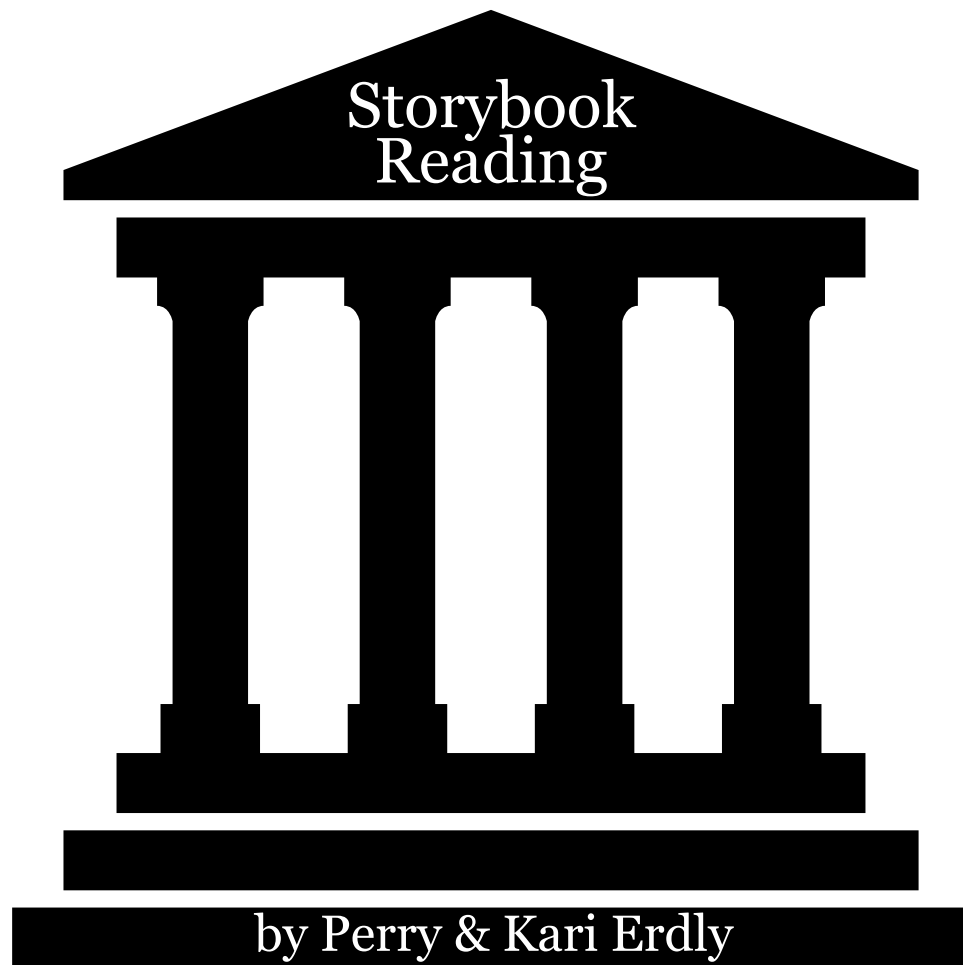




Parent Primer

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Welcome to Storybook Reading!

Thank you so much for taking the time to look at our family's curriculum.

Our Storybooks have been written by parents for parents and reviewed by the children who were the inspiration for the curriculum.

As a parent, I am sure that you feel the same way my husband and I do. You want the best for your child or children. You want them to be able to go out into the world and accomplish or learn anything that they want to.

That means that they need to have the skills to tackle any book they ever want to read in their native tongue, English.

In our current culture, being proficient in reading means that a person can fill out a job application without asking anyone for help.

Well, sorry, that does not cut it.

Our definition of being proficient in reading is to be able to pick up ANY book in English (no matter how technical) and with only the occasional use of the dictionary, be able to read and comprehend it.

If that sounds like what you want for your child, than let's get to it!

You may be coming from several different places.

Maybe you are a first time homeschool parent with a young one who is ready to begin that education journey.

Or, you have been homeschooling for a while and curriculum after curriculum has let you down. And at this point, you are trying to figure out if it is you or if it is that you have not found the right curriculum.

Perhaps your child has fallen behind in the current school system he or she is in, and you know that they do not need those "special" education classes. You believe it is the teaching methods that are at fault, not your child. So, you have decided to take that responsibility and teach your own child.

Wherever you are coming from, this curriculum is there for you.

Before we go further, we want you to be aware that we are followers of Christ. Our belief system will effect the way we express ourselves, but it in no way changes the curriculum. We pray this will be a blessing to your family.

We believe that every person deserves to be able to read and comprehend their own language in depth. This foundational ability is the gateway to a lifetime of exciting (sometimes not exciting) learning!

Before we get into all the details of how to teach our curriculum, we are going to dive into the exciting world of learning personalities and why reading is so hard to learn sometimes.

Here at *Deep End Homeschooling*, we always recommend exploring what your learning personality is as the teacher because it will effect what teaching methods feel the most comfortable to you.

In addition, knowing your child's learning personality is a great help in finding a curriculum that will keep him or her engaged and retain the information as effectively as possible.

A Word About Learning Styles

We all take in information through three modes: visual, auditory and kinesthetic (tactile). Usually, like a dominant hand, we have a preferred method of taking in information. Most schoolbooks and classrooms teach to the visual and auditory learning modes and completely leave out the kinesthetic learning mode.

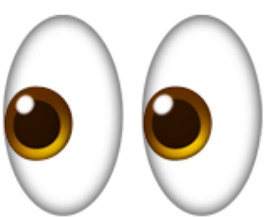
Kinesthetic (tactile) is a fancy way of saying, “hands-on.” All children are hands-on learners. They are movers. If they can jump in a puddle rather than go around, they are so going to jump in. It is in their nature to explore through movement.

As parents, we can't wait to see our baby crawl and then walk. Yet, when we put them in a school setting, whether at home or in a prison (sorry, government institution of lower learning) we expect them to sit still for hours and still be able to learn something. That is simply not how they are designed to learn.

An attention span does not come naturally to anyone, adults included. It takes training. However, wanting to move while learning is not necessarily a sign of disobedience. Often, it is just them trying to access their ability to remember what you are teaching or to keep themselves focused.

That does not mean that children should be let loose and be wild, but there is a difference between learning and disobedience. You are the parent. We are sure you can tell when your child is being difficult and when he or she is just learning the way that comes naturally.

We do not concern ourselves with school always being learned at a desk or in a chair. Sometimes school happens outside, sometimes in the van, and sometimes when we are trying to get supper finished. Learning is natural to them and there is no reason to put it in a box.



These learners learn best through their eyes. That can mean they prefer watching a video, reading, or just observing how something is done.

This learner needs to hear how it is done, talk it over with someone or listen to the subject matter in some way.

These learners need to touch and squeeze what they are learning about. Movement also helps them retain information. Let them jump, stand, run and wiggle when they need to.

What kind of learning personality do you have and what kind does your child have?

Everyone has a different personality. Character traits and preferences vary from person to person. So too do our learning personalities.

We all interpret the world through our own personality. While that might sound strange, think about it for a minute. If you are someone who is very sympathetic by nature, you are going to take into account peoples' emotions more readily than someone who is very systematic and schedule oriented.

There are four main learning personalities: **the people person, the thinker person, the feeler person and the idea person.**

We all have strengths and weaknesses for sure. One learning personality is not better than the other. Each one has great importance to a society.

Nobody can be fit neatly into a box. The reality is we all have a little bit of everything in us. One or more learning personalities may be more dominant over the other, but we can always choose to develop the less dominant personalities with some effort on our part.



The People Person loves to be around other people. They learn best when the subject is taught through the lens of the person or people who are involved.

They love to be around people and learn about their lives and experiences.



The Sensor Person needs to be hands on. They need to be able to get in there and do something: build it, sew it, or paint it.

Learning with something they can hold and manipulate helps this learner retain more information.



The Thinker Person likes to be organized and likes to know what is expected of him or her. They like to have information available to them that is accurate and as complete as possible.



The Idea Person always has some thing in their mind they want to do. They love planning and executing projects, from stage plays to new kinds of games.

This learner has so many ideas, it is often difficult to get to everything!

There are more than just two kinds of smarts.

Most schools and education programs are designed with only two kinds of *smarts* (intelligences) in mind, **Word Smart** and **Number Smart**. The students who have *Word Smarts* excel at most subjects because all subjects involve reading. *Number Smart* students excel at math and science. Students blessed with strength in both smarts have it made in modern education settings.

However, there are far more smarts than just these two. Below I have listed the eight main smarts that have been identified.

Again, we all have these eight smarts, some just come more naturally than the others, but we can all choose to develop these smarts further.



The Word Smart child will enjoy activities that involve language. As he or she gets older, reading will be a natural subject and talking will come easily. He or she will love to use his or her words as often as possible.



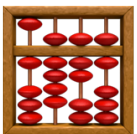
The People Smart child will love to be around people. He or she will naturally be good leaders or counselors and will love group activities.



The Music Smart child learns best with rhythm and often learns well alongside musical patterns. Often he or she will enjoy performing or attending performances and get wrapped up in the music.



The Picture Smart child sees the word in 3D. He or she can visualize projects and ideas in his or her mind and is often good at building projects with blocks or other materials.



The Number Smart child is good at patterns. This smart helps him or her in math and science subjects. He or she will often be good at logic and organization.



The Body Smart child is good at learning skills that involve large or small motor skills. From working with jewelry to skateboarding, this child processes knowledge through body movements.



The Nature Smart child needs to be outside. His or her mind is drawn to the outdoors and what it has to teach him or her. He or she is often patient and very observant.



The Self Smart child will need time alone to create and process information. He or she will be good at independent study. He or she often knows his or her own limitations well and likes to push his or her limits often.

Reading, Reading, Reading...

We do not know about you, but we get so overwhelmed by the vast amount of reading curriculum out there! How does a parent find the right one?

In addition to the sheer volume of choices, there is that ever nagging question of, “What if I mess up?” What if the way you choose to teach your child to read ruins them for the rest of his or her life?

After all, government and private schools have “certified” teachers teaching the children that attend those institutions. Yet week after week another news story breaks that the reading comprehension level of American school children is dropping.

If the *qualified* experts cannot teach children how to read, what hope do you have?

Reject these labels and these fears. The notion that there is such a thing as an “expert” for your child is false. Well, unless you are talking about the persons who came together to form them in the womb, the persons who changed their diapers, taught them to walk, talk and sang them back to sleep after a nightmare.

Who are these experts? Do they have names? We do not know about you, but we always called the two experts, *Mom* and *Dad*.

Didn't you?

No human knows our children better than we do. No expert. No person with fancy certificates on the wall or letters after their name. No one.

There is no one who is better qualified than you to teach your children.

No one wants more for your children than you. No one. Do not be fooled by fools in “experts” clothing. They are only consistent at getting things wrong.

So, moving on from that serious question, let's ask another one.

Why is it that “regular” teaching methods seem to fail child after child?

Before we go into their method, we will take a look at some of the genuine problems English does have.

English has a math problem.

The first problem is that English does in fact have a math problem. Bear with us, we are not nuts!

English is an amazing language. We have the largest vocabulary in the world. But, the way we got that vast vocabulary is through change, and lots of it.

In ancient times, English would have actually been several different dialects of Gaelic. When the Romans invaded, they brought with them their alphabet. This alphabet (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, and z) was very helpful in expanding the English vocabulary, as before they had used a runic alphabet, which is made with straight lines. This form of writing limits the amount of different characters a written language can have, therefore it results in a relatively small vocabulary.

Over the centuries, England continued to be invaded by other countries and each time they were invaded, the language grew both in sounds and words.

At one point, there were dozens or even hundreds of spellings for the very same word! So many different accents existed and everyone just spelled things the way they sounded. It was a bit of a mess.

Naturally, the king of England had a solution. Everyone had to spell things his way. So, about 500 years ago, scribes were tasked with the job of standardizing the English language.

Today, we are fairly close to how words were spelled 500 years ago. Although, in America we do differ in some of our spellings just to make us seem a bit different.

So, now we get to the math problem.

Over the many years of invasion and vocabulary expansion, English settled down to having about forty-five different individual sounds.

If you do a quick count of the alphabet, however, you will see the problem. We only have twenty-six letters in our alphabet.

If it was a math problem, it could read like this:

If a language has 45 sounds, but only 26 letters to represent those sounds, how do you make 45 fit into 26?

So, how do we?

Our ancestors decided to take a two step approach to the problem.

1. Have certain letters represent more than one sound.
2. Have teams of two or more letters join up and represent one or more sounds together.

Basically, think of it this way. In our math system, we really only use ten individual digits (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) to represent any number we ever want to use. A **number** is a specific amount or quantity of something that we represent with one or more **digits**. For example, the number 102 uses the digits 1, 0, and 2 to represent the specific number, 102.

Now, in English, our Latin alphabet functions in that way for us. We take letters and then assign them one or more sounds. But, we still do not quite make it all the way to that "forty-five sounds" number we are working towards. So, letters team up and together they represent one or more sounds.

Terminology can be a confusing rabbit hole to go down, but let's get a little Latin and Greek out of the way just so we can move on feeling a bit smarter because we are using fancier words.

A **phoneme** is an individual sound we make. It can also be called a phonetic sound.

A **phonogram** is a picture of a sound. We speak a lot of words, and obviously we need a way to represent those words on paper when we want to write something down.

We have a sound-based language, which is one of the reasons it can have such a large lexicon. (See, I said we would get some fancy words in there.)

If English was a picture-based language, like Ancient Egyptian or even modern Asian languages, its vocabulary would be quite a bit smaller. There are only so many pictures that the brain can memorize.

(Remember that point because it is going to be important later.)

Letters, then, are like digits in math. They are rearranged into every word in our language.

A letter or letter team becomes a phonogram (a picture of a sound) when it is being used to represent a specific sound or sounds. Sometimes, letters within these teams appear to just be silent. However, remember, our language has undergone a lot of changes. Many of these so called silent letters are actually retained to give us a clue of the word's origin.

In order to be able to take eye exams and spell things out loud, we have also assigned names to the letters. Just remember, though, that the names of the letters mean nothing in terms of helping a child to read.

The names are important, but not for reading. In fact, the alphabet song is probably one of the most common place and damaging aspects of children's shows and toys in terms of pretending it is somehow important, even essential, for the skill of reading.

So, why do "expert" teaching methods fail to teach children to read well?

English is a wonderful language. It has the ability to absorb new words from other languages almost without any effort! That is why it has the largest vocabulary in the world.

Many people get frustrated with English because, as children, they are given a puzzle box marked "English" that is missing some or even most of the pieces, and are then told to put it all together into a perfect picture. This is an impossible task, which results in the children feeling like they are the broken ones. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Others blame English itself for being inconsistent and illogical. This too is incorrect. Most of the time, English is quite logical. The problem lies in the teaching methods, not the students and not the language.

First, a living language is not math. Math is built into our universe by a Creator God. He established the world to run on a certain set of consistent principles. Man did not invent math. Man merely rediscovered knowledge that God built into our universe and openly shared with His creations during the short time of perfection.

Language is something God gave us as well.

Yet, it too has suffered because of man's disobedience and arrogance.

So, why does our language still feel so messed up?

England was repeatedly invaded for centuries, and with each new invader, English took on parts of the incoming language.

This was a long, and sometimes painful process, that brought us to our modern English.

However, our native tongue still has a wonderful track record if certain concepts are taught.

If a teacher tries to teach English as though it were math, they are going to fail the student.

English is a living language. It is spoken by millions of people across the world, and it absorbs accents, phrases and traditions from each culture it touches. This means it is subject to change, but that is one of the true beauties of English.

Some curricula teach that English has rules, but we disagree with that terminology. A rule is something that is true 100% of the time, and that is just not a fair request of a living language. Instead, we prefer to call them patterns. Patterns are true most of the time.

English has two main categories of patterns:

1. Sound Patterns
2. Spelling Patterns

Some curriculums would call the sound patterns, *phonograms*, and, the spelling patterns, *rules*. But as we said, the term “rules” just sets people up to have unfair expectations from English.

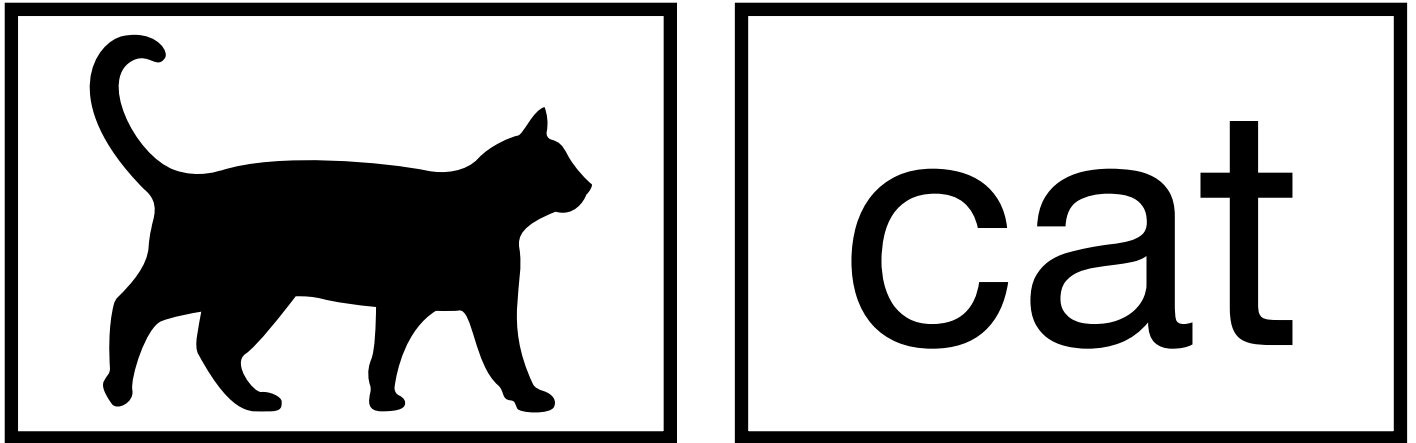
Unfortunately, reading only seems to be taught two ways in American schools and American curricula.

1. The Stupid Way
2. The Long Way Around Way

Government schools and most private schools teach reading the *stupid way*. Which is terribly funny, in an ironic kind of way. What we mean by “stupid” is that they take a language, which is based on sound, and they teach it as though it were a picture-based language.

Here is an example:

Teachers show a picture of a cat, and then they show the word, “cat.”



When they do this, they are asking the student to memorize those three letters as though they were a picture of the word, “**cat**.”

Furthermore, by using a picture to give the student a clue to the word, they are activating the child’s visual side of the brain rather than the sound side.

So, yes, the student will quickly memorize the word, “**cat**,” because they’re just asking him or her to access his or her visual memory.

But, if a teacher showed him or her the word, “**act**,” without any picture attached, he or she will have no idea how to sound it out even though it contains the same three letters which are making the exact same sounds.

The teacher didn’t teach the student to read the sounds of the letters. All the teacher did was to ask him or her to memorize a picture of a word.

Our brains can only retain so many pictures before it is **filled up**. That is one of the reasons this method is so damaging. At first, the child appears to be reading well, when, in fact he or she is just accessing his or her visual memory which will at some point fill up.

At this point, the child’s reading scores start to plummet because he or she lacks the skills necessary to sound out words he or she has never seen before or words that have no picture that can be attached to them.

What picture would you put with the word “and” or “am” or hundreds of others? It cannot be done. More importantly, it doesn’t *need* to be done.

Dyslexia is not an inherited condition. It is a caused condition. Caused by ridiculous teaching methods that confuse the hemispheres of the brain.

A school superintendent was visiting a struggling school one school day. She took a seat in an elementary school classroom during the reading lesson. The teacher asked the student to read the passage in the book. The struggling student hesitated with every word, not sure if she was reading it correctly. The teacher calmly told the student to use the pictures in the book to help her guess what the words were. The girl guessed the next word was “pony” and the teacher smiled and let her continue. The superintendent looked at the passage. The word was “horse.” She was very alarmed because the word “horse” and the word “pony” are not the same. What were they doing to these poor kids? After all, what will the students do when they get to college? Many of those books will not have pictures!

Most English teachers have the easiest job in the world. Anytime they don’t understand something, they just get to say, “Oh, well, that’s an exception.”

Oh, my. What a cop out!

The second method is what we call the “*long way around method*.” This method is generally the one used by classical schools. Points to them, they are trying to give kids a total picture of the language. Our main issue, especially where younger children are concerned, is that this method creates frustration because it wants to cram a lot of information into the student’s mind before it gives him or her the tools to start reading actual words.

When a child knows he or she is supposed to be learning how to read, but it takes months and months before he or she gets to actually read words, it becomes very frustrating to him or her.

So, basically, we are trying to take the long way around method, and create some strategies to get children to the reading part a little faster without sacrificing the foundational knowledge that they ***absolutely*** need to have.

Go at your child’s pace.

Comprehension is the goal, not completion. Giving a certificate of completion to children who have not actually fully comprehended the material is cruel and deceitful.

But, we are sure you desire the very best for your child, so your goal is comprehension. Make that your mantra, “Comprehension not scheduled completion.”

Your child will get there; rushing is not required and will actually deter the child from wanting to learn.

You want him or her to finish with comprehension of the subject and still have his or her natural love of learning intact!

What will this curriculum it look like?

All right, now that we have gotten all the theory out of the way, let's dig into how this curriculum will look and how it will be different.

First, we are going to teach just 10 letters and their sounds. Then, we will immediately learn words built with only those letters and sounds.

They will learn a small amount of letters at a time, and continue to build new words with those new letters.

We will learn them in story form first, and then practice them in a special spelling area.

Along the way, there will be teaching boxes for you to read to the child.

We have done our best to give it a clean, uncomplicated appearance and not confusing to either parent or child.

First, we recommend spending some time looking at what letters are being taught.

A great, free resource for listening or watching the sounds of letters or letter teams is located at:

<https://logicofenglish.com/pages/phonogram-chart?srsltid=AfmBOoq8btFFG7Qv4CJHMTRixHueks1xrZF4fudmB-dnZzHNOEwr8SfO>

We are also building a helpful tool as well at:

<https://deependhomeschooling.com/storybook-sounds/>

It is also great to have your child with you when you listen or watch these to help them learn as well.

You will notice as they learn the letters and their sounds that we have developed a colored number system.

The numbers represent the sounds the letter will be making and are listed in order from most common to least common use.



When they read the stories, the letter will be color-coded at all times.

Normally, a story would look like this:

Mat is sad.

Mom is glad.

Spot is bad.

But, color-coded it will look like this:

Mat is sad.

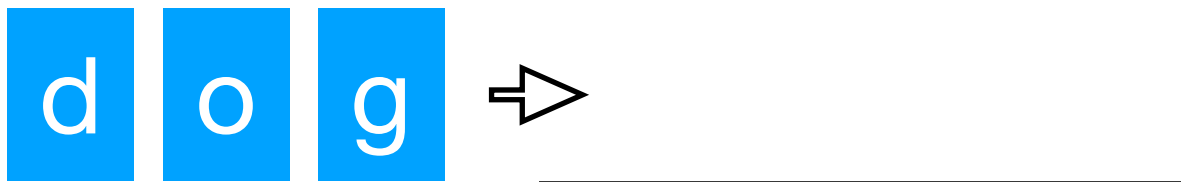
Mom is glad.

Spot is bad.

Blue is indicating that a letter is making its first sound. If a letter is green, it is saying its second sound and so on down the color line.

When we get to the spelling section, the words will be separated out into sound blocks. This means that each individual sound is in its own block. This will become especially important when we get to letter teams. The blocks are color-coded as well.

Let's take a look:



You will sound out the word, have them say the whole word, then write it out. Voila! They have used their eyes, ears, and hands to learn how to read and spell a word.

Storybooks 1 and 2 will teach the 26 letters of our English Alphabet.

The stories will be somewhat boring, only because it takes letter teams to make some of our most commonly used words.

Storybook 3 will begin to introduce those teams.

Letter teams are two or more letters teaming up to make one or more sound.

These are actually quite common. And, in English, we have over 49 such teams.

But, don't feel overwhelmed because we are going to learn them a little bit at a time. Again, the website resources listed a few pages back are a great resource for learning these letter teams and their sounds.

In the story sections, letter teams will be bold and underlined. It will look like this:

The cat is sad. She wants to play with her toy.

Did you see all of those teams?

There were several teams in just two short, simple sentences.

Now you can see why English can seem so confusing to kids.

In the spelling sections, letter teams will be in blocks together so that it is clear they are working together to make a sound.

It will look like this:



As we said before, there will be teaching sections along the way that will explain a few concepts about grammar and spelling as the Storybooks progress.

Our goal is to break English down as far as possible and make it simple without dumbing it down to the point where it makes no sense at all. The reality is, English is complicated. It is very big. But, we believe it can be taught logically.

With that in mind, there are three more quick things to discuss.

1. There will be times when a letter is not making a sound. When this happens, the letter will be gray or in a gray box.

have 

2. Other times, a letter is making the wrong sound. (This happens rarely, but in some commonly used words.) When this happens, the letter will be slanted or marked in a box with a red band.

of 

3. English has two main kinds of sounds:
Consonants and Vowels.

Knowing the difference will make an impact when you begin to focus on the spelling patterns later on in his or her learning journey.

But, it also effects how we pronounce certain words incorrectly on a daily basis.

*(Don't forget, America is full of accents. Depending on your area's accent, some words will naturally be pronounced a bit differently. I am sitting in sunny Florida, and so I have attempted to use the most commonly used pronunciations possible. But, there is nothing I can do for my relations in Kentucky who cannot pronounce "**creek**" correctly. It is not pronounced "crik!")*

Consonant sounds are blocked by our teeth, tongue or lips. Most of these sounds cannot be made louder or softer.

Vowel sounds are made with an open mouth. They are not blocked and can be made louder or softer.

Because we adjust our jaw to make different vowel sounds, we sometimes make lazy sounds.

This means, we did not open our mouth wide enough to make the correct sound. The sound coming out usually sounds like, "uhhhh," or "ehhhh".

Lazy vowel sounds will be marked with a yellow band in your spelling practice section.



At the moment, your child being able to read is the intended goal of this curriculum. That takes consistent practice, and do not be afraid to repeat the book (or certain pages) as often as necessary.

We have also written extra practice books for each storybook to make it a bit more interesting.

We like to print and put our pages in binders with sheet protectors because it makes them ready to reuse for multiple students or even for one student to repeat sections as necessary.

You may notice that we have very few illustrations as you progress through the reading sections. We want students to focus on sounding out the words and to not look to the pictures for visual cues and guess the words.

HAVE FUN!

Okay! That is the end of our *Storybook Reading Parent Primer*. It is a bird's eye view for sure.

But, do not fear, there will be lots of teaching boxes along the way showing you anything else you need to teach.

It is worth noting that you can go through each book as many times as you feel necessary. It does not need to be a "one and done" kind of thing.

Repetition is the reality of all learning.

Enjoy the curriculum, and most of all, enjoy the time teaching your child.

Whether you're a homeschooler or just a parent trying to help his or her child master reading, your children grow up super fast!

Every moment is worth celebrating together, so make this as fun as you can!

If at any time you have questions or just want to reach out with suggestions or for moral support, we will always respond!

hello@deependhomeschooling.com

Our website is full of helpful articles and posts that empathize with your learning journey through humor. Check us out!

DeepEndHomeschooling.com

Remember this if nothing else, your child is in your care for a reason. You are the best possible teacher he or she can have because you love them more than anyone else. Bad days happen, and that's okay. Take a breath and do not try to hold to anyone else's timeline. Your child's learning path is meant to be unique to him or her and not a copy-cat of what someone else thinks it should be.

Yours Truly,

The Erdly Family