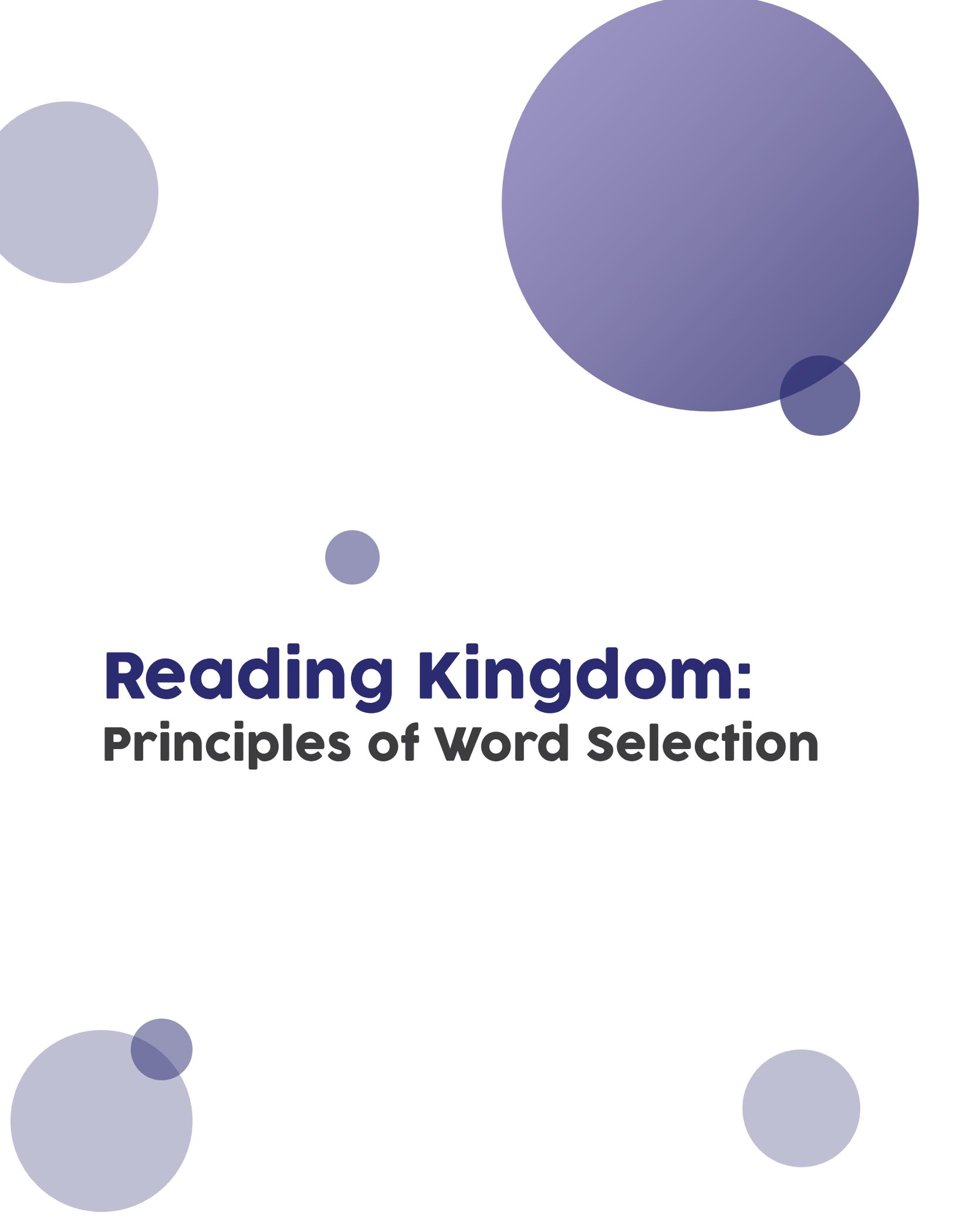


When the copying is completed, the model is withdrawn and the student is asked to write the word from memory. So within a few seconds, the task that was originally incorrect is now completed successfully. The blend of content and technique represents an unbeatable combination for success.

Comprehension

Comprehension is what reading is all about, but it has been given short shrift in reading instruction. Phonics programs, with their concentration on sounds, offer strange, confusing texts like “Sam has ham.” Whole language programs, with their concentration on “authentic literature,” offer stories that are often too complex for beginners readers to decipher. Typically, these methods lead students to fend for themselves in attempting to figure out how written ideas are organized and what those ideas are designed to say.

Reading Kingdom represent the first instructional program to offer specially designed books that systematically advance from the simplest levels of language to steadily more complex structures. In addition, all the books offer animations that hold the student’s interest, while illustrating the ideas on the page (e.g., a sentence such as “the rockets are flying” will show those objects in flight).



Reading Kingdom: **Principles of Word Selection**

Reading Kingdom is divided into 5 levels with 6 books at each level. Prior to reading a book a student is taught all the words of that book using a variety of formats that teach a word’s spelling, pronunciation, meaning and usage. In addition, wherever appropriate, words are taught with multiple variants. For instance, a word like “park” will be taught along with “parks,” “parking,” and “parked.” This gives students tremendous insight into the way English is structured and how the numerous suffixes affect meaning and usage.



Level	New Words	New Words+ Variants	New Books	Lexile Level
1	36	63	6	230L
2	60	96	6	350L
3	62	177	6	480L
4	63	180	6	620L
5	62	151	6	750L

What follows is a brief description of the unique method Reading Kingdom uses to determine the words that are taught in the program.

Background

In preparing materials to teach students to read, reading programs typically rely on a few basic guidelines:

- High frequency words are selected as opposed to low frequency words (e.g., car instead of automobile).

- Short words are used as opposed to longer words (e.g., hit instead of strike).

As these examples indicate, frequency and length correlate – higher frequency words tend to be shorter than low frequency words. Essentially, the focus is on keeping the words short and simple.

While a valid starting point, this widely-used approach overlooks a key set of language components that are vital to reading. Reading Kingdom, on the other hand, emphasizes these components and in so doing gives students a major leg up on achieving reading and writing mastery.

— What are these components?

1. Teach the 120 essential non-content words and introduce them in an order that takes account of the way these words are actually used to form meaningful messages.

Non-content words such as **the, is, were, these**, etc. occupy, on average, 60% of every page of text in English and most programs attempt to teach them. The teaching, however, is extremely limited and not systematic. Typically, because these words cannot be sounded out, they are taught as “sight words” where (i) the teaching time is minimal, (ii) there is little effort to teach the meaning of these words, and (iii) each word is presented independently of the others.

This leaves students unprepared for how these words function in real texts where they are an integral part of the meaning and grammar of language and there are intricate relationships among them. To be effective, the teaching must account for these factors. For example, the use of a pronoun such as **he**, presupposes some previously introduced male figure (**a man, the boy, that dog**, etc.) This means that the non-content words such as **a, the, that** must be taught prior to the introduction of a word such as **he**.

It is important to note that the non-content words function very differently in written language as opposed to spoken language. For example, in everyday speech, a word like **he** can be used without explicitly mentioning the referent. The person is present and so, there is no need to say “Look at that man. He...”. Instead, it is acceptable and clear to say something like, “Look at him.” It is due to this discrepancy that students who seem to speak quite well can be confused by the demands of reading and writing. There is no

confusion, however, if the teaching is carefully organized as it is in Reading Kingdom.

In contrast to **he**, a pronoun such as **they** assumes that plural figures were introduced before the word itself. (Unlike with the word **he**, however, with **they** gender is not a factor.) This means that the non-content markers for plurals such as **s** and **es** is taught prior to the introduction of a word such as **they**.

The teaching of other non-content words requires other prerequisite skills. For example, a question word such as **where** will require an answer that involves either prepositions (such as **in**, **on**, **over**, etc.) or placement markers (such as **here** and **there**). Accordingly those words are taught prior to the introduction of **where**.

Finally, let's consider the word **but**. The concepts underlying this word assume some idea of negation which requires several other words (e.g., That kid is big, **but** he can not jump). Accordingly, **but** is taught only after the students have learned the other key words in the sentence.

In Reading Kingdom each new non-content word is taught in a precise sequence so that students have mastered the other non-content words required to understand the new word. The process is not determined by frequency – but rather by meaning. For example, the word **of** is the second most frequently used word in English after **the**, but it typically appears in relatively complex phrases such as **the story of**, **of course**, and **kind of** that can pose great difficulty for novice readers. Consequently, **of** is taught in Reading Kingdom – but not at the outset, despite the fact that it is high frequency.

The order in which words are taught in Reading Kingdom is based, in part, on the conceptual complexity of words. So the easier non-content words (e.g., **a**, **some**, **is**, **are**) are taught before the more complex ones (e.g., **even**, **since**, **after**). But an equally important factor is the conceptual linkages required to decode and comprehend these words as outlined above.

2. Teach content words based on using the noun-verb relationships critical to the creation of meaningful sentences.

For the words on a page of text to make sense, they must combine to form meaningful sentences. Sentences, in turn, depend of two key grammatical categories: nouns and verbs.

In order to create ideal early reading material, nouns and verbs must be taught in a way where they “connect.” This requires that the nouns be animate figures (**girl, boy, man, baby, dog, cat, bird, frog** along with some special inanimate figures like **planes** and **cars**) that can and do perform the actions that the verbs represent (**eat, walk, run, fly, fall, jump, sleep**, etc.)

The nouns and verbs taught in Reading Kingdom tend to be short and simple, but they go far beyond the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern that often dominates early readers. The fact is that there are remarkably few nouns and verbs that meaningfully fit the CVC pattern. Focusing on CVC words such as sun, hat, fun typically leave students with idiosyncratic texts that are structured based on sounds and not on meaning – and in all real texts words are organized based on meaning.

Even more significantly, a sustained emphasis on three letter CVC words leaves many students unprepared for real reading. Admittedly, CVC words (where a sound can be applied to each letter) represent the easiest words for sounding out. However, the majority of the words in the language – even short 3 and 4 letter words – are not easily blended and the end result is that many students are handicapped when it comes to reading even the simplest pages of real text.

Significantly, nouns and verbs each have connections with a particular set of non-content words. Nouns connect with words such as **a, the, these, some, those**, while verbs have connections with words like **is, are, was, did**. This means that the particular animate nouns selected are not critical. **Girl**, for example, can be taught before or after the word **boy** or **man**. What is central is to have common, easily recognizable figures that can link with familiar, easily recognizable actions to create meaningful sentences.

Then, once introduced, it is essential that the figure be linked to all relevant concepts being taught by the program. This enables a student to gain an innate understanding of how the language is structured. For example, it is important that students realize that **girl** and **lady** take the pronouns **she** and **her** when singular and **they** and **their** when plural. Similarly, when singular, they take verb forms such as **is, was, has** and when plural the forms **are, were, have**, etc.

3. Words are selected to allow the presentation of and foster the comprehension of connected ideas (coherence).

Arguably the most overlooked linguistic component in early reading instruction is coherence. Coherence refers to the fact that books are composed not simply of sentences but of sentences that connect to convey a coherent message.

This fact of language plays a central role in the word selection in Reading Kingdom. Imagine, for example, that there are some children (**kids**) who have a certain activity in mind (**wanting to play in a park**) but find an obstacle (**it is raining**). A coherent development of the theme requires that they might abandon their plans (e.g., **It is not good playing here.**) and choose another activity (**We need to find another place to go.**) Other possibilities, of course, exist — but the key is that the various sentences connect to create a “main idea.”

These “logical additions” to the noun-verb matrix play a key role in the sequence with which words are introduced in the program, so that students are always learning to read in a context of meaning. This arrangement is also consistent with what neuro-science tells us about how children learn. Children are pattern perceivers. They do not learn in isolated bits and pieces but instead discern the patterns that unify information. The key to success is to give the students sufficient, well organized, appealing information that enables them to see the patterns. Reading Kingdom’s use of key linguistic components is phenomenally effective in allowing them to achieve this goal.

4. Effective word selection and information-based texts

The demands of decoding based on using phonics to “sound out” the words have led to the development of stilted texts organized based around sound and not meaning. That is why texts such as:

Dan has an ax. Has Dan an ax?

are so prevalent in reading instruction.

In real books, words are always structured based on meaning. That is why in Reading Kingdom, words are always selected based on creating meaningful stories that

develop students' abilities to read a wide variety of texts and introduce them to such basic characteristics as characters, plot structure, and tense, as well as genres such as narrative, fantasy and non-fiction.

Providing students with information-based texts is very important because these are essential for students work in other curriculum areas (e.g., science, social studies). In these kinds of texts, non-content words play a particularly crucial role via their power to indicate key conceptual issues such as time, causation and quantity (e.g., after, until, because, when, much, many, such a lot, even, etc.). The early introduction and careful teaching that Reading Kingdom offers in this domain allows students, even at the start of reading, to experience interesting and instructive books on topics such as the first trip to the moon, the life styles of insects and the source of rainbows.



Testimonials

I recently retired after two terms as a School Board Director for the largest school district (11) in Colorado Springs. I am also a retired USAF Colonel. I believe reading success is foundational to life and career success, yet far too many of our children are not succeeding with the traditional phonics-focused reading programs. I co-founded a movement in Colorado Springs to help address the reading crisis. We have selected Reading Kingdom as our primary tool to help young students become successful readers. I highly recommend the program.



Bob Null

Former School Board Director, District 11, Colorado Springs

This program has transformed the teaching of reading...I have had the pleasure of working for the past 15 years with Reading Kingdom, and I have seen first-hand her innovative and carefully designed reading program used by a wide variety of students across a broad age range. The program is absolutely outstanding -- not simply in teaching reading, but also in enabling children to master and expand their knowledge of English. It does so by steadily integrating spoken and written language. No other program with which I'm familiar is comparable in teaching these vital skills. I believe that central to the program's success is: (i) its steady integration of spoken and written language, and (ii) its unique incorporation of "immediate interactive feedback." Research has shown that this type of feedback is critically important to engaging the student and thereby to enhancing effective learning. It regularly provides an immediate response to what the student does, and it offers clear, simple direction to overcome any errors that occur.



Dr. Bradley Peterson

Director, Institute for the Developing Mind, Keck School of Medicine, USC

I have personally used Reading Kingdom with a wide range of students. It provides the most complete method for teaching reading and writing that I have seen in the eleven years that I have been teaching primary students. Thank you for this outstanding program.



Catherine Smith

Elementary School Teacher

Reading Kingdom has created a monumental work that makes available to educators, therapists and families her simple, straightforward and time-tested approach.



Dr. Jeffrey A. Lieberman

Chairman, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University

Reading Kingdom was an answer to my prayers. My students' reading abilities have soared, and my principal is astounded that this program could do so much to teach reading to kindergarteners. Thank you very much for your outstanding program!



Kathy Radford

Kindergarten teacher, Jefferson Elementary, Rigby Idaho

I love how the program is customized to teach the students exactly what they need. It focuses only on their weaknesses to help turn these areas into strengths. Once the child masters a level, they move on to the next area that they need to work on. This program helps in the areas of reading, writing, keyboarding skills and keeps me, as a teacher, up to date on the progress that my students are making. Then I know where to focus my time with them as well. Thank you Reading Kingdom. A++!!



Melissa Holyfield

Teacher

Last year I taught at Hodgkin Elementary, an at-risk, low income (100% free lunch) school with many non-native English speakers. There were five kindergarten classes. At the end of the year the other teachers each had two or three students reading above grade level, while I had 10 reading above grade level (as determined by the DRA test). While I would like to take all the credit, much of it goes to Reading Kingdom. I always liked to hear my students say "Oh I learned this on Reading Kingdom!" I reported my great Reading scores to the principal and strongly encouraged her to use Reading Kingdom in all kindergarten and first grade classes next year.



Nancy Collopy

Teacher, Hodgkin Elementary School, Albuquerque, NM

The Reading Kingdom is a unique and innovative system will be of enormous use to the millions of parents who dream of reading success for their children.



Susan A. Rose

Ph.D. Professor of Psychiatry, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

The program addresses the deficiencies seen in phonics and the whole language approach to reading...I highly recommend this for those of you who have early readers like I do. The financial investment will garner huge returns for you.



Anitra Elmore
Teacher

Dear Reading Kingdom, I wanted to pass along a note I received from one of our clients: ‘I am writing to share some amazing stats regarding Moss and his time on Reading Kingdom over the course of the summer. We recently attended his Parent-Teacher Conference with the school’s reading specialist in attendance as well. On the Dibels Test at the end of last year Moss scored 29 with a goal of 58 on his NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency - Correct Letter Sounds) and 0 where the goal was 13 on his NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency - Whole Words Read). Now, keep in mind this is for 1st grade level reading at the end of last year - which was the end of his first grade year. The exciting piece: being tested on Dibels again at the second grade level after a summer of Reading Kingdom work he tests in those same two categories at a second grade level 63 with a goal of 54 on his NWF (CLS) and 20 with a goal of 13 on his NWF (WWR)! The reading specialist was blown away by “whatever we’d done”. This is exciting stuff and I wanted to thank you. So, thank you! -- Larry’ And thank you, again, from me too! Your program is changing children’s lives.



Gary Smith
The Reading Success Movement

Reading Kingdom is the only program I recommend in my book because it is fun for kids, easy to use, well grounded in research and IT WORKS! In my opinion, there is no better program out there that teaches children all the skills needed to become a proficient reader.



Karen Quinn
Author of Testing For Kindergarten

I teach 5th grade in a school of English language learners, immigrant/refugee students. None has been in the U.S. for more than 2 years, and many have never even been in school before. 2 years ago I used Reading Kingdom and got outstanding results, with their teachers the following year commenting on their evident vocabulary and literacy skills. Last year when my school ran out of funds and couldn't afford to pay for Reading Kingdom I went with the phonics-focused program the school had already purchased, and the results were very poor. So this year I decided I had to pay for Reading Kingdom out of my own pocket to make sure my students received all the benefits your program provides. I look forward to seeing my current students achieve and become the readers they want to be. Thank you Reading Kingdom for making such a great program available!



Barbara Chiodini

Nahed Chapman New American Academy, St. Louis.

I've used Reading Kingdom and gotten fantastic feedback. It's been a huge success. One student (a ninth grader) originally tested at the first grade level and now she's reading at the 4th grade level. Her speech also improved dramatically and it turned out to be a life-changer for her and her parents. Thank you.



Sue Sommer

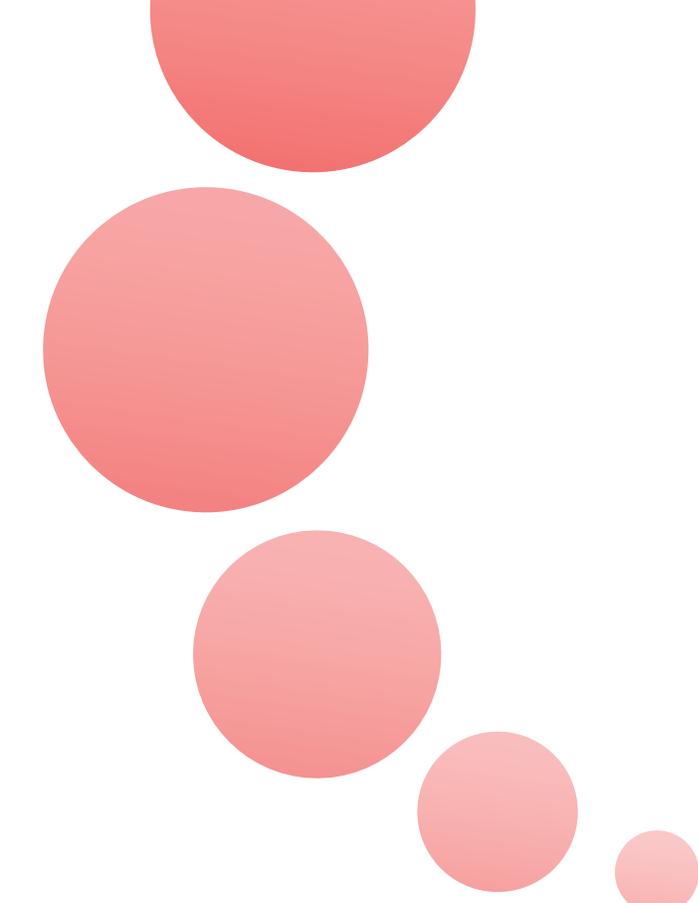
eVirtualAcademy.com

Children learn to read very quickly using The Reading Kingdom. There is no question that it works, otherwise I wouldn't be using it year after year.



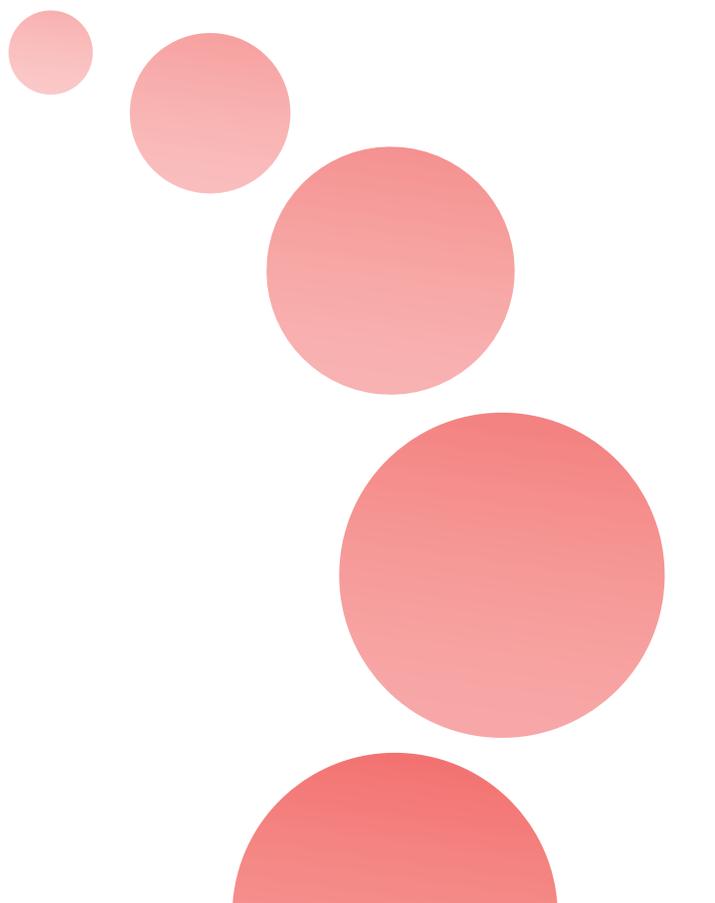
Alberta Tabak

Elementary School Teacher



Appendix:

How phonetic is English?



The term “phonics” is frequently used interchangeably with reading instruction, so it’s understandable that many people believe English can be “sounded out.” Ever since alphabets were first invented, alphabetic languages have used letters to represent the sounds in words. The easiest alphabetic languages to learn are those that use one grapheme (a single letter or a letter combination) for each phoneme (the smallest sound unit in a language). As the grapheme/phoneme relationship becomes less direct, learning to read a language becomes more difficult.

The Reading Kingdom Curriculum Guide states that approximately 20% of English words can be “sounded out.” At such a low percentage, sounding-out is functionally useless. But where did this 20% number come from?

The phonetic qualities of English have been studied extensively. Here are some of the findings:

- Dr. Godfrey Dewey, who devoted much of his career to studying our orthographical system, conducted a study in which he created a list of the 10,000 most common printed words out of a sampling of approximately 4,565,000 words. The result of this study, which he published in the book *Relative Frequency of English Speech Sounds* (Harvard University Press) was that approximately 1 in 5 of the most common words in English are spelled phonetically. He also found that for the 41 distinguishable phonemes, there are 561 spellings, the 26 letters of our alphabet are pronounced in 92 ways, and we also have 132 sets of two letters (digraphs such as th, ch, ea, etc.) that have 260 pronunciations.
- Professor Julius Nyikos of Washington and Jefferson College found 1,768 ways of spelling 40 English phonemes – an average of 44 per sound. He published his results in a paper called *A Linguistic Perspective of Functional Illiteracy* published by the Linguistic Association of Canada and the United States. He also found that these 40 English phonemes are spelled with all 26 single letters in the alphabet and at least 153 two-letter graphemes, 98 three-letter graphemes, 14 four-letter grapheme, and 3 five-letter graphemes, for a total of at least 294 different graphemes. (This is less than the 1,768 mentioned above because every phoneme is spelled with more than one grapheme. For instance, the “u” in the word “nut” can be spelled 60 different ways.)

- Professor Theodore Clymer studied phonics rules and published his results in a paper entitled *The utility of phonic generalizations in the primary grades*. Clymer collected 121 commonly used phonics rules. Using 2,600 words found in basal readers and Merriam-Webster's Dictionary pronunciation guide, he compared the actual pronunciation of each word to the phonics rules that should apply and calculated a percentage of agreement. Eliminating any rules that did not apply to more than 20 words, Clymer whittled his list down to 45. Then, using 75% as a reasonable level of utility, he found that only 18 of the 45 rules had any utility at all. For example, Clymer found that the generalization commonly referred to as "when two vowels go walking" is effective only 45% of the time.
- Robert Hillerich, the Chairman of the Dept. of Reading & Language Arts at the National College of Education did a study on vowels funded by the US Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare. The results were published in a paper entitled *The Truth About Vowels*. His conclusion: "From the evidence and the research studies reviewed, the author concludes that generalizations about vowels can be grouped into two categories: generalizations which hold true most of the time but which include too few words to be worth teaching, and those which apply to many words but which are so unreliable that they are not worth teaching."
- Dr. Diane McGuinness, in her book *Why Our Children Can't Read* explains the complex logic that is required to learn to read English and why that is a serious problem for students. Unlike most other alphabetic languages, there are tens of thousands of different syllables in English, with sixteen different syllable patterns:

CV	CCV	CCCV	CVC	CCVC	CCCVC	CVCC	CVCCC
CCVCC	CCVCCC	CCCVCCC	CCCVCC	VCCC	VCC	VC	V

C = Consonant
V = Vowel

There are two or more syllables in most English words. Each syllable can have one of the sixteen syllable patterns and each vowel and consonant in each of these patterns can represent multiple phonemes. Additionally, all 26 letters of the alphabet are

silent in some words with no way of knowing whether a letter is silent or not in a word, and all letters except H, Q, U, W, X, and Y are doubled in some words and not in others, with no way of knowing whether a letter is doubled or not. The level of complexity is astounding.

Many phonics advocates and the Department of Education website claim that English is 50% phonetic. Where do they get these percentages?

They get those percentages from a 1966 study conducted by Professor Paul Hanna which was funded by the US Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare. The results were published in a paper entitled *Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondences as Cues to Spelling Improvement*. Hanna studied 17,310 words selected from the Thorndike-Lorge Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words (omitting foreign words, trade names, slang, and rare words) and used Merriam-Webster dictionary pronunciation guide to create 203 phonics rules that were put into a computer.

Using these rules, Hanna's program analyzed the words and the computer achieved 49% spelling accuracy. This is where the 50% figure comes from.

However, citing this result to claim English is 50% phonetic is ridiculous for multiple reasons: 1) Hanna reached this number by allowing more than one grapheme per phoneme. If you allow only one grapheme per phoneme, English is only 20% phonetic. 2) Children are not computers and cannot memorize 203 rules. 3) Even if half the words were phonetic, children would still have no way of knowing which word is spelled phonetically and which is not. Imagine teaching arithmetic and telling children that $2+2=4$ fifty percent of the time.

So why do phonics proponents continue using a system that does not work? As renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow noted "When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." In other words, phonics advocates, for many seemingly valid reasons, continue to try and use the only tool they're aware of.

English has evolved over the course of millennia, without any central planning. Words from Germanic Anglo-Saxon (woman, Wednesday) and Old Norse (thrust, give) were mixed with words from the Latin (annual, bishop), and Norman French (beef, war). Science, technology and the Enlightenment added words, often based on Greek (anthropology, phone, school), and wars and globalization added even more, like “verandah” from Hindi and “tomato” from Nahuatl (Aztec) via Spanish. Words from other languages typically carry their spelling patterns into English. So, for example, the spelling “ch” represents different sounds in words drawn from Germanic (cheap, rich, such), Greek (chemist, anchor, echo) and French (chef, brochure, parachute).

Various intrepid people throughout history have attempted to reform English spelling, including Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Darwin, George Bernard Shaw, Andrew Carnegie, Isaac Asimov and the Duke of Edinburgh. But they all failed and we are still faced with the simple fact that there is simply no way to reliably “sound-out” or spell English.

As long as phonics-dominant reading instruction is used to teach children how to decode English, a high failure rate is guaranteed because English is just not spelled phonetically. We illustrate the challenges students face with phonics via this one sentence where the “ea” vowel combination can be pronounced 13 different ways:

I knew in my **head** and **heart** that the **theater** **bureau**’s harsh **reaction** to the **great** and **beautiful** **Ocean/Earth** **pageant** was **mean** spirited – despite the **caveat** that their review was **changeable**.

Put simply, if phonics worked as it should, the word would be spelled “foniks.”