

THE ART OF READING

Stage 2

An Engaging & Systematic Path to Phonics Mastery

SEQUENCING



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FIRST EDITION

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ABOUT THE ART OF READING

The Art of Reading is a comprehensive, systematic phonics program designed to build a solid foundation for reading. It uses a carefully sequenced, stepping approach, introducing each concept one at a time to ensure your child masters the skills required for proficient reading.

The program follows a simple, open-and-go structure. Lessons are intentionally short and focused. Each lesson includes engaging, hands-on activities that reinforce new material. To support long-term retention, previously covered concepts are also consistently reviewed within the activity pages.

In addition, each lesson is paired with a controlled reader to ensure your child has plenty of practice in the context of actual reading. This approach not only helps with decoding skills but also builds reading fluency as your child progresses through this book.

This book is consumable. It is designed to be cut, written in, and used directly by your child. The Art of Reading is a complete phonics program. No additional materials are required to teach your child to read.

ABOUT STAGE 2

PLEASE NOTE: STAGE 2 FOLLOWS DIRECTLY ON FROM STAGE 1.

The Art of Reading does not follow the traditional sequencing often found in other Stage 2 phonics programs. Instead, it follows a carefully structured path that prioritises the most common sounds in English, introducing them as early as possible.

This approach allows children to decode a broader range of words from the outset, many of which are often labelled as “sight words” in other programs. By introducing these sounds early on, most of the high frequency words become fully decodable.

IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR STAGE 2?

If your child has completed Stage 1 phonics using a different curriculum, it's important to ensure they have a solid grasp of the following sounds before starting The Art of Reading Stage 2:

TH (hard TH like in that) **CK SH ALL** (/aw/ like in call) **EE OO AY QU**.

By this stage, it is expected that your child can comfortably decode simple words with the digraphs listed above. If any of those digraphs are unfamiliar, take the time to introduce and practice them before starting Stage 2. This will help ensure your child can start Stage 2 with ease.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT IN STAGE 2?

The first 4 weeks of Stage 2 are dedicated to fluency building and review, with no new concepts introduced during this time. This is an intentional step in the process, designed to strengthen reading fluency before moving on to new, more challenging concepts. These lessons include activity pages and controlled readers that consolidate learning from Stage 1.

The stories have been extended and are meant to be read over several days, much like real books. Reading a story in parts encourages children to recall what they read the day before, which helps build memory and comprehension.

As you move further into the book, encourage your child to read more than one page, if they are able to, as this will steadily build their reading stamina.

WHAT TO EXPECT

When you start Stage 2, your child may still be sounding out words one letter at a time. This is completely normal. Smooth blending takes time and practice.

As they work through this book, you will notice their reading becoming smoother and much more fluent.

LESSON LENGTH AND STRUCTURE

The recommended pace is **one lesson per day, five days a week**. There are a total of 115 lessons in Stage 2. Each lesson instruction/review component, activities and a matching reader will take approximately **10 minutes** to complete.

DAILY STRUCTURE:

1. **Teach (or review)** the concept in Lesson X.
2. Complete **one page** of activities.
3. **Read** the assigned **story**. A note at the bottom of each activity page will direct you to the correct story. ***If your child is able to read more than one page, encourage them to continue, as this will help build reading stamina.***

PACE

Consistency is key when it comes to learning to read. Setting aside a regular daily time slot ensures that your child has dedicated time to focus on learning to read without distractions. It's best to choose a time when your child is well-rested and alert, as this allows them to fully engage with the new material.

If your child is struggling to master a concept, it's perfectly fine to go back and review previously learned lessons to solidify their understanding. It is important **not** to take a break just because a concept feels challenging - working through it helps strengthen their skills and build perseverance over time.

READERS

The Art of Reading follows a true stepping-stone approach. Each story is carefully controlled to match the concepts that have already been taught, even when that limits the natural flow of text. This makes every word fully decodable and keeps the focus on practicing newly learned skills and reviewing concepts in context.

NO ILLUSTRATIONS IN READERS

Illustrations have been **intentionally** omitted to **prevent** children from guessing words based on pictures rather than focusing on the text itself. Many early readers rely on images to predict words instead of developing **strong decoding skills**. By removing this visual aid, children are encouraged to **sound out each word**, recognize patterns, and build reading accuracy.

This approach ensures that reading comprehension comes from understanding the words on the page rather than making assumptions based on illustrations. Over time, this strengthens a child's ability to read independently.

SIGHT WORDS

The sequencing is designed to minimise the number of sight words introduced to your child. However, sight words are an important part of learning to read, as English contains some irregularly spelled words that don't follow standard decoding rules. Such as "one" and "said" which are introduced throughout the stories, one at a time. These words will be **highlighted in red** when first introduced, making them easier to spot, and will be reinforced through the stories.

GRAMMAR

As your child moves into Stage 2, grammar is taught as it applies to reading only.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Each story includes comprehension questions. Some will ask your child to recount what they have read, while others focus on specific details from the story. A number of these can be completed verbally through discussion, and others use a checkbox format for your child to mark an answer.

SILENT LETTERS

Silent letters are shown in pink to remind your child that they are written, but not pronounced. By the end of the book, the pink is phased out and only new silent sounds are marked.

BEGINNER-FRIENDLY FONT

Reading can be tiring for beginners. The fonts in this book were carefully selected to make reading less strenuous for new readers.

This program uses fonts that help beginners by:

- Giving each letter a distinct shape to reduce confusion.
- Increasing word spacing for better visibility.
- Increasing line spacing to improve tracking.

Note: If your child finds it difficult to focus with multiple lines of text visible, place a blank sheet of paper over the lines below the one being read. This helps minimize visual distractions and supports sustained attention on the current line.

DIGRAPHS

In the stories, digraphs are underlined when first introduced to help your child spot and distinguish them from other letters easily.

SPELLING:

Children will continue working on their kindergarten level spelling skills up until Lesson 71. By that stage, they should be able to competently spell CVC, CCVC, CVCC, and CVCe words.

The final spelling activity is on page 71, which completes the kindergarten portion of spelling.

From that point onwards, spelling becomes a more complex subject as it requires writing and is best supported with a separate first grade spelling curriculum. It is important to introduce a dedicated spelling program apart from phonics, as spelling will now need to connect to writing, copywork and any dictation.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencil or colored markers
- Highlighter
- Coin and a game piece
- Any set of Alphabet Flashcards (lowercase and capital letters) that you already own

A NOTE ON DIALECTS AND PRONUNCIATION:

English is spoken with many regional accents and variations. The Art of Reading is based on standard phoneme-grapheme correspondences, but slight differences in pronunciation are expected. Where applicable, adjust the pronunciation to reflect your own regional dialect.

VOWEL VARIATIONS:

English vowel sounds can be inconsistent and may vary slightly depending on regional accent. For example, words like frog, ox, and orange all use the short /ɒ/ sound, but you might hear subtle differences in how they're pronounced, even by the same speaker.

Use the guide word at the top of the instruction page to indicate the intended pronunciation, as your anchor when introducing the sound. This word reflects the target pronunciation in that lesson.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Learning to read is a journey that unfolds with **time**, **patience**, and **consistent practice**. Celebrate each step forward and enjoy the process of building a lifelong love of reading.

READY TO BEGIN?