

Parent Primer: Reading

Welcome to Learn Away Books!

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

Learn Away books has 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.

As followers of Jesus Christ, ultimately, we want our children to be able to read and comprehend the Bible. We want them to have critical thinking skills firmly established at a young age, so they are ready to examine and accept the truths found in the Bible for themselves.

Bible time for our family is essential. Teaching children about their loving Creator and Savior is the ultimate and heavily repeated command to parents throughout the Bible. But, if we do not teach them to read and think through the truths the Bible reveals and to also be able to recognize the deceptions the world offers loudly through our culture, have we truly accomplished our mission? Have we fulfilled God's command to teach our children these things ***diligently***?

*And thou shalt teach them diligently
unto thy children, and shalt talk of them
when thou sittest in thine house, and when
thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest
down, and when thou risest up.*

Deuteronomy 6:7

Now, before we continue, we want to say that you certainly do not have to be a Christian to use this curriculum effectively.

But, in the interest of honesty and openness, we are followers of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, those beliefs will come through in the curriculum.

Before you dismiss this curriculum as being, perhaps, biased to one belief system, please consider the reality that no matter what book you read or video you view, the bias of the author will shine through.

“Bias,” though now used as a *naughty* word in our modern culture, merely means the lens through which a person views the world. Every person has developed a pair of glasses that he or she puts on and looks at every other person, viewpoint or opinion with. This could also be called a “worldview.”

Life experience is the major driving force behind these glasses, and it is simply dishonest to say that you or anyone else does not have their own set of worldview glasses.

I also like to think of it as our own personal flavor.

Take coffee for example. I (Kari) cannot stand the taste or smell of coffee. (Although, if I smell it, I invariably want donuts. But, who doesn't, right?)

Coffee has a very strong flavor. Over the years I have had friend after friend say, “No, you can't taste the coffee when you get it mixed with this other flavor, etc.”

No matter what other flavor you attempt to foist on coffee, it still tastes like coffee! There is no way around this fact!

Anyway, my point is that we all have our own flavor that we bring to anything we create or compose.

Many authors and teachers, however, are not honest about their own bias in their work. So, we wanted to be different. We are letting you know from the very beginning that the Bible is the foundation of our beliefs and that it will resonate throughout the curriculum.

However, we hope you will still give this curriculum a try and that it will bless your family!

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 communist-government fashioned 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 people's emotions more readily than someone who is very systematic and schedule oriented.

There are four main, recognized 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. They all have 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, 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.



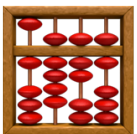
The **People Smart** child will love to be around people. He or she will naturally be good leaders or counselors and will love group activities.



The **Music Smart** child learns best with rhythm and often learns well along side 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 are 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 like to push his or her limits often.

There is more to us than our personalities and our smarts.

While secular scientists have been able to identify several learning personalities and smarts, there is still a major component that they miss completely. We are more than just machines that live and learn. We are special creations, and, because of this, we are given special gifts from God.

The Bible refers to seven *gifts* that can more accurately be called Spiritual Personalities. Each personality reflects a particular part of God's nature. As with the smarts, we all possess these seven spiritual gifts or personalities, but often, one or two are more dominate than the others. As Christians, we should strive to develop all of the gifts, as this brings us closer to the way God intended us to be, more like Him. (*1 Corinthians 7:7, 12:6-10 and Romans 12:6-8*)

The Church



While most people imagine a building when they think about the church, the Bible does not define it that way. We translate the Greek word *ekklesia* into our word “church.” The definition of this word means the “called out ones” and it refers to a gathering or a congregation. Anyone who has put their trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation has become a part of the Body of Christ, and, therefore, is a member of that church. Like parts of our body, different people with different spiritual gifts (personalities) make up the Body of Christ and fulfill different necessary purposes in the church.

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 their 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 out of the way just so we can move on feeling a bit more like we are super smart 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.)

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 change. 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 when he walked through the garden with them.

Language is something God gave us as well. In fact, that is something that has truly stumped evolutionists. Because they have recently discovered that there are places in our brain especially designed for speaking and reading. Something that completely contradicts the very basis of evolution.

Man has been speaking and reading fluently from the beginning. In fact, we originally had one language. That too is something that evolutionist greatly dislike about reality.

Instead of languages independently cropping up all over the world as man supposedly evolved, history shows us that all languages actually emerged from one master language some 4,000-6,000 years ago. For followers of Christ, this causes no surprise or alarm because we know that we *did* have a master language until the Tower of Babel. Since then, language has also fallen under the curse of sin. That is the reason we face a language that does not always seem to make sense.

English, however, 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.

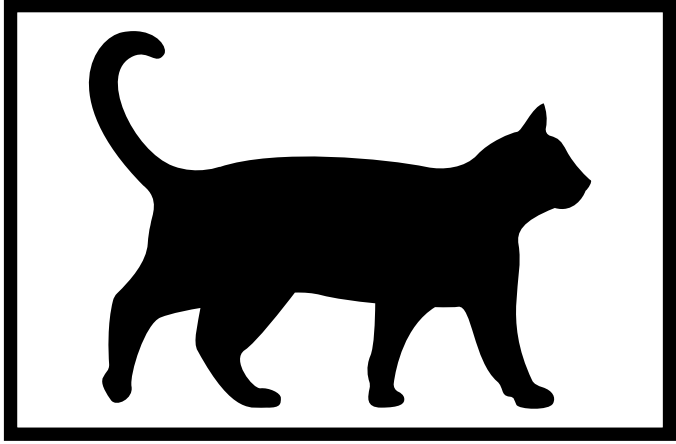
Unfortunately, reading only seems to be taught two ways in American schools and American curricula.

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 a dark humor 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.

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 them 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.

This guide is designed with a weekly format which includes 5 individual lessons for each week. If your actual pace through the guide is slower or faster, do not be alarmed. 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 is different about Learn Away Reading?

We have done our best to take all of the truly great aspects of other curriculums, including ones from over 100 years ago, and combine them into an attractive, but functional, reading course.

Many of the classical approaches to reading focus on teaching reading, writing and spelling all at the same time. We are not arguing that these three skills are not essential nor that they obviously complement one another, but, we do not agree that they each must be taught at the same time.

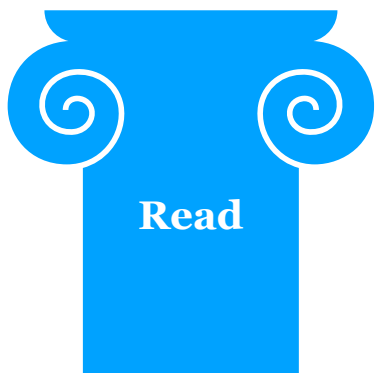
For example, good spelling is not required for the skill of reading. Being able to write the alphabet is also not needed for reading. Reading is a visual and auditory skill.

If you have a young child who really wants to read, but is not mechanically ready to write, should you withhold their reading lessons based on this alone? We do not believe so.

Therefore, what we have done is to separate the essential skills of English into four different sections. All of these sections build on and complement one another, but they do not have to all be taught at the same time.

As the teacher, you will have the freedom to be able to choose at which time to begin the other sections for the unique child you are teaching.

We call the sections, the Four Pillars of Reading. Here is what they are:



Learn the most commonly used phonograms and how to read over 1,700 of the most frequently used words in English.



Learn how to write the lower and upper case alphabet.

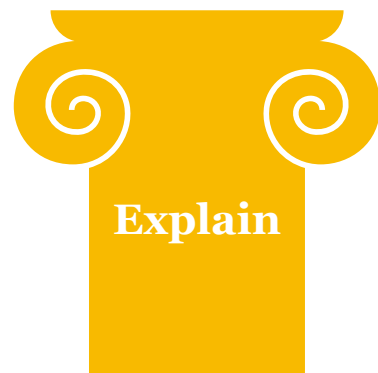
Learn how to write every word from the **Read** pillar.

Learn basic grammar, parts of speech, and composition.



Understand the difference between vowel and consonant sounds and how to count syllables.

Learn how and why we spell certain words the way that we do through the use of spelling patterns.



Move from being able to just read words, to being able to comprehend the word's meaning in the context of a sentence.

Decode the definitions of words through the understanding and use of morphemes.

The Read pillar is the foundation for the other four, and, therefore, must be done first or at the same time as the others.

Each pillar will focus on teaching the 1,700+ high frequency words that are covered in the Read pillar, but they will do so from their own unique perspective of the word.

Reading a word is not the same as spelling, writing or defining it. Separating these skills helps each skill to be able to fully develop the word for use within its own pillar.

All of these pillars are essential to having a complete understanding of our language, but, as we said, we do not hold to the belief that they have to be taught at the same time.

If you have a child who is old enough and has the capacity to do all four simultaneously, than by all means, do so! But, if you have several young children, as we do at this moment, who are at various development and patience levels, then feel freed from the burden of having to do all of these pillars at once.

Have you ever noticed that children will want to listen to a new song or watch a new movie over and over and over and over and over...

Well, you get it.

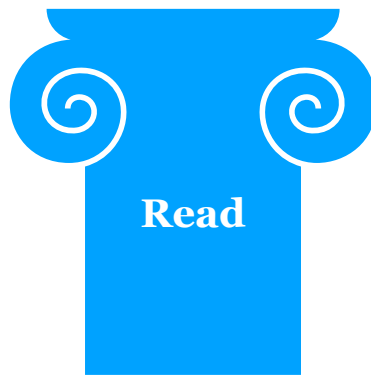
Why do they do this? Repetition is essential for memory retention.

Now, exploit that! Because to be able to remember a word instantly (or really for your brain to sound it out so fast you feel like you are reading it instantly) you must see a word several hundred times!

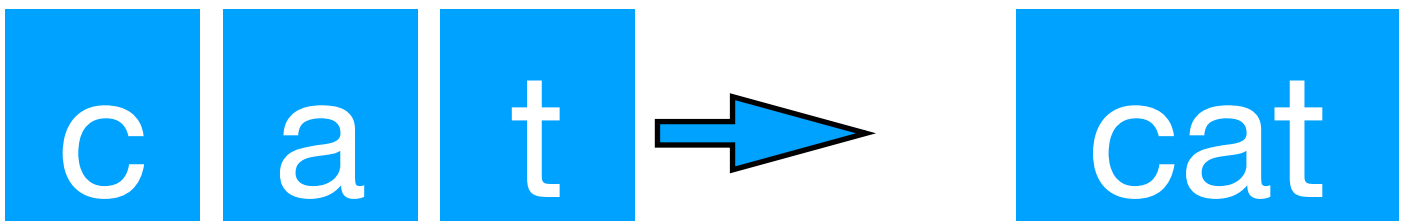
We have built repetition into the course as much as possible, which may seem repetitive to an adult...but, remember, that's the idea.

However, the course can only do so much. Reading to your child is a powerful way to help them see the words he is learning in the course in the context of a real story.

We recommend finger-guided reading, so the child can track where you are and begin to pick out words he knows.



You will notice that the reading pillar is very different in appearance than other curriculums. What we have found for our own children, and is a great way to help them see the individual sounds within a word, is to separate the phonograms (the pictures of sounds) into blocks and then “click” the blocks back together. Here is an example:



Say the sound each letter represents in this word and then say the word again, but in the normal tone and way.

(k) (â) (t) = (cat)

It is pretty simple, right? It helps to break apart the words for them and put them back together.

A quick word about how sounds will be represented in the Parent’s Primer.

Our writing program does not have the normal breve mark which is usually used to indicate a vowel saying its short (first) sound. Our breve mark, therefore, looks more like a frown than a smile, but at least you know which sound we are trying to represent.

Here are what the different vowels will look like:

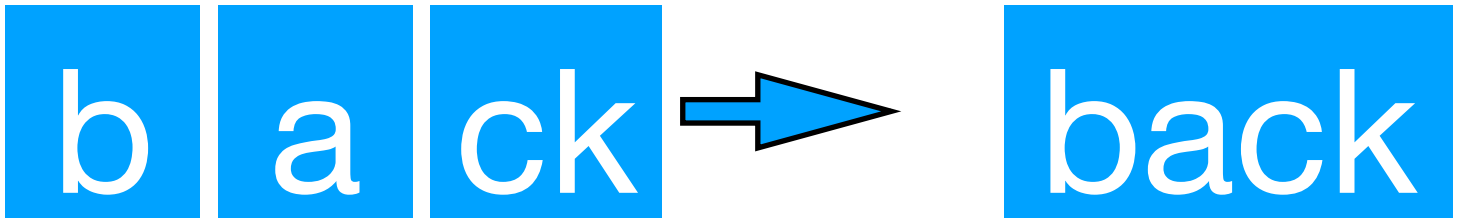
Short (first) sounds: **â, ê, î, ô, and û.**

Long (second) sounds: **ā, ē, ī, ō, and ū.**

Broad (third or fourth) sounds: **ä, ë, ï, ö, and ü.**

As you may recall, there will be many letter teams taught (also called multi-letter phonograms).

The block method really helps here as well.



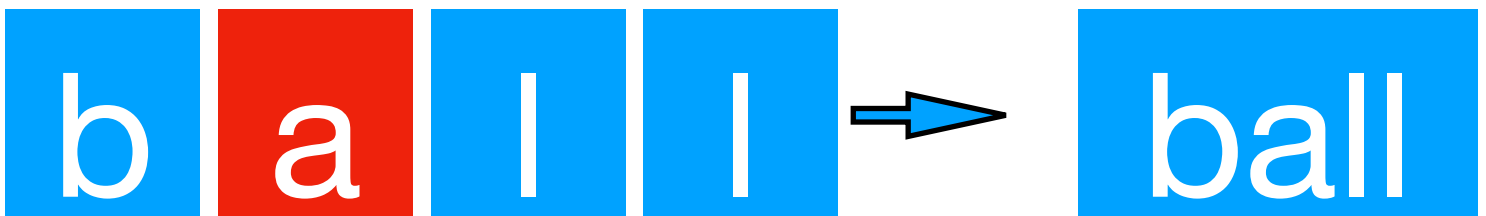
It is so much easier for the child to see how the letter team is working together to make one sound in the word when it is separated into its own block.

Also, many phonograms will represent more than one sound. This can get a bit tricky to teach.

Some programs use numbers written above the phonogram to indicate which sound it is making. But, we have found that this often confuses the children more than it helps them to recognize that the phonogram is saying a second or third sound.

What we have chosen to do instead is use colors. Colors resonate with all of us and leads to quicker memory recall.

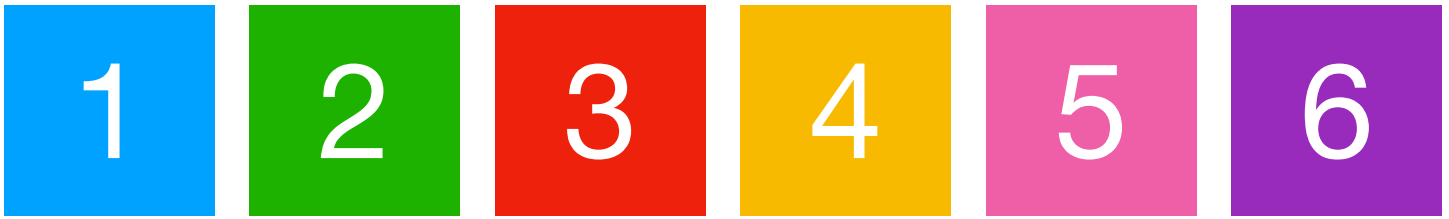
Here are some examples:



In the word “me” the letter E is saying its second sound (ē).

In the word “ball” the letter A is saying its third sound (ä).

When a phonogram is sayings its first sound, which is also its most common sound, it will always be represented in a blue square. Here are the colors that will represent which sound.



We know it is hard to imagine, but, yes, there will be some phonograms that represent six different sounds.

Phonograms are presented at the beginning of each lesson. They must be drilled. When we are drilling the phonograms, it goes something like this:



“The name of this letter is A. It has three sounds, it says (â ā ä).”

As the student begins to understand and remember, that instruction can be shortened to just saying, “A says (â ā ä).” And then move on to the next phonogram.



Here is a letter team. This is an example for teaching it. “S and H are teaming up to say the sound, (sh).”

Again, as you progress, that can be shortened to, “S and H say (sh).”

We have found with our own children, that the more physical connection they have to what you are saying, the more they retain the information. Therefore, the way we have taught them their letters and phonograms is to use the American Sign Language sign for the alphabetic letter with one hand, and to use our other hand to count the sounds of the particular letter or phonogram.

(We highly recommend visiting <https://phonograms.logicofenglish.com/chart> to listen to how the phonogram is pronounced. You as the teacher will need to be confident in how to pronounce the phonograms.)



During the first week of the Write course, the child will learn how to write the lowercase letters in cursive. Yes, cursive.

We have heard people say they do not like to teach cursive because it is harder or even that “everyone’s cursive looks different.” However, everyone’s handwriting looks different regardless of whether it is cursive or print (manuscript).

Here are the reasons we teach cursive first:

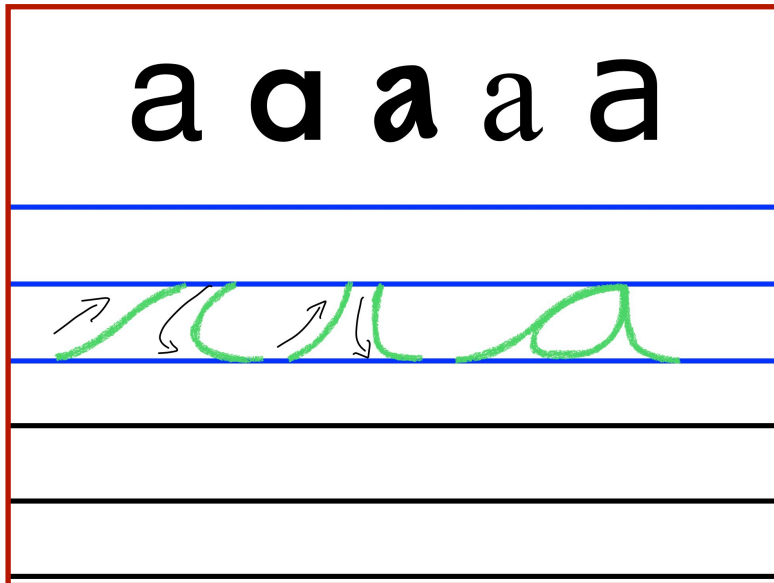
1. Cursive is designed for the human hand. Print (manuscript) is designed for the printing press.
2. Cursive connects the letters within words, thereby helping the child to space their letters correctly and to understand when to have a larger space between words.
3. All lowercase letters in cursive begin at the same place, the baseline (bottom line). Print lowercase letters start in several different locations.
4. Cursive helps to reduce wrong facing letters such as **b** and **d**.

Another aspect to remember when teaching handwriting, whether it is print or cursive, is that the letters are not just one whole symbol. They are, in fact, a series of strokes that form into a complete symbol.

Some children do better learning the whole symbol, but many do better when learning the individual strokes. Many letters share strokes, so they are grouped together. That is why the letters are not taught alphabetically.

As the course progresses, the uppercase letters will also be taught, but since 95% of letters that they will see in their reading will be lowercase, lowercase is naturally taught first.

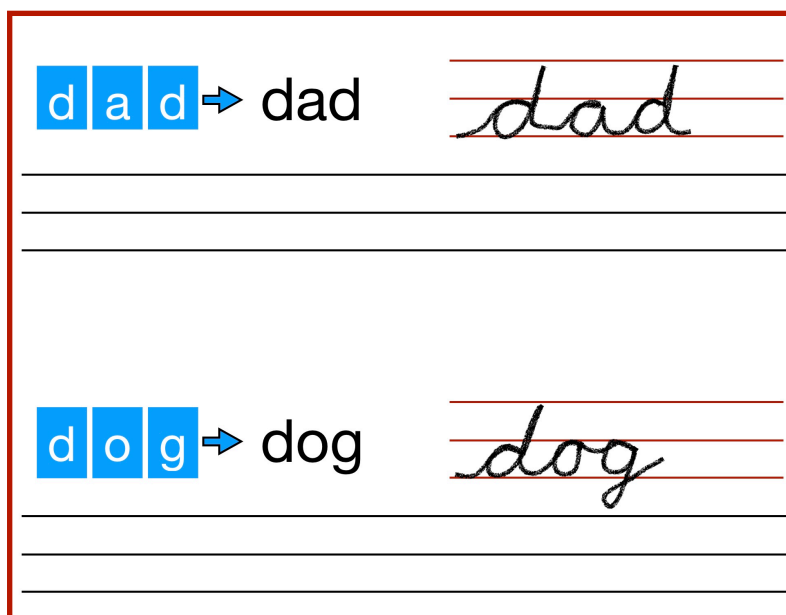
Here is a sample of how a student page will look. (There will be detailed instructions for how to talk them through the writing process in the Parent's Guide.)



As you can see, the individual strokes are taught first, and then they are put together into the final product.

Starting in the second week of the Write course, the child will get to review their reading words from the previous week by writing them.

Here is a sample:



As you can see, they get to see the word separated out once more, and then have an example of how to write the word in cursive.




In the first week of the Spell course, the child will become familiar with the difference between vowel sounds and consonant sounds. They will also learn what syllables are and how to count them.


These skills are very important for learning about spelling patterns later on.


Starting in the second week, they will begin to write their reading words grouped by the spelling pattern that will help them to remember why and how a word is spelled.

Here are some sample pages:

Syllables

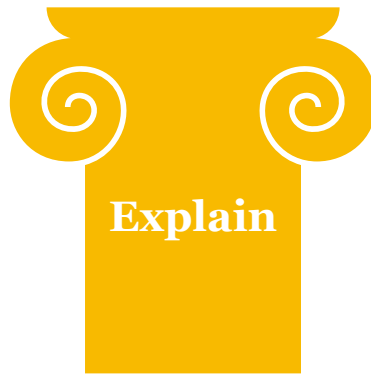
cat 

ti ger 

el e phant 

In English, consonants are often doubled at the end of short words.

will	well	tell
<i>will</i>	<i>well</i>	<i>tell</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



Explain

Reading, writing and spelling are all important skills. But, one of the major skills that is lacking in traditional classrooms (as evidenced by horrid standardized test scores) is comprehension.

If a child can read a word, can he or she tell you what the word means?

Just as importantly, can he or she tell you, based on the context of the sentence, what the role of the word is in the sentence or story?

This is comprehension.

In the Explain course, the child will be exploring the use of these words within stories.

At first, there will be work pages that will have the child connect reading words and phrases with pictures. From there, he will move on to deeper exercises that will help him to develop his comprehension skills.

At the end of each week, there will be a chapter from *Adam's Acres*, a set of stories about a small farm that is written specifically for this course.

Even though the stories are designed to be read by the parent, words that he or she has been learning to read will be highlighted in orange.

Adam's Acres



Chapter 1

Adam's Acres is a farm **in** a small city called Berea. Like most farms, there are fields, fences **and** animals. There are a couple **of** cows, some chickens **and** a goat here **and** there. Sometimes among the moos, cock-a-doodle-dos **and** baa-baas, different sounds find their way to your ears.



Once there was something that sounded a lot like a deep rumbling, grumbling growl. **It** was hard to even imagine what kind **of** animal **it** could have come from.

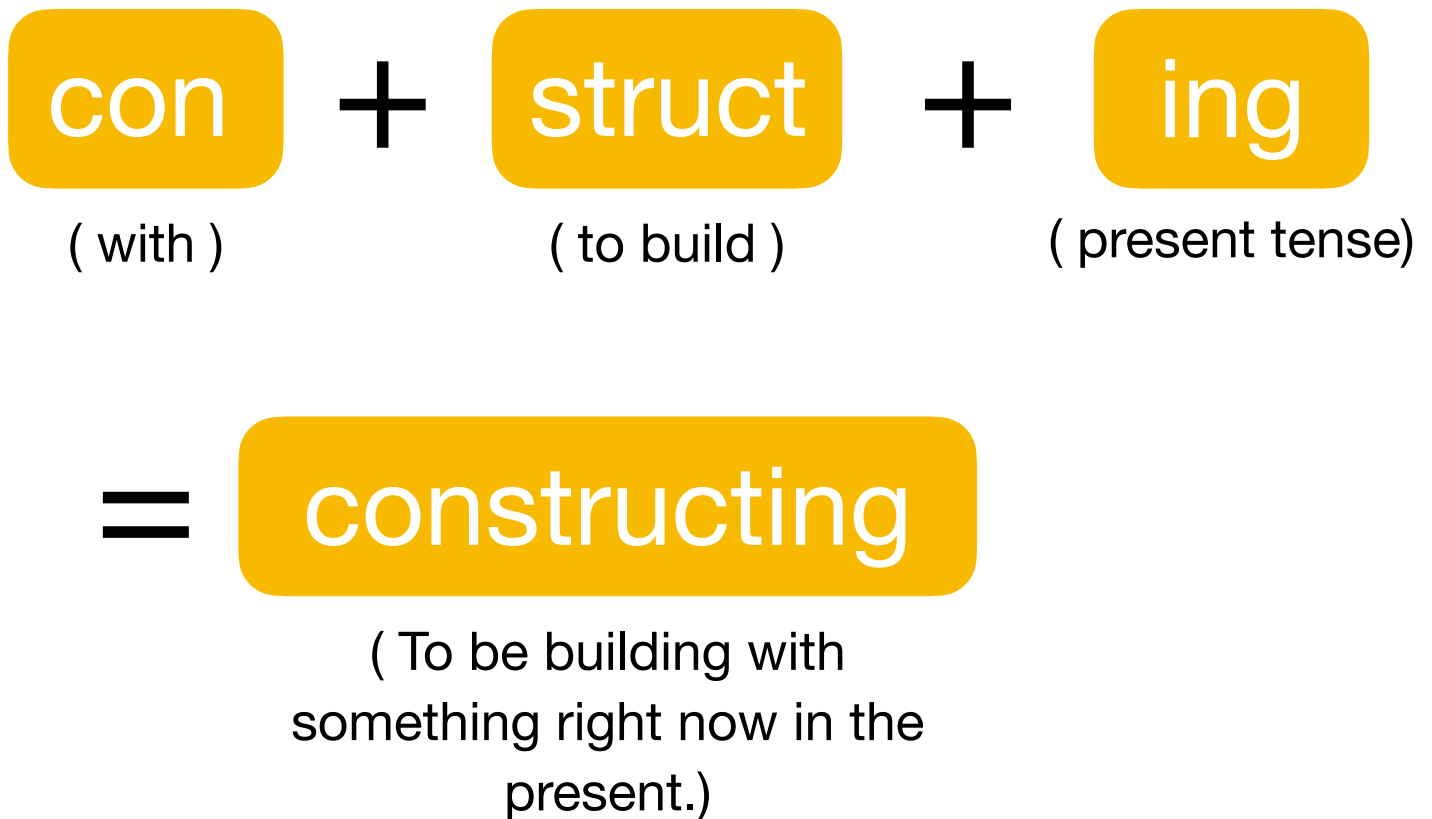
English words are actually groups of smaller items called **morphemes**. Morphemes are smaller units of meaning within the word. They come in three varieties, base words, prefixes and suffixes.

A **base word** is the foundation of the word and carries the most meaning.

A **prefix** is added to the front of a base word to alter or intensify the meaning of the base word.

A **suffix** is added to the end of a base word and often changes the tense of the base word, but it can also alter its meaning.

Here is an example:



The goal of teaching morphemes is so the child will be able to look at almost any word in the English language and be able to understand its use, its definition, and to even know the historical origin of the word (Greek, Latin, French, etc.).

Begin!

We know that all of this was a lot of information, but it will help you to determine whether you believe this curriculum will help your child learn to read, write, spell and comprehend English.

We hope that it will be a great help to your family!

There are a lot of review pages involved and different kinds of activities that help the child to see the reading words in various contexts which aids greatly in memory retention.

Again, whether you do one pillar at a time, two, or all four, understand that you are in control at all times and use whichever parts of the courses you believe are of the most use to your particular child.

There are parent guides for each book in the curriculum with step by step instructions that will help guide you through the courses. But, though certain lessons will provide “scripts,” understand these are examples of how to teach the lesson, but please put the lesson into your own words.

Just a quick suggestion. If possible, try to read ahead of your child by a day or even a week or two. This will help you get a long view of what is to come and will aid in your ability to answer their questions as they come up.

For some strange reason, children never seem to follow the lesson plan when it comes to their questions! Imagine that!

Most of all, enjoy the time with your child. Teaching can often feel like a burden, but he or she will not always be your little one. The little one who climbs into your lap for story time. The little one who always comes to you first to answer their questions. Raising children into adults is truly bittersweet. Joy is mixed with sadness, and time flashes by so very quickly.

Unlike parents whose children spend eight hours a day in the care of strangers, you truly do have an immense amount of time with them. It may seem like too much time, but it won't when they are off to their career, college or starting their own family.

Take the time to raise your own children and bless each day you have with them!

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Psalm 127: 3-5

