

Series 1
Books 3 to 6
Coaching Guide

The goal: The goal of these books is to help your child feel successful as a beginning reader. This should be an experience your child enjoys sharing with you.

Remember these things:

- Students need to be exposed to new material several times before they master it.
- Make sure you don't express frustration or worry. Expect this to be a long process. Rome was not built in a day!
- If your child resists, put this away for a little while and try again later.
- Keep doing other things to support your child's literacy, like reading other books aloud to him/her every day.

Sounding-Out Words

In these books, we move from two sounds to **three sounds** (three letters) in each word. Encourage your child to sound out the words by saying each letter sound slowly and then blending the sounds together.

- As you move your finger along the word CAT:
 - You: Cuh...a...tuh. Now you try.
 - Child: Cuh...a...tuh.
 - You: Say it faster. Cuh.a.tuh. What word is it?
 - Child: Cat!

Once introduced, some words will reappear in later books to help your child practice. Your child may not remember these words right away. That's normal.

When your child is stumped, start by reminding him/her of the strategy: "Sound it out." Wait quietly until s/he tries. If necessary, help more: "What's the first sound?" Wait again. Avoid jumping in with the answer unless you sense frustration. You know your child best.

Vowel Sounds

In books 3 to 6, **the new vowel sounds are short:**

- Short A as in "cat."
- Short U as in "run."
- Short I as in "in" and "is."
- Short O as in "hop."

Explain to your child that **some letters have a few different sounds**, not just one sound. Talk about each new vowel sound before you read the book.

Sight Words

Sight words are words that appear very frequently, so new readers should memorize them. Books 3 to 6 introduce these words that can be treated as sight words (though they can be sounded out).

- Book 3: the
- Book 4: in
- Book 5: is
- Book 6: on, and

Make sure your child understands: sounding out is just one way to figure out a word. Sometimes that won't work. Sometimes words are spelled in funny ways and letters don't sound like we expect them to. Sometimes we have to remember what the word looks like.

To help your reader learn these sight words:

- **POINT** to each word on the practice page at the start of each book and read it to your child.
- **SOUND OUT (if possible)**. When it makes sense, help your child recognize the sounds in the words.
- **TALK ABOUT WORDS**. The word "the" is especially tricky for kids when they expect to be able to sound out every word. Explain that this word is not for sounding out. Instead, we need to remember what it looks like.
- **PLAY A MATCHING GAME** with flashcards of the sight words. Print two copies of the sight-word flash cards and cut them out. Turn all the cards facedown, mix them up, and encourage your child to find matching words.

NOTE: Once introduced, some sight words will reappear in later books to help your child practice.

Reading Fun

Make Predictions

- In Book 5: As the wet kids run in the sun, ask: What will happen to their wet clothes as they run in the sun? Why?

Talk About Similar-Sounding Words

Encourage your child to think of other words that sound like the words in the story (i.e. for Book 3: rat, hat, pat, etc.)

Change Characters

Read the books many times and add new characters to keep them exciting (and to introduce new names).