

Reading Made Easy  
with  
Blend Phonics for  
First Grade

The Reader

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## Step One: Short Vowel Sounds

**UNIT 1:** Short sound of **a** **b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x y ck**

bat dad fat had hat bad lad Sam bag tap pan tan tax ham  
pad can quack yak tag lap nap cap jam gas rat van ran  
wax cat mat cab sad rag wag map sap rap am fan man an  
at

**UNIT 2:** SHORT SOUND OF **i** **z**

bib did hill in vim bin hid hit pig win bit jig pill bill kiss  
quick will kid rib yip nip rig dim kill rim zip dip big lip  
rid fib lid sit fig fit miss sip rip wig fin fix mill sin rim tip  
hip if it tin him pit pin Tim six mix

Mixed Short Sounds of **a** and **i**

bat bit bib did dad hat hit hid fat lit gas hill in an Sam bag  
big dip dig tip tap hip lip lap ham him pad pat pit pal cat  
sat mad mat mitt miss mass it at if mix Max rig rag tag  
jam rat van vim six cab zip zap fin fan fix Tim tam rip rap  
nap nip rag sag wag wig sap sip map yak zig-zag

**UNIT 3:** SHORT SOUND OF **o**

Bob got log top hop bog dog hog fog box hot not nod sod  
sob pod pot rob cob cot hod bob pop job gob doll dot lot  
tot on off Don mob rod rot fox mop sop

## Mixed Short Sounds of **a**, **i**, and **o**

Bob bib bob dot tot gob got big bog bag fog fig hog hag  
hot hit hid hat hod had not nit Nat pod pad pit pot pat cob  
cab nod sob cot cat pop top tap tip tax job jab jib doll dill  
lot lit rob rib rod rot rat mob on an in log lag off Don box  
fox fix fax mop map sop sap sip sup wag wig

## UNIT 4: SHORT SOUND OF **u**

dug rub bun duck jug sun bug fun mug cup rug sum bud  
but fuss mud tub hut bus gum gun muff tug hug nut cub  
gull pup cuff hum run cut up us

## Mixed Short Sound of **a**, **i**, **o** and **u**.

but bat bit kit kid hut hat hot hit dug dig dog bug big bag  
bog hug hag hog rub rob rod rib van ban bin bun bon  
duck Dick jug jig jag sun son sin fun fan fin fix fax fox  
mug wag wig rug rag rig sum Sam bud bad bid fuss mud  
mad mid tub tab bus kiss bass boss gum gun muff miff  
mutt mitt tug tag tax cup cap cop nut nit not up cub cob  
cab gull gill gal gob pup pop pat pit putt puff cuff box  
him ham hum run ran Ron cut cat cot cod wax mix ax  
zig-zag

## UNIT 5: SHORT SOUND OF **e**

bell tell fell beg peg Ted bet let led fed jet get pet bed pen  
dell red den hen less set vet wet web wed met net sell well  
mess men ten keg leg vex meg

## Mixed Short Sound of **a, i, o, u,** and **e**

get got gut net Nat nit nut not rot rut rat rod rid  
red set sit sat tell till toll beg bag bog bug big  
box hen ham hum him hem peg pig pug Ted  
Todd tad bet bit bat but bed bid bud bad lit lot  
let fed fad fat fit jet jot jut pet pot pit pat putt  
wax pen pin pun pan web wed wet wit dell dull  
doll dill bill bell Bill hill hull fell fill full fox fax  
fix well will den Dan din Don less lass loss vet  
vat men man mom mum sell sill mess mass miss  
moss muss mop map muff miff mutt mat met  
mitt Mat ten tin tan tax tux keg kiss kid kit cad  
cod sod cup cop cap cog sap sop sup sip zig-zag

## Step Two: Consonant Blends

### UNIT 6: FINAL CONSONANT BLENDS

(Short sounds only of vowels)

hand mend bent hint pump pomp bend band bond jump  
pant duck dock Dick belt felt just jest quest Jack bump  
lamp lump dump damp hump lend land kick camp lent  
rust rest lock lack lick luck sent desk disk send sand neck  
fast fist pick lift loft next list last lust lost lest quack quick  
fond fend fund find lint lent tent tint rock Rick rack melt  
test sick sack sock suck gift must mast mist went tack tick  
tock tuck tilt milk silk sulk wind gust and end ask best its  
past

### UNIT 7: CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **sh**

cash hush dish fish shall shed shelf shut shot shop ship

### UNIT 8: CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **th** (Voiced)

than then them this that thus

### CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **th** (Unvoiced)

bath thick think thank thump thin thud with

### UNIT 9: CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **ch, tch**

chat chill witch chin chum much such rich match notch  
latch fetch hatch chick chop chip catch patch pitch ditch

### **ch**: SOUNDS LIKE **k**:

mechanic

**UNIT 10: CONSONANT DIGRAPH: wh**

**BLEND wa SOUNDS LIKE wo**

**wha SOUNDS LIKE who**

want watch was water wasp wash what

which whisk whack whiff whip whet whiz when whim

**UNIT 11: ng (ang, ing, ong, ung)**

bang ding dong wing ping-pong king hung hang thing thong  
rang rung ring sing sung sang song snug gong gang thing-a-ling  
long lung clang clung cling swung swing prong stung sting  
string strung sprung sprang spring

**UNIT 12: nk (ank, ink, onk, unk)**

bank bunk link sink chunk mink wink tank thank think honk  
kink than king dunk dank pink punk rink rank sank sunk sink  
ink

**UNIT 13: INITIAL CONSONANT BLENDS:**

**bl, cl, fl, gl, pl, sc, sk, sm, sl, sn, sp, st, sw**

plan plant flung fling spunk spank flit flat fled smug smog  
block black blast blink blank blend bland bled flock flack  
smell flag flog smash smelt blush spit spat spot splat split  
bliss stuck stock stick stack stamp stump stand flop flip flap  
stop step club slap slip slop clap clip clop still plod plot plat  
glad gland slam slim slum slosh slash stem click clack clock  
cluck clinch glass gloss cliff scat scalp sled slid slot slat slit  
slab stab stub clink clank clunk snip snap skin snob snub  
skip skid clench snug snag sang sung stiff stuff staff cling  
clang clung skill skull skiff scuff scoff swell swill swift snuff  
sniff scum scam scan spin span spun flesh flash flush Scotch  
sketch flip flap flag flop switch spell spill swing swung swim  
swam fling flung smack smock swept swap swag swig

## **Mixed Beginning Consonant Blends and Non-blends**

lush blush pan plan melt smelt punk spunk lit flit mug  
smug lock flock lock block fat flat sell smell pan span  
lend blend led bled lag flag mash smash sum slum sash  
slash pat spat sat band bland land lip clip cub club land  
gland lap slap sap till still sill pod plod lap cap clap clamp  
lad glad lick click lass glass lash slash sand stand tack  
stack sack lock clock cat scat sat led sled link clink can  
scan nip snip tub stub clan clank skin kin sob snob hip  
ship skip nap snap sap tuff stuff stiff tiff nub snub sub  
well swell sell lash flash sum scum pat pit pot spot sift  
swift lap lip flip flap flop pill spill sill witch switch lap  
flap sell spell wing wig swig swing Mack smack sack  
sank snack spank wept swept lot plot pot sack snack pill  
spill sill skill kill pop plop sop slop sick slick lick lack

## **Simple Two-Syllable Words – Short Vowels Only**

bedrock napkin chestnut flapjack sunspot handcuff  
hubcap landmass ashcan blacktop sandbag dishpan  
claptrap midland helmet eggnog shipment backstop laptop  
catfish kidnap hotdog gumdrop endless sonnet dogsled  
bobcat dustpan upland cashbox desktop humbug visit  
habit basket ticket rabbit pencil vivid robin puppet dental  
husband sunset sudden exit within rocket racket ribbon  
combat lemon jacket traffic pocket picket lesson Hobbit  
handbag wingspan filmstrip magnet handstand tiptop  
catnap trashcan hilltop nutmeg hatchet latchet

## Step Three: Long Vowels (CVE)

**UNIT 14:** WHEN THE FINAL **e** IS SILENT,  
THE VOWEL IS USUALLY LONG

(long vowel sound of vowel is the same as its name):

bake cake cube safe swine note cane came paste  
spine cape gave ripe tote case time dime dine  
those tone tune date fake tile stole daze haste tide  
waste fate flake wife mope fade save wine mole  
gate blaze wide vote gaze vase slide woke hate  
taste pipe here size duke haze bite glide dune lake  
while cute lame white tube make dike bone bane  
mane fine cone mule made fife cope these mate  
dive drive drove code brave late file dote broke  
brake game five dole wake hide dome crate name  
hive globe crave pale lime hole craze quake life  
home drape rate like hope rake mine joke pane  
mite lone gape grape sake mile lobe grade shame  
nine lope grave shake snake pike poke pride same  
pine pole prime take pile quote prize tame quite  
rode probe tape kite robe trade blame ride rope  
flute flame shine sole prune plane side stone rule  
role rile stake stoke spike spoke scone rude glade  
smile plume slime slope brute chase chose stile  
smoke ate use

## **Paired Short and Long Vowels**

pill pile, slop slope, plan plane, Sam same,  
pick pike, mill mile, lob lobe, pin pine, prim prime,  
shack shake, rid ride, Sid side, rat rate, hop hope,  
pal pale, fill file, tack take, grad grade, pan pane,  
back bake, not note, past paste, cap cape, rip ripe,  
till tile, mop mope, lack lake, cub cube, Tim time,  
fad fade, win wine, slid slide, dim dime, din dine,  
tub tube, cop cope, cam came, Mack make,  
mad made, cod code, rack rake, jock joke, lick like,  
at ate, sack sake, tack take, slack slake, slim slime,  
slop slope, pet Pete, top tope, pock poke, fat fate

### **UNIT 15: PHONOGRAMS USING LONG VOWELS:**

**old, olt, oll, ost, oth, ild, ind**

old bold scold cold gold fold told sold mold hold  
colt volt molt bolt jolt toll roll post most host both  
mild child wild rind wind blind find grind hind kind mind

### **UNIT 16: SHORT WORDS ENDING IN A LONG VOWEL:**

be he no she go me so we I the

**UNIT 17: INITIAL CONSONANT BLENDS AND  
FINAL CONSONANT BLENDS**  
(and/or digraphs, phonograms)

**ENRICHMENT REVIEW**

brag drug drag frog drop drip crunch frump grin brand  
fresh prank brass French Fred Frank Fran brim drank  
drink drunk bring drum dram frock brash brush brunch  
branch brink brick grand grant grunt print prim prom  
press dress grass crab crib trim tram tromp trump tramp  
crash crush crest crack crust cramp crump crimp gruff trot  
trod crisp truck track trick trunk trend trust twist grip  
grog grasp crop drill droll plug pluck plank grad grid  
blend bland blond blast blest bled glad glum glam

**Mixed Consonant Blends and Non-Blends**

rag drag rug drug dug bass brass dunk drunk rock frock  
ranch branch bran brand rack crack ramp tramp tram tam  
gas grass rib crib rot trot tot red rend trend tend rasp gap  
grasp asp led bled bed last blast end lend blend rut rust  
crust runt grunt fog frog ram tram ruff gruff luck pluck let  
lest blest ant rant grant rink brink rump trump rush brush  
ink rink drink ring bring fed Fred rank Frank rim brim  
prim lug plug gad grad rum drum an and brand rip drip  
dip rill drill dill black back

## Step Four: R-Controlled Vowels

### UNIT 18: PHONOGRAM: ar

bar dark dart tart mark hark bark scar barn darn far mart  
star car farm park tar chart cart hard part jar spark lark  
smart start starch stark art arch march harm yarn sharp  
arm charm harmless harvest party

### UNIT 19: PHONOGRAM: or

born horn thorn fork torn cord cork fort scorn torch scorch  
corn horse storm for pork porch stork worn north sort  
short or nor before morn morning

### UNIT 20: PHONOGRAMS: er, ir, ur and sometimes or

bird stir worm planner clerk third camper runner fern curb  
cutter sitter jerk curl catcher starter her burn chopper  
swimmer herd fur dipper sender term hurt drummer  
spinner birth purr helper dirt turn jumper actor first word  
marker doctor girl world farmer janitor sir work pitcher  
visitor after better never over under worst work fir matter  
batter bitter sister mister blister dinner summer winter  
tender skipper ladder madder gladder glummer hammer  
slumber sir miller slimmer winner factor

## **Step Five: Vowel Digraphs and Diphthongs**

### **UNIT 21: VOWEL DIGRAPH: ai, ay**

ail paid pail may bail bait laid lay bay hay day brain clay  
gray fail rail pay pray grain gain drain rain ray sail say jail  
tail trail sway maid train jay gay way wail mail wait plain  
play claim strain strait pain paint faint chair tray railway  
runway away

### **UNIT 22: VOWEL DIGRAPH: ee**

bee keen sleet beef free peep sweep beech freeze peek  
sweet beet fleet reed sheep deed green see meet deep  
greet seed need breeze heed heel seen wee fee seem weed  
feet feel feed jeep sleep week keep sleeve weep three

### **UNIT 23: VOWEL DIGRAPH: ea**

(three phonemes: long e, short e, and long a)

beat each reach read beach leaf beast leap real bean leave  
cream lean cheat meal cheap least deal sea dream seat  
feast treat team tea east teach eat feat peach steal fear near  
threat thread tread bread wealth read breast weather  
breath dead death health instead deaf sweat ready heavy  
steak break great bear beefsteak daybreak breaker

### **UNIT 24: VOWEL DIAGRAPH: ie**

(two phonemes: long i and long e)

cried lies tied cries lied tried dried pie dries pies spies  
fried lie tie

priest relief believe brief chief yield grief field thief

**UNIT 25: FINAL VOWEL: y**

(Some dictionaries give it the sound of short **i**; others say long **e**. Take your choice.) Long **i** in one syllable words.

**Long i** in one syllable words:

my ply sly try sky shy by why cry dry fly pry

**Short i** (some dictionaries say long e)

army handy sleepy candy hilly thirty kooky healthy  
twenty daddy fairy silly dolly fifty wealthy dusty messy  
funny penny gummy puppy party rainy happy sunny  
myself pretty foggy Henry copy sloppy sixty dusty sunny  
sandy

**Mixed Final vowel y:**

army handy sleepy my candy hilly thirty ply kooky  
healthy twenty sly daddy fairy silly try dolly fifty wealthy  
sky dusty messy shy funny penny by why gummy puppy  
cry party rainy dry happy sunny fly myself pretty foggy  
Henry copy sloppy sixty dusty pry sandy spy

**UNIT 26: VOWEL DIGRAPH: oa, oe, (like long o)**

boat load roast Joe boast loaf soapy toe coat road toes  
coach soap foe woe coast soak goes goat toad hoe float  
throat hoed board coal oak cloak foam loam goad

**UNIT 27: DIGRAPH: ow (like long o); DIPHTHONG: ow**

bow slow window bowl tow willow blow throw yellow  
crow show glow shown grow snow grown fellow growth  
follow flow hollow low pillow shadow own

frown flower gown growl bow cow howl crowd power  
how clown powder crown drown town down brown now

**UNIT 28**

**DIPHTHONG: ou**

**DIGRAPH: ou** (Often irregular; it can sound like short **u**, short **oo**, long **oo**, short **o**, etc.)

cloud mound round found out sound ground our shout  
house mouse scout loud pound hound round proud

you country young soul

**UNIT 29: DIPHTHONGS: oy, oi**

boy toys coin spoil boys oyster join point joy oysters  
joint toil joys oil toy boil soil going moist Roy broil coil

**UNIT 30: LONG SOUND OF oo**

boot moon stoop foolish booth roof spoon smooth bloom  
loose spool teaspoon coo room shoot noontide cool proof  
too toothbrush boost mood tool scooter droop gloom tooth  
papoose food noon troop tooting groom soon coolness  
school goose roost zoo doom stool cooler smooth scoop  
pool loop groom root food hoot groove choose soothe

**UNIT 31: SHORT SOUND of oo**

book good hood shook booklet foot look wool cook  
footstep looking wood crook goodness soot wooden  
brook hoof took woolen cooker hook stood footstool  
understood fishhook woodpile woodshed

**UNIT 32: VOWEL DIGRAHS: aw, au**

crawl hawk saw clause crawling shawl drawn dawn lawn  
law thaw haul yaw yawn fault fawn faun cause pause paw  
jaw

**UNIT 33: PHONOGRAMS: al, all**

already bald malt call almost false salt mall also halt ball  
wall small all

**UNIT 34: DIGRAPHS: ew, ue**

blew flew news flue brew threw pew glue chew dew stew  
true crew few due drew mew blue hue grew new clue Sue

## Step Six: Irregular Spellings

**UNIT 35:** UNACCENTED **a** AT THE BEGINNING OF A WORD.  
ALSO THE WORD **a** WHEN NOT USED FOR EMPHASIS:

a ajar around asleep about alike arouse astir adrift ahead  
apart awake afar amuse aside awhile

**UNIT 36:** PHONOGRAMS: **ul, ull, ush**  
(**u** SOUNDS LIKE SHORT **oo**)

careful full fullback put pull push full bull bush fulfill

**UNIT 37:** SOFT SOUND OF **c**  
(before **e, i** and **y**) Usually sounds like **s**: sometimes **sh**.

cent brace mice rice cell chance space cease decide niece  
nice slice center dance pace spice civil dunce place since  
cinder face peace piece twice cyclone fleece trace circus  
fence prance price prince princess thence cinch France  
choice cigar hence voice acid ice pencil cistern lace ace  
mince race

ci = sh: special ocean precious musician

**UNIT 38:** SOFT SOUND OF **g** IN **dge** AND SOMETIMES BEFORE  
**e, i** and **y**.

age page badge budge bridge ridge plunge dodge lodge  
ledge smudge change rage edge wedge cage range fudge  
ginger engage sage stage hedge giraffe fringe gist huge  
wage nudge gible barge large urge pledge gyp gypsy  
lunge hinge judge gymnast

**UNIT 39: SILENT gh AND gh SOUNDS LIKE f**

**bright high blight tight might slight thigh fight flight  
fighter night right plight sigh light moonlight**

taught caught daughter

gh = f: rough tough laugh laughter laughing enough

(In the above words, **au** and **ou** are irregular.)

**UNIT 40: SILENT k, w, t, b and l**

knee chasten wrist lamb limb kneel glisten wring wrap  
knelt hasten wrote thumb knight listen wreck knife knit  
often wrong calf soften half knot comb walk wreath climb  
known know wretch debt knock write numb doubt dumb  
wren wrench crumb plumbing answer sword

**UNIT 41: se SOUNDS LIKE z**

choose noise please those chose nose rose wise cheese  
pause rise as ease pose tease has because praise these is  
his games tunes hose fuse

**UNIT 42: ph SOUNDS LIKE f**

elephant prophet phonograph photograph telegraph  
telephone nephew pamphlet phone orphan alphabet  
phonics earphone phonogram

**UNIT 43: FINAL le, tion, sion**

battle handle attention partition bundle puzzle action  
portion bottle scramble addition station buckle scribble  
affection section circle sprinkle invitation little struggle  
foundation expression middle tickle education impression  
pickle wiggle mention mission sample nation

**UNIT 44: ed WITH SHORT e**

added ended painted waited acted folded planted counted  
landed printed crowded lighted rested graded seated sifted  
petted tested needed twisted roasted mended

**ed SOUNDS LIKE ‘d**

aimed changed saved stayed burned filled rained turned  
called named rolled sailed peeled pinned kneeled aimed  
loaned climbed roared wheeled scattered cleaned canned  
plowed

**ed SOUNDS LIKE ‘t**

baked backed picked packed looked locked wished boxed  
hoped hopped packed camped jumped pitched hitched  
liked stopped kissed guessed dropped coaxed checked  
shipped scraped dashed milked baked clapped wrecked  
wrapped stamped dressed knocked

# *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade*

by Hazel Logan Loring

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Also the word a when not used for emphasis.

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It gives me great pleasure to publish my *Blend Phonics Reader* to supplement Hazel Loring's invaluable instructional booklet: *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade* (available for free download from the Education Page of the [www.donpotter.net](http://www.donpotter.net) web site and [www.blendphonics.org](http://www.blendphonics.org)). Since its publication in 1980 for free distribution, Loring's booklet has offered solid guidance to tens of thousands of teachers in the techniques of **Blend Phonics** and **Directional Guidance**. Teaching directional guidance with blend phonics will help prevent whole-word dyslexia. More information on preventing and curing acquired (artificially induced) whole-word dyslexia can be found on my web site: [www.donpotter.net](http://www.donpotter.net).

Loring's *Blend Phonics* method is a form of phonics called single-letter phonics. The whole focus is on blending the sounds of the letters going from left to right. There are many other phonics systems; but *Blend Phonics* has proven superior in the **prevention** and **cure** of whole-word dyslexia. Loring's method is a sterling example of pure "synthetic phonics" because it builds up the words from the letter-sounds. Inductive phonics, on the other hand, requires that students memorize a bank of sight-words from which they are expected to induce for themselves or with help from their teachers the phonics principles. Unfortunately the practice of having children memorize sight-words as wholes (configuration) establishes an automatic reflex on the right side of the brain that interferes with the later acquisition of the left brain reading skills necessary for the speedy and accurate decoding of words and good comprehension. In fact, when **sight-word instruction precedes phonics instruction**, a cognitive conflict is created that generates frustration in the student and impedes progress in reading. The conflict caused by early sight-word instruction creates a form of dyslexia called whole-word dyslexia. This frustration can also create psychological problems that have an adverse effect on student behavior.

The organization of the *Reader* follows the instructional Unites in Loring's *Blend Phonics*. Many words not in Loring's method have been added to the reader in order for the student to have ample opportunity thoroughly master all the phonics skills to automaticity. Stories and sentences have been purposefully avoided in order to encourage the students to focus their **entire attention** on developing highly accurate, automated decoding skills. Rudolf Flesch maintained that students with whole-word dyslexia (the guessing habit) should be **removed** from their context guessing environment and do nothing but phonics drills until they were able to overcome their whole-word guessing habit. Students should be instructed to read, spell, and write the words in the reader after the Unit has been taught from the blackboard or overhead. The words have been carefully arranged so that words of similar shape are group together. This organization requires the student to differentiate between look-alike words.

First grade students who have mastered all the words in the *Blend Phonics Reader* will find first-grade level books extremely easy, and most will have no problem with second- and third-grade readers. The method is exceptionally effective for curing whole-word dyslexia in students of all ages. I have used it to teach adults to read.

Many thanks to all my *Blend Phonics* students for helping me improve my *Blend Phonics Reader*, especially Ric Hale – a third grade student in Odessa, TX.

Latest revisions to the *Blend Phonics Reader*: 8/6/08.

## WHY TEACH BLEND PHONICS?

It is my belief that most reading failures are caused by the perfectly normal and very common tendency of many children to look at words from right to left. That this tendency is neither abnormal nor pathological is evident by the fact that many languages are written from right to left: Hebrew, Arabic, etc. Before the time of Homer, Greek inscriptions were written in the boustrophedon (pathway of the ox) form: one line from left to right; the next line from right to left. Oriental languages are written in a vertical manner. There is no “physiologically correct” or incorrect direction in which a language may have been developed.

When a child sees a word as a whole he or she has no way of knowing in which direction it should be looked at until the correct direction is shown. Each child will look at it in whatever direction his/her tendencies dictate. If the word is in English and the child looks at it from right to left, he/she is in BIG TROUBLE: “ten” is not the same as “net”; “pat” is not the same as “tap” and if instead of “fun” some children see “nuf” they are headed toward confusion.

It has been common practice to teach the word as a whole in the first grade and, then, later, in second grade, to introduce phonics in the form of word analysis. That is, the child is expected to break down the whole word into its component parts and thus deduce the relationship between phonemics (sounds) and graphemes (symbols).

This method can be reasonably successful if the child has a natural left to right tendency, is capable of deductive reasoning, and has memorized the whole word accurately. But what of the children of equal or even superior intelligence who have a natural right to left tendency? They cannot deduce correct phoneme/grapheme relationships because they are working from a false premise when they see the whole word in a reversed order. Even though they may have 20/20 vision they do not see what the teacher sees in the expected order. They hear the phonemes in a left to right order, while seeing the graphemes from right to left – or perhaps in a confused – direction. This explains why some people think of word analysis as “phony phonics,” and why the confused child is thought to have a learning disability or “dyslexia.”

To be fair, although most techniques in word analysis are useless for the children with directional problems – or may even add to the confusion – there is one technique that may be helpful, i.e., that of teaching of the initial consonant as part of the whole word. As long as care is taken to be sure that each child looks at the *first* letter in the word as the sound is heard, the child will be able to learn the consonant sound. **BUT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH.** They must be able to learn the vowel sounds and it is imperative that they be given early directional training.

I have a daughter who taught for more than eleven years has taught remedial reading in an urban adult education institute. High school graduates, who have diplomas but who cannot read on a second grade level, come to her for tutoring. She tells me that most of them know the consonant sounds, but they cannot learn to read until after they have had training in blend phonics.

Directional guidance is inherent in the system of blend phonics. First we show the student the initial consonant in isolation and teach its sound. (True, we cannot pronounce the pure sound in isolation but must add a neutral vowel – or schwa - sound. However, this is of no importance because the schwa sound will be elided when we make the blend.) Next we show the student the vowel grapheme and teach its sound. *Then we blend the two sounds together* before adding the next consonant. There is no way for the child to go except from left to right, and with enough practice an automatic left to right habit is acquired. Then, to insure comprehension, it has been my practice to have the student use the completed word in a *verbal* sentence.

Directional guidance is also inherent in spelling and writing. They are the other side of the same coin and much practice should be given in all three skills: spelling, writing and reading, reading and more reading.

There is nothing new about the material that we use in teaching blend phonics. It can all be found in “A Guide to Pronunciation” in the front of any dictionary. Take a look at it and you’ll say, “Wow, teach that to First graders? Impossible!!” It is not surprising that some anti-phonics persons say that it cannot be done. The trick is to present these seemingly complicated facts in a simplified, streamlined, bare bones version that can be assimilated by a six-year old or younger. There are bound to be differences of opinion as to the order in which the facts should be presented, and also as to which grapheme/phoneme relationships occur with sufficient frequency to be considered “regular,” and which are so rare as to be called “irregular.” Even pronunciations may vary due to geographical and ethnic differences.

English is a wondrous and varied means of communication, but at heart it is simple and consistent. In first grade we must teach the *heart* of the subject and not get bogged down with linguistic niceties. In this way we can provide the *basic* tool that a person can develop and expand all through life to enjoy a means of communication to express the most complex thoughts and feelings, and to understand those of fellow human beings.

I found I could provide this tool adequately in its simplest form to my school children in daily half-hour sessions in the first semester of the first grade. By starting in September, children have gained a working knowledge of the 44 phonetic elements in the English language and an overall concept of its basic structure before winter vacation. While their knowledge may not be 100% perfect, it will be sufficient so that they can, with the teacher's continuing help as needed, utilize the phonic key to unlock 85% of the words in the English language. (The other 15%, while largely regular, contain phonetic irregularities which sometimes require a little extra help from the teacher.)

The format of these lessons consists in taking a regular word and building it up phonetically as a class exercise. Then a child is called on to use it in a sentence. At first it is sometimes practically necessary to put the words in the child’s mouth until it is understood what is meant by making up a sentence. As soon as the child catches on, the lessons become lively and spirited. The children are eager to participate. (When I inadvertently failed to give a child a turn, I heard about it!)

It was something like “Show and Tell” without the “Show.” Instead of using a “Show” object as an inspiration for conversation, we used the key word which we had built up phonetically. Actually it was a language lesson as well as a reading lesson because the children learned to speak in complete, correct sentences. The context was limited only by the children's speaking vocabularies and was not confined to sentences like. “Go. go, run. run, see, see” or like “A fat cat sat on a mat.”

I recall one instance when we had sounded out the word “mill.” To avoid missing anyone, ordinarily I called on the children in turn, but this time I simply had to break the rule to call on the little fellow who was waving his hand frantically and just bursting to tell us something. He blurted out, “My daddy has a sawmill.” Now that’s what I call reading with comprehension!

True, we read only one word at a time but it was always phonetically regular and there was no guesswork. By the time we had completed the 44 Units, the children had the feeling of security that comes from knowing that the language was basically an ordered, dependable system. As we came to words in our books that contained irregularities, they were welcomed as something surprising, unique, different and thus easy to remember.

It is possible to teach this work from the chalkboard, but it means that the teacher is half turned away from the class. An overhead projector is ideal because the lighted area holds the children’s attention and, since the teacher faces the class directly, there is better control and more eye contact.

As to textbooks with which to implement this study, it would no doubt be easier for the teacher who is using blend phonics for the first time if phonics-based texts were available, correlated more or less with the structured phonics lessons. However, I can vouch from both tutoring and actual classroom experience that any books—old or new—can be used if they are of interest to the children and suitable for their age level. A few problems may be encountered in the first four months if the books have words that contain phonetic elements that have not as yet been introduced in the structured phonics lessons, but it is not too difficult to muddle through this phase. After the children have been exposed to the 44 phonetic elements, they can tackle anything with a little help from their teacher. Frequently, delighted parents reported to me that their children were reading from newspapers and magazines and were devouring library books at a great rate.

In the second semester we used much enrichment material. All of the children belonged to our Book Club. They took home books that they selected during regularly scheduled visits to the school library. My Room Mother arranged to have a volunteer mother sit in the hallway outside the classroom two afternoons a week. The children were excused from the classroom one by one to give brief book reports to the mother who added a star to the child’s bookmark for each book read.

Blend phonics is just about the easiest lesson to teach that can be imagined. No preparation is needed (except to have at hand a copy of the groups of words as given in the LESSON PLANS); no papers to correct for this phase of the reading lesson; no compulsory tests to be given. The children themselves do most of the work by making up sentences, and thus they learn by doing. It’s easy; it’s inexpensive and it works!

## LESSON PLANS FOR THE TEACHING OF BLEND PHONICS IN FIRST GRADE

**Do not delay teaching the names** of the letters of the alphabet. They are not only necessary in spelling and in the use of the dictionary, the telephone directory and alphabetical filing systems, but they will help in teaching the sounds. The sounds of many consonants are heard in the letters' names and the long sounds of the vowels **a, e, i, o** and **u\*** are identical to their names.

(NOTE: Because the soft sounds of the letters **c** and **g** are heard in these letters' names and thus are easier to teach, we introduce the hard sounds first and provide plenty of opportunity to practice them. Also we make sure the student is familiar with the short sounds of vowels before we present the easy-to-teach long sounds.)

The vowels are **a, e, i, o, u** and sometimes **y**. If a letter is not a vowel, then it is a consonant.

In our first lessons in blend phonics (or word building) we teach the sound of a consonant, then the short sound of a vowel. The child is taught to look at these letters **from left to right** (IMPORTANT) as they are presented to him one by one and as the sound is blended. Then we add another consonant to form a word which the child uses in a verbal sentence to insure comprehension.

It is true that, when we pronounce the sound of a consonant in isolation, it is necessary to add an extraneous neutral (or schwa) sound. This is of no importance because, when the consonant is blended with the vowel, the schwa sound is elided. For example:

**b** says **b-uh**

**a** says **a**

Blend **b-uh** and **a** to make **ba**

The **uh** sound has disappeared.

The great advantage of this technique is the fact that the child has received directional guidance and has been taught, step by step, to look at the word from **left to right**. This is extremely important because many children have a normal, natural tendency to look at words from right to left. When shown the word as a whole they may not see what the teacher sees. If shown the word ten the child may see **n-e-t**. Such reversals cause serious confusion when the child is shown whole words as is the case in the look-say method which incorporates no detailed directional guidance.

After you make the blend, **ba**, add the letter **t** to form the word **bat**. Have the child make up a verbal sentence using the word bat. If necessary, use leading questions to help the child think of a sentence.

For example: TEACHER: If you have a ball, what do you do with the bat?

CHILD: I hit the ball with the bat.

Use this format to teach each of the words in Unit I for the short sound of **a**. Then introduce the short sound of **i** and teach the children to sound out as many of the words given in Unit 2 as are necessary for good practice. Choose the words that will be most interesting to the class and, of course, let **the children take turns using each word in a verbal sentence**. Continue in the same manner with short **o**, short **u** and short **e**. Short **e** may give some difficulty because the sound of this letter is easily confused with the short sound of **i**. (We have all heard some people say "git" or "get" and "ingine" for "engine.")

*\*u has two long sounds. One is the same as its name; the other is like long oo*

When teaching this work to an individual, use a chalkboard, slate or paper and pencil. For teaching a class, a chalkboard is adequate but an overhead projector is ideal because the teacher is able to face the class directly.

You will notice that the units, if taught in the order given, are cumulative. That is, only one new phonetic element (or related group of elements) is introduced in grapheme/phoneme relationship(s) plus those that were used in the previous units. The work proceeds step by easy step. It is not obligatory to teach phonics in this particular order but this presentation is one that has proved successful over the years.

When your students have completed all 44 units they will have been introduced to all of the regular phonetic elements in the English language. They will then have the tools with which they can sound out 85% of all words. Most children will need help in implementing this basic knowledge in actual reading and may need help in identifying the graphemes in a word. For example, when the student comes to the word, **teaching**, it may be necessary to help break it down into its phonetic components: **t-ea-ch-ing**. Often it takes only a quiet hint: (**ea** sounds like long **e**) to give the child the clue needed.

To help students with the 15% of words that contain phonetic irregularities, consult your dictionary. Write the word as it is given in parentheses following the correct spelling in the dictionary. For example, said (sed). Although students must learn the correct spelling, they can sound out the word as it is given in parentheses.

Phonetic irregularities occur most frequently in short, commonly used words. As the child reads more advanced material the phonic training will become increasingly useful and the child can achieve independence in reading unfamiliar words.

The basic work should be presented to a class in one semester (Sept.-Dec.) in half-hour periods daily in the first grade. Where large groups of words are given (as in Units 2, 6, 13, 14, etc.) choose **only** the words that will be most interesting. **You do not need to teach all of them.** Large word lists have been included to demonstrate how the phonics system provides the key to unlock unlimited numbers of words...unlike the narrow capabilities of the “controlled vocabularies” associated with the look-say method.

It is helpful to lay out a schedule at the beginning of the semester, allotting certain time-periods in which to present words from a given number of units. The objective would be to introduce all of the units before winter vacation. Remember that this formal introduction is merely the foundation. It starts the child off right by giving strong directional guidance and an overall understanding of the phonetic structure of the language. **It must be accompanied by—and followed by—much practice in writing and reading of books.**

If one is adapting this material to individual work—rather than a class—it is well to plan on at least 50 hours in which the basic units are supplemented by exercises in writing and practice in reading.

Phonics-based textbooks are useful—especially for those who are teaching phonics for the first time. However, the lack of such textbooks is no excuse for the failure to teach the material in these Lesson Plans. Any sort of book may be used. The writer has done it successfully using the only books at hand: look-say basal readers! When words are encountered which contain sounds that have not as yet been taught in formal phonics lessons, they may be offered as whole words or better still, if the teacher feels up, to it, may be presented as a “preview” of what is to come in the formal sessions.

The writer knows from actual classroom experience that, even though the textbook material is not coordinated with the structured phonics lessons, the problem will solve itself when, in a few weeks' time, the class has completed the 44 units in these Lesson Plans. Don't make a big issue of it. Be patient, pleasant and adaptable during textbook reading lessons but, on the other hand, do not let anything interfere with the daily half-hour formal phonics sessions. At the end of the first semester, with the guidance and assistance of the teacher and with supplementary work in writing and spelling, the children will be able to sound out words in any reading material suitable to their age level.

If millage failures and tight budgets—or the prejudice of school administrators or supervisors—preclude the possibility of new phonics-based textbooks, don't despair. Remember how many persons in history learned to read with only the Bible or Pilgrim's Progress for textbooks and, though Abraham Lincoln never saw a basal reader, he achieved mastery of the English Language.

Do plan a tentative schedule before you begin to teach this material. The 44 units in these Lesson Plans should be completed in about four months. Do not linger over any one unit. Do not expect the student to know perfectly the sound in one unit before you go on to the next. After all, this material is arranged to provide a continuing "built-in" review. For example, if you are teaching the word "toothbrush" in Unit 30, the only new sound is that of long **oo**. The other sounds, **t**, **th**, **b**, **r**, **u** and **sh** are review elements. When all 44 units have been completed, don't worry if the student has not learned thoroughly every phonetic element that has been presented in this preliminary work. From now on, every time the student reads any written matter whatsoever it will constitute a review of the material in these Lesson Plans. It is to be expected that the student will need help and reminders for some time after the four months of initial instruction is completed. The more practice the student has in reading, the sooner complete mastery of phonic skills will be achieved.

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
				UNIT 1	UNIT 1	
	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 3	
	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 5	
	UNIT 6	UNIT 6	UNIT 6	UNIT 7	UNIT 8	
	UNIT 9	UNIT 10	UNIT 11			

Here is a blank calendar for four months on which to write in the units on the days you plan to teach.

SAMPLE

### SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

#### FIRST MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

#### SECOND MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

#### THIRD MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

#### FOURTH MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

Now you are ready for the first lesson. You have before you groups of words to guide you but, remember, these are mere skeletons of your lessons. It is your task to inspire the children to put flesh on the bones and to breathe life into them. Here is a sampling of a proven teaching method:

**THE TEACHER SAYS:**

The name of this letter is **b**.  
It says **b-uh**.

The name of this letter is **a**.  
Its short sound is **a**

Blend **b-uh** and **a**

Now we'll add the letter **t** that says **t-uh**.

What is the word?  
(Pronounce it in class.)

**CLASS: bat**

I'll draw a picture of a bat.

Johnny, if you have a ball, what do you do with  
the bat?

**JOHNNY: I hit the ball with the bat.**

Good, let's sound out another word.  
This word also starts with **b** that says **b-uh**.

The next letter is **a** that says **a**.

Blend **b-uh** and **a** together to make **ba**

Now we'll add the letter **g** that says  
(hard sound of **g**)

What is the word? (Pronounce the word  
**bag** with the class.) I'll draw a picture of a **bag**.

Mary, in what does you mother carry  
groceries home from the store?

**MARY: She carries them home in a bag.**

That's fine. You have read two words this  
morning. Let's sound another word

**THE TEACHER WRITES**

b

a

ba

bat

b

a

ba

bag

**b** says **buh**

b

**a** says **a**

a

Blend **b-uh** and **a** to make **ba**.

ba

Now we'll add **d** that says **d-uh**.  
The word is? Class?

bad

CLASS: **bad**

Billy, a dog walked on mother's clean floor  
with muddy paws. Was that good?

BILLY: No it was **bad**.

(NOTE: If Billy has a dog he will probably want  
to tell about something bad that he did.  
Point to – and pronounce – the new word  
whenever it is used.)

Now we'll start the next with another letter.  
It's name is **c** and it has more than one  
sound, but today we will learn only the  
hard sound: **k-uh**.

c

You remember **a**; it says **a**.

a

Blend **k-uh** and **a** together to make **ca**.

ca

Now we'll add the letter **p** that says **p-uh**.

cap

The word, class, is?

CLASS: **cap**

Donald, what do you wear on your head?

DONALD: I wear a **cap**.

Continue in this fashion. After you have Finished Unit 1, you need not try to teach all of the words in the longer units. Choose the words you think will be most interesting to the children. Stay on your schedule so that the work will be completed in about four months.

It is important that each child has a turn making up a sentence. This is the “bait” that is used to hold the children's attention. They will not realize that they are sounding out “lists of words” because they will be so intent in expressing their own thoughts as they incorporate the “key” words in sentences.

If anyone is bashful or slow in responding, gently ask leading questions to draw the child out. Don't be afraid to improvise. Talk about the “key” words as much as is needed. Then ask the child to tell **you** something about it even if, at first, the response consists only of a parrot version of your ideas. The children will soon have their own delightful, original sentences. Of course, our purpose is to encourage them to think of the **meaning** of the “key” words. A six-year old child's verbal vocabulary is said to consist of 5,000 - 10,000 words or more. These lessons provide a means of exercising that vocabulary and developing a reading vocabulary at the same time.

# Reading Made Easy With Blend Phonics

## Unit Progress Chart

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Date \_\_\_\_\_

Unit 1 <b><u>Step 1</u></b>	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6 <b><u>Step 2</u></b>	Unit 7
Unit 8	Unit 9	Unit 10	Unit 11	Unit 12	Unit 13	Unit 14 <b><u>Step 3</u></b>
Unit 15	Unit 16	Unit 17	Unit 18 <b><u>Step 4</u></b>	Unit 19	Unit 20	Unit 21 <b><u>Step 5</u></b>
Unit 22	Unit 23	Unit 24	Unit 25	Unit 26	Unit 27	Unit 28
Unit 29	Unit 30	Unit 31	Unit 32	Unit 33	Unit 34	Unit 35 <b><u>Step 6</u></b>
Unit 36	Unit 37	Unit 38	Unit 39	Unit 40	Unit 41	Unit 42
Unit 43	Unit 44	<b><u>Step 1:</u></b> Short Vowels & Consonants <b><u>Step 4:</u></b> R-Controlled Vowels <b><u>Step 2:</u></b> Consonant Blends & Digraphs <b><u>Step 5:</u></b> Vowel Digraphs & Diphthongs <b><u>Step 3:</u></b> Long Vowels (VCE) <b><u>Step 6:</u></b> Irregular Spellings				

Created by Donald L. Potter, 9/30/07 ([www.donpotter.net](http://www.donpotter.net))

HAZEL LOGAN LORING  
(1902-1983)

Born in Massachusetts in 1902, Hazel Loring viewed the recent history of reading instruction from the unique perspective of one who taught under both the phonics and the “whole word” method.

After attending what is now the University of Massachusetts for two years, she had her first experience teaching phonics in 1923-24. While raising a family of three children, she maintained a keen interest in reading problems and later returned to the teaching profession. Mrs. Loring earned her B.S. in Education from Wayne State University, received her Michigan State Permanent Elementary Certificate, and taught a first grade classroom in Oscoda, Michigan for ten years from 1960 to 1970.

As a retired teacher she joined the *Reading Reform Foundation* and served as its Michigan Chairman. She was a member of the NRTA and a Retired Member of the NEA.

The original edition contained this acknowledgement: For their encouragement and assistance, grateful acknowledgement is made to Mrs. Raymond Rubicam and Ralph W. Lewis, Professor Emeritus, Department of Natural Science, Michigan State University.

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Donald Potter’s *Blend Phonics Reader* was published in 2007. It contains all the words in *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade* plus other words of similar spelling patterns. Words of similar configuration are in close proximity to help students overcome the whole-word configuration guessing habit. Visit [www.donpotter.net](http://www.donpotter.net) and [www.blendphoncs.org](http://www.blendphoncs.org).

# Appendix A

## 80 of the 220 Dolch List Words

### Absent from *Blend Phonics*

*after again always an and any are ask at ate away been before best better buy carry come could did do does done don't down draw eat eight very fall four give going have his I into its laugh live many myself never of once one only open over own pretty said seven six small some start the their here they think three to today together two under up upon us use very warm wash were where who would your*

**Note:** Thirty-five of the absent *Dolch Sight-Word List* words are regular according to Loring's system and forty-five are irregular. The regular words could easily be worked into the book if it were thought appropriate to make some minor additions to the word lists. Some are regular phonics words that start with a vowel (VC) and were not included in the VCV lists. All of them will be easy for the student to master once they have learned *Blend Phonics*. These high-frequency irregular words are easy to remember because they are encountered often in stories. "Of" is the only word that can be considered totally irregular; the others are only slightly irregular.

**Here is a useful classification of the omissions :**

**35 Regular words:** *after an and ask at ate away before best better did down draw eat fall going his I its myself never over own pretty six small start the think three under up upon us use*

**45 Irregular words:** *again always any are been buy carry come could do done does don't eight very four give have into live many of once one only open said seven some their here they to today together two very warm was were where who would your*

**Note:** The thirty-five Regular *Dolch List* words have been included in the *Blend Phonics Reader* in their correct spelling pattern. Students who have mastered *Blend Phonics* will have no problem learning the 45 irregular Dolch List words. The important thing is to be sure the students learn the Dolch words like all the other words, by looking at all the letters from left to right and not just the word shape.

Be sure and teach the students Mr. Potter's *Secret of Reading*, "**Look at all the letters the right way.**"

## Postscript

The following quote is from Rudolf Flesch's 1955 *Why Johnny Can't Read and what you can do about it*. This is the **most helpful advice** I have ever read for helping students with reading problems.

“To begin with, let's try **to isolate Johnny from his word-guessing environment**. While he is in school, that is difficult or almost impossible. So the best thing will be to work with him during the summer vacations. Let him **stop all reading** – all *attempts* to read. Explain to him that now he is going to learn to how to read, and that for the time being, books are out. All he'll get for several months are lessons in phonics. ... This, incidentally, is important. Take him fully into your confidence and explain to him exactly what you are trying to do. Tell him that you are going to do something **new** with him – something entirely different from what his teachers did in school. Tell him that this is *certain* to work. Convince him that as soon as he has taken this medicine he will be cured. ... Start him on the phonics lessons. Give him either this book or the only other book of that type that I know: *Remedial Reading Drills* by Thorleif G. Hegge, Samuel A. Kirk, and Winfred D. Kirk. Go with him through the Exercises, one by one, always making sure that he has mastered the previous one before you go on to the next. ...**Only** when you are through – or almost through – with the drills and exercises, start him again on reading. At first, let him read aloud to you. Watch like a hawk that he doesn't guess a single word. Interrupt him every time he does it and let him work out the word phonetically. He'll never learn to read if he doesn't get over the word-guessing habit.” (115).

Hazel Loring's *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade* hadn't been written in 1955 when Flesch wrote his *Johnny*, but I am sure that he would have been glad to include *Blend Phonics* right along with the Hegge-Kirk-Kirk *Remedial Reading Drills* (available for free on my web site) and his own 72 exercises published at the end of his *Johnny*.

# Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics

## Certificate of Completion



Blend Phonics Reader

Six-Steps to Reading Success

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Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Step</u>	<u>Phonics Skills Mastered</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	Short Vowels and Consonants	1 – 5	297	_____
2	Consonant Blends and Digraphs	6 – 13	444	_____
3	Long Vowels (VCE)	14 – 17	337	_____
4	R-Controlled Vowels	18 – 20	145	_____
5	Vowel Digraphs and Diphthongs	21 – 34	525	_____
6	Irregular Spellings	35 – 44	<u>336</u> 2,084	_____

Congratulations to \_\_\_\_\_ for demonstrating the ability to read all 2,084 phonics words in Mr. Potter's *Blend Phonics Reader*.

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_