

Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade

Lesson Plans and
Teacher's Guide

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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 **ă**

Blend **b-uh** and **ă** to make **bă**

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 2	UNIT 3	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 **ă**

Blend **b-uh** and **ă**

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 **ă**.

Blend **b-uh** and **ă** together to make **bă**

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 your mother carry
groceries home from the store?

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

THE TEACHER WRITES

b

a

ba

bat

b

a

ba

bag

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

b says **buh**

b

a says **ă**

a

Blend **b-uh** and **ă** to make **bă**.

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. Its 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 **ă**.

a

Blend **k-uh** and **ă** 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.

UNIT 1

SHORT SOUND OF a

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

UNIT 2

SHORT SOUND OF i

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

UNIT 3

SHORT SOUND OF o

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

UNIT 4

SHORT SOUND OF **u**

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

UNIT 5

SHORT SOUND OF **e**

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

UNIT 6

FINAL CONSONANT BLENDS

(Short sounds only of vowels)

band	hand	mend	ck:
bent	hint	pump	
bend	jump	pant	duck
belt	just	quest	Jack
bump	lend	rest	kick
camp	lent	rust	lock
damp	land	sent	luck
desk	lamp	send	neck
fast	hump	silk	pick
fist	lift	next	quick
felt	list	sand	quack
fond	lint	tent	rock
fund	melt	test	sick
gift	must	went	tack
tilt	milk	wind	
gust	mist		

UNIT 7

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **sh**

cash	hush	shelf	shot
dish	shall	ship	shut
fish	shed	shop	

UNIT 8

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **th**
(Voiced)

than	them	this
that	then	thus

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **th**
(Unvoiced)

thick	thud	bath
thin	thump	with

UNIT 9

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **ch, tch**

chat	chum	fetch	witch
chin	much	latch	thatch
chill	rich	match	
chick	such	notch	ch: SOUNDS LIKE k:
chop	catch	patch	
chip	ditch	pitch	mechanic

UNIT 10

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: **wh**

BLEND **wa** SOUNDS LIKE wŏ
wha SOUNDS LIKE whŏ

want	watch	when	whip
was	what	which	whisk
water		whiff	

UNIT 11

ng (ang, ing, ong, ung)

bang	ding	wing	song
gang	ping-pong	king	hung
hang	ring	thing	lung
rang	sing	gong	rung
sang	thing-a-ling	long	sung

UNIT 12

nk (ank, ink, onk, unk)

bank	link	sink	chunk
bunk	mink	wink	thank
dunk	pink	tank	honk
kink	rink	sank	

UNIT 13

INITIAL CONSONANT BLENDS:

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

blush	fling	slot	spunk
black	flung	slum	spin
block	flit	slap	span
blend	flat	slam	spat
bland	flag	slash	spit
bliss	flock	slip	stuck
blink	fled	sled	stop
clip	flop	smack	still
clap	glad	smelt	stem
click	glass	smug	stand
cliff	gland	smell	stack
clock	scat	smash	step
clink	scan	snip	stub
clank	skin	snob	stab
clinch	skip	snap	stuff
clench	skid	snug	stiff
cling	skill	snuff	swim
clang	scuff	snub	swell
club	scum	spun	swam
flash	Scotch	spot	swift
flesh	sketch	spill	switch
flip	scalp	spell	swing
flap	slush	spank	swept

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

UNIT 15

PHONOGRAMS USING LONG VOWELS:

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

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

UNIT 16

SHORT WORDS ENDING IN A LONG VOWEL:

be	he	no	she	the
go	me	so	we	

UNIT 17

INITIAL CONSONANT BLENDS AND FINAL CONSONANT BLENDS (and/or digraphs, phonograms)

ENRICHMENT REVIEW

brag	crunch	frump	grin
brand	crust	fresh	prank
brass	drag	French	press
brim	drank	Fred	prim
brick	drop	frog	print
bring	drum	frock	track
branch	drink	grand	trap
brush	dress	grass	trick
crab	drunk	grasp	trim
crash	drip	grant	trip
cramp	drug	gruff	trot
crack	Fran	grog	truck
crib	Frank	grip	trend
crop	from	grunt	trust

UNIT 18

PHONOGRAM: **ar**

bar	dark	mark	scar
barn	far	mart	star
car	farm	park	start
chart	hard	part	tar
charm	jar	spark	
darn	lark	smart	

UNIT 19

PHONOGRAM: **or**

born	fork	porch	torn
cord	fort	scorn	torch
cork	horn	scorch	morn
corn	horse	storm	morning
for	pork	stork	worn

UNIT 20

PHONOGRAMS: **er, ir, ur** and sometimes **or**

clerk	stir	camper	sitter
fern	third	cutter	starter
jerk	curb	catcher	swimmer
her	curl	chopper	sender
herd	burn	dipper	spinner
term	fur	drummer	
bird	hurt	helper	actor
birth	purr	jumper	doctor
dirt	urn	marker	janitor
fir	word	farmer	visitor
first	world	pitcher	
girl	work	planner	
sir	worm	runner	

UNIT 21

VOWEL DIGRAPHS: **ai, ay**

ail	paid	wail	lay
bail	laid		may
brain	pain	bay	pay
fail	rail	clay	pray
gain	rain	day	play
grain	sail	gay	ray
jail	tail	gray	say
maid	train	hay	sway
mail	wait	jay	way

UNIT 22

VOWEL DIGRAPH: **ee**

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

UNIT 23

VOWEL DIGRAPH: **ea**

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

beat	each	reach	read
beach	leaf	read	threat
beast	leap	real	thread
bean	leave		tread
cream	lean	bread	wealth
cheat	meal	breast	weather
cheap	least	breath	
deal	sea	dead	steak
dream	seat	death	break
feast	tea	health	great
east	teach	instead	bear

UNIT 24

VOWEL DIGRAPH: **ie**

(two phonemes: long i and long e)

cried	lies	tied	priest
cries	lied	tried	relief
dried	pie		believe
dries	pies	brief	thief
fried	spies	chief	yield
lie	tie	grief	belief
		field	

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.)

army	handy	sleepy	my
candy	hilly	thirty	ply
cooky	healthy	twenty	sly
daddy	fairly	silly	try
dolly	fifty	wealthy	sky
dusty	messy		shy
funny	penny	by	why
gummy	puppy	cry	
party	rainy	dry	
happy	sunny	fly	

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	

UNIT 27

DIGRAPH: **ow**

(like long **o**)

DIPHTHONG: **ow**

bow	slow	window	frown
bowl	tow	willow	flower
blow	throw	yellow	gown
crow	show		growl
glow	shown	bow	how
grow	snow	cow	howl
grown	fellow	crowd	power
growth	follow	clown	powder
flow	hollow	crown	row
low	pillow	brown	now
row	shadow	drown	town

UNIT 28

DIPHTHONG: **ou**

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

cloud	mound	round	you
found	out	sound	country
ground	our	shout	young
house	mouse	scout	soul
loud	pound		

UNIT 29

DIPHTHONGS: **oy, oi**

boy	toys	coin	spoil
boys	oyster	join	point
joy	oysters	joint	toil
joys		oil	
toy	boil	soil	

UNIT 30

LONG SOUND OF **oo**

boot	moon	stoop	foolish
booth	roof	spoon	smooth
bloom	loose	spool	teaspoon
coo	room	shoot	noonday
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	

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

UNIT 32:

VOWEL DIGRAPHS: **aw, au**

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

UNIT 33

PHONOGRAMS: **al, all**

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

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

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

UNIT 38

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

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

UNIT 39

SILENT **gh** AND **gh** SOUNDS LIKE **f**

bright	might	thigh	caught	rough
blight	night	right	daughter	tough
fight	moonlight		taught	laugh
fighter	plight			laughter
flight	sigh			laughing
high	tight			
light	slight			

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

UNIT 40

SILENT **k, w, t, b** and **l**

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

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

UNIT 42

ph SOUNDS LIKE f

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

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	

ed SOUNDS LIKE 'd'

aimed	changed	saved	stayed
burned	filled	rained	turned
called	named	rolled	

ed SOUNDS LIKE 't'

baked	picked	looked	wished
boxed	hoped	packed	
camped	jumped	pitched	
hitched	liked	stopped	

CONSONANTS and VOWELS
A SUMMARY of PHONETIC SOUNDS

Our alphabet has 26 letters.
Each **letter** has one **name** and one or more sounds.

The **consonants** are all the letters, except a, e, i, o, u.
Consonants: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, y, z. **Vowels:** a, e, i, o, u
and sometimes y (which is sometimes a vowel and sometimes a consonants.)

Most **single consonants** have only one sound.
Example: the “b” sound you hear in “baby”
Exceptions: “c” has a **hard sound** “k” (as in “cat”) and
a **soft sound** “s” when followed by **e, i, or y** (as in “cent, city fancy”)
“g” has a **hard sound** “g” (as in “go”) and sometimes
a **soft sound** “j” when followed by **e, i or y** (as in “age, ginger, gym”)

In a **consonant blend** you hear the sounds of two or three consonants blended together.
Example: Single consonant **rap**
Consonant blend with two consonants **trap**
Consonant blends with three consonants **strap**

In a **consonant digraph** you do not hear the separate sounds of the consonants, but you do hear a new sound. (Most of the consonant digraphs are a consonant followed by an “h”)
Example: **ch** – church **th** – that **ph** – phone
sh – shop **wh** – when **gh** – laugh

Some letters are **silent** that is do not have any sound in the word.
Example: Silent consonant “b” – comb. Silent vowel “e” – date.

Every word has one or more **syllables**. A syllable is a “**beat**” in the word.
This symbol ´ means the syllable is **accented**, or has the **heavy beat**.
Example: un´der be gin´ in for ma´tion

Every syllable has a **vowel sound**. The vowels are a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y.
 (“y” is usually a consonant when it is the first letter in the word, as in “yes,” but a vowel when it is in the middle or at the end of, as in “gym” or “my”)

Each vowel has several different sounds, depending on how it is used in the word.

A single vowel usually has the **short sound** (˘)
Example: ädd, ěxit, ĩt, õn, ŭp

A single vowel may have the **long sound** (ˉ means long).
Example: dāte, mē, Ī, gō, ūses

A **closed syllable** ends in a consonant, and the vowel sound is **short**.

Example: **gōt**

An **open syllable** ends in a vowel, and the vowel sound is **long**.

Example: **gō**

Silent “e” as the end of the word usually makes the vowel before it **long**.

Example: **āte**, **Pēte**, **rīde**, **hōpe**, **tūbe**

Often when two vowels come together, the **first one is long** and the second one is silent.
(The second vowel “works on” the first vowel to make it long.)

Example: **ēe** – **trēe** **āi** – **rāin** **īe** – **pīe** **ōa** – **rōad** **ūe** – **blūe**
ēa – **ēat** **āy** – **dāy** **ōe** – **Jōe** **ūi** – **sūit**

Two vowels together may give a different sound than those made by the single letter. They are digraphs if they have a single sound.

Example: **ōō** – **moon** **ōō** – **book** **au** – **Paul**

They are diphthongs when two sounds slide together to make a continuous unit of sound.

Example: **oi** – **oil** **oy** – **boy** **ou** – **out**

Other vowel sounds can be made with a **vowel followed by an “r.”**

Example: **ar** – **car** **or** – **for** **er** – **her**
ir – **bird**
ur – **turn**

Or vowel sounds can be made with a **vowel followed by a “w.”**

Example: **aw** – **saw** **ow** – **cow** **ew** – **new**
ow – **slow**

(“r” and “w” are “vowel helpers” in the above examples.)

The symbol “ə” stands for the **schwa sound**, which is the sound of the **unaccented short “u.”**

Any one of the vowels (a, e, i, o, u) can take the schwa sound.

Example: **about**, **elephant**, **politics**, **ebony**, **crocus**

Other common letter combinations using the vowels are:

ǎng – **sǎng** ǎnk – **bǎnk** all – **ball** ōlt – **bōlt** īnd – **fīnd**
īng – **sīng** ĩnk – **pīnk** alt – **salt** ōll – **rōll** ĩld – **chīld**
ōng – **sōng** ōnk – **hōnk** a/k – **walk** ōld – **cōld**
ǔng – **sǔng** ǔnk – **jǔnk**

ti, si, ci can say “sh”

Example: **nation**, **tension**, **special**

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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The original edition carried the following permission for reproduction:

Unlimited reproduction for solely educational purposes is encouraged. However, reproduction for profit may not be made of any part of this publication.

For historical interest, we will include the following note to teachers from the original edition:

To the Teacher

You are one of the first to receive this booklet outlining a practical and inexpensive way to add blend phonics to your present reading instruction. We hope to continue – and expand – non-profit distribution of this method to other teachers in the near future. Your comments on your experiences with the method will be invaluable to us in our efforts. Replies will be treated confidentially if you request. Send your comments to the address below, and thank you for your cooperation.

Logan Institute for Educational Excellence
6197 Livernois Avenue
Troy, Michigan 48098

Of course, the above information is dated, and the address is no longer valid.

This edition has been prepared by Donald L. Potter
for FREE, noncommercial distribution on the www.donpotter.net web site.
May 28, 2003

Robert W. Sweet, Jr. Co-Founder and Former President of *The National Right to Read Foundation* wrote this stirring recommendation for *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics*, in his 1997 article, “The Century of Miseducation of American Teachers:”

“An effective answer to illiteracy ... Let me offer a less costly, and more effective answer. I have here a twenty-five page booklet called Blend Phonics written by Hazel Loring, a master teacher born in 1902, who taught under both the “whole word” and phonics systems. The legacy she has left us is powerful. Within the pages of this little booklet is the cure of illiteracy as we begin the twenty-first century. ... If every pre-service reading teacher, every reading supervisor, every kindergarten, first- and second-grade teacher in America had the information contained in Hazel Loring’s 25-page booklet and taught it this fall, there would be such a dramatic decrease in illiteracy in this country that the national media would be forced to take note.”

Note from Internet Publisher – Donald L. Potter

Retired Elementary Bilingual and Junior High Spanish Teacher
for the Ector County ISD, Odessa, TX.

Now Spanish and Remedial Reading Teacher for the Odessa Christian School

November 6, 2005, January 2, 2007

(Revised 8/30/08; 2/17/10, 12/29/11)

I first learned of Loring’s pamphlet from the 1997 article mentioned above by Robert W. Sweet. I immediately got a copy of Loring’s *Blend Phonics* from the *Interlibrary Loan*. I was so impressed that I retyped it for Internet publication on May 28, 2003. Later Mr. Charlie Richardson sent me a copy along with his excellent instructional article, “The Alphabet Code & How It Works” which I republished and provided with an mp3 audio instruction file. There is also a “Table of Contents” at the end of this document. I am delighted to report that the document has received many thousands of hits since I first published it on the Internet. It is my earnest prayer that every pre-service reading teacher, every reading supervisor, and every kindergarten, first- and second-grade teacher in America will receive the information contained in Hazel Loring’s 25-page booklet and apply its message so that there will be such a dramatic decrease in illiteracy in this country that the national media will be forced to take note. I use *Blend Phonics* extensively in my private tutoring practice. I have the students **spell the words orally** in each Unit after I have taught them to sound out the words with Loring’s blend phonics technique.

Students of all ages can learn to read with Loring’s *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade*. Her daughter Pat Lent used it to teach adult education students to read. I have used it to teach a 41 year old man who could not read and numerous other students in elementary and secondary grades. It is very important to realize that beginning readers at any age learn best with a good, intensive phonics program like *Blend Phonics*. The title merely indicates the ideal time to teach phonics-first. I have also published several supplemental aids for *Blend Phonics*: Don Potter’s *Blend Phonics Reader*, *Blend Phonics Unit Progress Chart*, and *Blend Phonics Certificate of Successful Completion*. These are all available for FREE at www.donpotter.net. I have a YouTube video explaining how to teach Blend Phonics. Elizabeth Brown’s Blend Phonics Decodable Storybooks are now available. www.blenddphonicss.org.

I have republished two articles by Mrs. Loring on the following pages that will be of considerable interest to those interested in the history of good phonics instruction America.

The words in Unit 13 were reordered on 2/17/10. *Fir* was added to Unit 20 on 12/29/11.

Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for All Ages
by Hazel Logan Loring

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The *Table of Contents* was prepared by Donald Potter – June 2003 (slight revision 1/17/05), Odessa, TX. Further revisions 7/16/05.

Says a retired campaigner:

Intensive phonics is the only way to go

By Mrs. Hazel Loring

I am a retired teacher, 76 years old, who taught the genuine old-fashioned phonics using New Beacon charts, flash cards, and readers in the early 1920s. I left the profession to raise a family but maintained a lively interest in methods of teaching beginners' reading, particularly when I learned of problems encountered by my neighbor's children who were being exposed to the recognition system in school.

It was in the early 1950s that I began to think seriously of the possible causes of reading failure. Following discussion about eye phenomena with a friend, Dr. J.A.J Hall, an ophthalmologist, I put my ideas in a little manuscript entitled "Monocular Intervals in Binocular Vision and Their Relationship to Reading Disability."

Dr. Hall had the paper read at a regular meeting of the Detroit Ophthalmology Society, and he sent it to a committee on vision whose membership he described as international.

My project lost its sponsor when Dr. Hall died of a heart attack. I had had only two years of college training and no prestige or academic standing. You can imagine the opposition my ideas encountered from the powerful anti-phonics people in education.

I had enrolled in Wayne State University but as a cliff-hanging encounter with cancer prevented me from completing my work for a degree. Amazingly, I recovered and had an opportunity to teach first grade at Oscoda, Mich., on a Special Certificate.

I taught first grade for 10 years and, with summer, night and correspondence courses – and at age 61 – I received my Bachelor's degree and later my Michigan Permanent Teaching Certificate.

All of my teaching experience has confirmed my belief that directional guidance, inherent in the blend phonics system, is the key to success in teaching reading.

In my first years at Oscoda a sudden influx of personnel at nearby Wurthsmith Air Force Base resulted in over-crowding of the schools and we had more than 40 first-graders in a room. This, together with the fact that I used phonics cautiously in a limited way, resulted in only fair success. As class sizes were reduced to the low 30s and I felt free to give the children intensive phonics training, the results were very gratifying. Only "recognition" textbooks were available (Houghton, Mifflin series), but I spent at least a half hour daily in formal phonics training, which I implemented in all reading classes.

At first I used the chalkboard for phonics instruction, but when I came across an overhead projector that was not being used, I found it to be an ideal phonics-teaching tool.

Three days before my retirement, I went into the school storeroom and took a set of first reader books which my children had never seen before. Each child stood in front of the class and read a full page. Only one little girl needed help, and that with just a couple words. The others read fluently, without error. Of course most of them had been reading supplementary library materials far beyond first grade.

About 10 years ago my daughter, Pat Lent, asked me to teach her how to teach phonics, and she then volunteered as a teacher at an Urban Adult Education Institute in Detroit. For the first eight years she taught as a volunteer, but her work has been so successful that she is now a paid teacher.

It was Pat who told enthusiastically of the **Reading Reform Foundation** and urged me to write to you: “Mom, they are saying the very same things that you have been talking about all these years!”

Well, now I am retired and putter around with my garden and photography, but perhaps you may be interested in the experiences of a phonics believer of more than 50 years.

You quote Janette Moss as saying she cannot understand how it became possible to make money more easily and quickly with an ineffective technique than with an effective technique (see **RRF Conference Report**, October, 1978). It is like an unbelievable nightmare, but I saw it happen. The fanaticism of the Gestaltist cult, bolstered by self-righteousness, left no room for reason or objective evaluation. A science education professor from a large Eastern University, after reading my manuscript, told me, “They won’t get you on this (pointing to my paper); they’ll get you on something else.”

Anyone who opposes the look-say method could expect to be blacklisted. I felt I was a member of an endangered species at Wayne State, but they didn’t “get” me. My first bout with cancer took me 200 miles away where teachers were scarce and results counted more than methodology.

There is no question that Gestaltists played rough, and the conflict of interest of policy-makers in Education was a disgrace. The very people who raked in royalties as authors or editors of textbooks were the very same people who dictated reading methods and selected textbooks. Theirs, of course.

“Publish or perish” may be acceptable if the publication is restricted to non-profit professional journals, but it is an ugly situation when educational concepts are dictated, not by a search for truth in a spirit of academic freedom but by the edicts of publishers and the amount of royalties that will accrue to faculty members who use their university prestige for commercial purposes.

I realize that decent, well-intentioned educators who felt the need to augment their limited salaries were caught in the web – “everybody” was doing it. But it was wrong.

Congratulations to the **Reading Reform Foundation** on your campaign to restore common sense teaching in the schools. Your forthright stance is courageous and admirable. The opposition you encounter is entrenched and formidable, but you are right, and **you will win out**.

I’m a humble person, far from affluent, and I sometimes wonder for what purpose I have survived my on-going fight against cancer, but it feels mighty good to be able to cheer you on in your good work against the legacy of illiteracy that has been bequeathed to our children by the self-anointed, highly organized, cultist Gestaltists whose bullying tactics have dominated the reading scene for more than 50 years.

Another Letter from Hazel Logan Loring in the Same Publication
[Hod's Podge]

We were delighted to get a letter from Mrs. Hazel Loring of Birmingham, Mich., and to be able to share with you in these pages. Just before we went to press, we received a second letter; one, which we believe, raises an excellent point for further discussion. Speaking of a **RRF** publication, **The Reading Crisis**, Mrs. Loring says, in part:

“It mentions that Dr. Jean S. Chall in her very fine book, **Learning to Read: The Great Debate**, divides reading methods into two groups: the ‘code-emphasis’ group and the ‘meaning-emphasis’ group. This could lead to the false assumption that intensive phonics fails to emphasize meaning.

“I know that in the past, anti-phonics people like to create the impression that they alone taught comprehension and that the intensive phonics method failed to do so. I question if one can ‘teach comprehension,’ but surely it is possible to create a situation where the exercise of comprehension is encouraged. I suppose that conceivably, a child could be taught to read lists of words without comprehension of their meaning...but that is not the way I taught my first-graders, and I doubt if it is a common practice...”

Mrs. Loring concluded her letter: “Because in years past I have heard so many claims by look-say people in regard to their ability to teach comprehension, when, in fact, in many cases they fail to even teach reading, I simply had to unburden myself.

“With the kindest regards and cheers for the work you are doing...”

“I must dispute Mrs. Loring on that last sentence. With her first letter to the **RRF**, she sent a very nice financial contribution, it’s “we” not “you,” Mrs. Loring.

Note: G. K. Hodenfield was the editor of this issue of *The Reading Informer*.

[Hodenfield was “*Associated Press* National Education Writer before getting angry because he couldn’t write what he wanted to about what he was learning about the reading problem and its cause. He quit and went to work at Indiana University.” He co-authored, with Kathryn Diehl, *Johnny STILL Can’t Read But You Can Teach Him at Home*, AP, 1976. (Per. letter from Kathryn Diehl, 2/15/06.)]

Note from Internet Publisher – Donald L. Potter
Concerning Loring’s articles
January 25, 2006

The above articles by Mrs. Hazel Loring were published in *The Reading Informer*, Volume 6, Number 3 – February, 1979. *The Reading Informer* a publication of the **Reading Reform Foundation**. Their motto was: OUR SOLE AIM: TO RESTORE INTENSIVE PHONICS TO THE TEACHING OF READING THROUGHOUT THE NATION. A special word of thanks goes to Mrs. Kathy Diehl, former Research Director for the **Reading Reform Foundation**, for sending me a box of *The Reading Informer* magazines and her book, *Johnny Still Can’t Read But You Can Teach Him at Home*. These articles by Loring were added to this Online edition of Hazel Loring’s *Reading Made Easy With Blend Phonics for First Grade* on February 3, 2007.

Article by Kathryn Diehl on Loring's *Blend Phonics*
The Barbara M. Morris Report
May 1983

The *Detroit Free Press* (2/13/83) printed a long featured article, "A Sound Road To Reading." As far as anyone knows, this is the first time the facts about good teaching reading ability have been printed in the Detroit news media. The article was about Hazel Loring, an elderly retired teacher, and her little booklet for teachers, "Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for the First-Grade." This was sent free to 5000 Michigan first-grade teachers last year. The article quotes admiring teachers who determinedly use this phonics method, saying their basal reading series "doesn't teach enough phonics" or they are "disgusted" with the failure it produces.

The Loring title alone is revealing to most teachers. Mrs. Loring began teaching before the sight word books were printed, and then watched the old standard phonics method forced out of the schools. "It was like a swarm of locust descending on the schools from coast to coast, and soon phonics was taboo." She went right on teaching it secretly, of course.

"Blend phonics" is a very helpful term, to try to combat the false theory that the big basal series today teach through phonics. For what they do *not* do is teach the children to *use* the letters sounds by blending them from left to right to figure out the printed words. Some big publishers have even stolen the term "intensive phonics" (coined years ago by Sr. Monica Foltzer to describe her real phonics method), and apply it to their skimpy "phonics." If we begin to call for "**blend phonics**" **methods**, they'll have a harder time to invent an Orwellian "redefinition" of that specific term, since blending and sounding out words is the **essential thing** they carefully avoid teaching. It is also necessary to show many teaches that "**first grade**" **is the time to teach children independent reading through phonics**, not spread out over three years and more, as they've been trained.

ANYONE CAN ARRANGE TO PRINT MRS. LORING'S BOOKLET AND DISTRIBUTE IT, AS LONG AS IT ISN'T SOLD. She refuses to sell them, considering that the big money that changes hands in the sales of the sight word basal programs is the corrupting reason they remain a virtual monopoly in the schools. She would "die happy," if every first grade teacher had a free copy of her booklet, to help them make up for the flaws in the programs most must use.

An organization or group of businessmen frightened about the effect of illiteracy on the U.S. economy could contact Mrs. Loring to ask approval to print it - - as long as they do not sell, but *give* them to teachers. They would have to bypass the curriculum and reading supervisors, and school superintendents, in many districts, sending the booklets directly to the teachers to ensure they receive them. A couple of million copies of this tiny treasure, in the hands of every K-12 teacher in the schools, would bring about a revival of grassroots literacy within a year. Many teachers at last would understand why their school's adopted commercial programs produce poor reading, and what to do about it.

I appreciate Mrs. Diehl for sending me the above article. Her idea of printing a "couple million copies of this tiny treasure" may seem a bit ambitious. Nevertheless, with its publication as a free e-book on my web site, www.donpotter.net, there is nothing to prevent it from reaching **every classroom in America**, or even the entire English speaking world.

This page last edited: 2/18/06.

The following is the cover letter that was included with each copy of Hazel Loring's booklet sent free of charge to more than 5,000 Michigan teachers. (*Reading Informer*, March 1982)

Dear First Grade Teacher:

This booklet is sent to you free of charge by the non-profit Logan Institute for Educational Excellence, thanks to the generous contribution of Mrs. Raymond Rubicam, who has unselfishly devoted many years to the purpose of improving the teaching of reading and of combating illiteracy. It was Mrs. Rubicam who inspired me to write about my work in teaching reading to a first grade classroom. When Dr. Ralph W. Lewis read my description of the method that I had used, he commented that we should find some way to get it into the hands of every first grade teacher in Michigan. And here it is.

Please read the little booklet and try it out. It will take very little time and cost nothing. Simply allot half an hour each day for about four months in which to teach blend phonics to your children and thus provide them the important ingredient that too often is missing from reading programs, namely, directional training.

Except for this half hour, use materials of your choice, as you ordinarily would do. There is no need to disrupt the program to which you are accustomed though, of course, I am sure you will find it useful to utilize blend phonics techniques while attacking new words in oral reading, spelling, and writing. Your own judgment will dictate to what extent you make use of this tool during the school day.

Please try it. It can make all the difference for those children who might otherwise fail. I found this to be true in my classes. With best wishes for a successful school year.

Sincerely,
(signed)
Hazel Logan Loring