

Six Pals: Guidebook



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Additional Related Products:

(sold separately)

- Sound Sorting System
- Waseca Reading Program
- Waseca Sentence Building
- Continent Readers
- Complete Set of Parts of a Biome Readers



INTRODUCTION

We are excited to add *Six Pals* to our suite of language materials! These readers follow the adventures of six friends while building confidence and competence with literacy. Coded to correspond to the Waseca Reading Program's phonetic progression, the nine books incrementally build skills and engage young readers with colorful illustrations and a continuous storyline for levels red through gold. Each reader has nine six-page chapters that give children the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of the *Six Pals* while expanding their phonetic knowledge and building vocabulary.

When a child has successfully completed a color of the Waseca Reading Program, they can begin reading the *Six Pals* book of that same color! At this exciting stage, you can introduce the book to them for independent or guided reading, as you would any other reader.



SIX PALS - IN DEPTH

This guidebook offers a nuanced look at how we wrote and designed the readers, controlled level by level to correspond to the Waseca Reading Program, and the supplemental materials we created to support the child as needed. We'll leave it up to you to decide which of these materials are necessary and helpful to the burgeoning reader in your home or classroom.

Building the “Word Bank” and Reading Comprehension Skills with *Six Pals*

You can think of the following as your tools to help the child build a robust “word bank,” foster reading comprehension, and enhance engagement with the readers:

Decodable Words

Sight Words

Challenge Words

Vocabulary

Discussion Questions

Character Chart

Map

Name & Page Bookmark

Decodable Words

We drew upon the “word bank” of the Waseca Reading Program materials, words culled from its cards and phonogram books, to begin writing these stories. The Waseca Reading Program is structured to provide a systematic presentation of the phonetic elements used in the English language. It breaks words down phonetically into manageable pieces to be presented sequentially. The color-coded presentation of phonetic elements, inspired by the Orton Gillingham Approach, builds cumulatively toward a mastery of reading and spelling, continuously expanding the child's repertoire of decoding skills. Each of the nine *Six Pals* books corresponds to a color level of the Waseca Reading Program and the phonetic elements explored therein.

WASECA READING PROGRAM LEVELS

Red: Focuses on three letter c-v-c words created with pure sounds.

Orange: Introduces blends including common beginning blends such as s, l, and r blends; ending blends, and words with both beginning and ending blends.

Yellow: Explores consonant digraphs like sh, ch, th, and tch.

Green: Introduces words ending with ng and nk.

Aqua: Explores silent e with a focus on the “magic e” rule as applied to each vowel.

Blue: Focuses on different phonograms used to make long vowel sounds.

Purple: Introduces various diphthongs, such as oy, ow, aw, and digraphs such as r and l controlled vowels.

Pink: Focuses on combinations that produce silent letters like wh, mb, kn, and gh.

Gold: Explores less common phonetic rules, including spelling variations for the same sounds and hard and soft consonants.

Keeping in mind that the words directly supplied by the Waseca Reading Program materials could not be the only source of vocabulary to write a coherent story with an expansive storyline and nuanced character depictions, we expanded the “word bank” in each level by including more decodable word options that are controlled for that level’s phonetic elements.

If a child struggles with any of words that contain phonetic elements that were already learned in the Waseca Reading Program, this is a good opportunity to reinforce those skills or return to that level for some more review.

Sight Words

Sight words are essential for the first few books of *Six Pals* as the progression from decoding individual words to reading whole sentences in English relies upon them; Common articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and irregular verbs (like “be” and “have”) are essential to forming simple sentences. All of the Sight Words in *Six Pals* are drawn from the sight words in the Waseca Reading Program Workbooks. Derived from the Fry Word List, these high frequency words are not yet decodable for a child but necessary for the leap into reading sentences.

For a child working with the Waseca Reading Program, these Sight Words Lists may not need to be reviewed at all since they have mastered those words with the Workbooks. They are already part of the child's “word bank”! If you do decide to review the Sight Words with the child before reading, we have provided two options so that you and the child can easily access these words:

Word Lists Bookmark: We have included a bookmark for each book that has the Sight Words on one side and the Challenge Words on the other. (Sight Words are on the side with *Six Pals* at the top). The Sight Words are listed progressively, tracked by their introduction to the text chapter by chapter. You can print more copies of these bookmarks from the Words List Bookmark pdf available on our website, wasecabiomes.org, in the *Six Pals* section of our A - Z PDF Library.

Sight Words Cards: If you prefer a card format, you can download *Six Pals* - Sight Word Cards from our A - Z PDF Library. The back of these cards is color-coded to the *Six Pals* book color with the chapter number for easy sorting.

Bookmark Sample

Six Pals

	the	when	
	this	said	
	is	what	
	he	I	3
	has	or	
	a	you	
	that	are	
1	she	be	
	with	by	
	for	as	5
	and		
	all	was	
	his	were	6
		from	
2	to		
		they	9

Sight Words Card Sample

this

front

Six Pals
Sight Words
1

back

Challenge Words

The Challenge Words used in *Six Pals* are exactly that, a potential challenge for a reader who has completed a color level. They extend skill sets by introducing and highlighting related phonetic elements, variations, or spelling rules not covered in the Waseca Reading Program. For example, the red level of the Waseca Reading Program focuses on three letter c-v-c words and the central focus of the Challenge Words for the red book are multisyllabic words that follow c-v-c formulations for each syllable.

CHALLENGE WORD FOCUS BY LEVEL

Red: multisyllabic words, possessive apostrophe + s

Orange: -ed inflectional ending

Yellow: schwas, the inflectional ending -es

Green: doubled consonants with the inflectional endings -ed and -ing

Aqua: more silent e rules (silent e with soft c, words ending in -are, and words that end in -ve)

Blue: qu digraph, squ consonant cluster, ch digraph pronounced as k, u as short -oo (/ʊ/)

Purple: unstressed syllables with vowel + l and vowel + r, -ture pronounced as *chur*, -err pronounced as “air,” -ous pronounced as “us,” soft c (c + i), soft g (g + e and g + i)

Pink: singular silent letters, short vowel digraphs, ul pronounced with short -oo (/ʊ/), long vowel digraphs, -au as substitute for -aw, -ar pronounced as “air,” -or pronounced as “or,” irregular words/exceptions

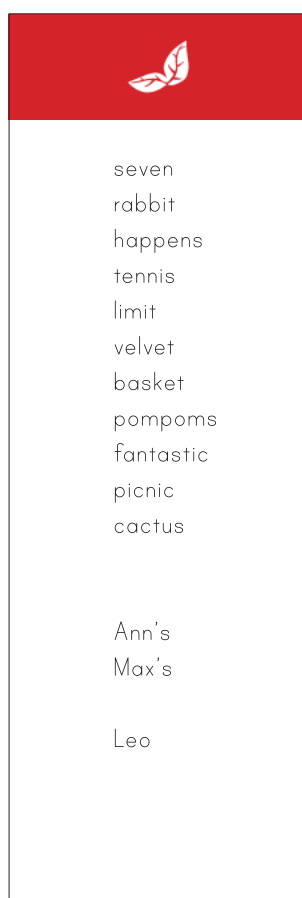
Gold: g + silent u + vowel, palatalization of s + u, -cious, -tial and -cial, irregular words/exceptions

You can feel free to tackle the Challenge Words with the child on an as needed basis as they appear in the text. You can also treat them as traditional sight words, presented for memorization, or so use them as an opportunity for short lessons or discussions (suggestions for lessons for each level are included in this guidebook). Again, if you are inclined to review these words with the child before reading, you have two options:

Word Lists Bookmark: The Challenge Words List for each level is featured on the back side of the Words List Bookmark. The Challenge Words are *not* listed progressively; They are grouped by the phonetic element, variation, or rule they highlight.

Challenge Words Cards: You can download Six Pals - Challenge Word Cards from our A - Z PDF Library. The back of each card is color-coded to the *Six Pals* book color with the chapter number and the challenge that the word demonstrates so that you can introduce them chapter by chapter or challenge by challenge.

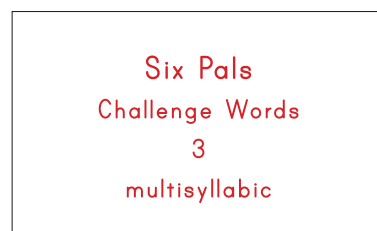
Bookmark Sample



Challenge Words Card Sample



front



back

Please note that if you really feel like delving into lessons, the aqua, blue, and gold levels also include extension cards and worksheets in the Challenge Words Cards pdf. These extension exercises are outlined in the suggested lessons included in this guidebook.

Challenge Words Extension Card Sample



Challenge Words Extension Card Worksheet Sample

name: _____

Fill in the blank with a t, c, or s to complete the words below.
Then, write a sentence with one (or more) of the words.

artifi_ial	substan_ial
ini_ial	controver_ial
so_ial	fa_ial
cru_ial	poten_ial
finan_ial	spa_ial
provin_ial	pala_ial
spe_ial	offi_ial
essen_ial	celes_ial
commer_ial	benef_ial
influen_ial	torren_ial
par_ial	

Six Pals - Challenge Words - Gold - Extension © Waseca Biomes 2025

Vocabulary

We believe one of the most exciting parts of learning to read is building vocabulary! Exposure to new words is essential to this task. We have taken the liberty of playfully using language within these stories to create an engaging universe for the reader. Again, these words are phonetically controlled, but they may challenge the reader to discern their meaning through context, the illustration, or even use of the dictionary.

Because vocabulary can vary so widely from child to child, we have created some vocabulary lists from the texts that you can use to familiarize yourself with words you might be asked about, or you could use them as the basis for vocabulary lessons. These lists are available for the orange level onward in the series. They are included in this guide and as a PDF download in our A - Z PDF Library.

Discussion Questions

Whether you are doing guided reading with a child, a child is reading independently, or your class is doing group reading (maybe even a book club?), checking in on engagement and reading comprehension is imperative. To this end, this guidebook includes a list of potential Discussion Questions for each book, chapter by chapter. The questions provided are not exhaustive, but you might find them a good jumping-off point to check in on comprehension or to start conversations about events in the book and what feelings or thoughts they provoke.

RED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - The Six

- How many characters do you meet in Chapter 1?
- Do you remember all of their names? Which names do you remember?
- Do you know how old any of them are?
- Do any of them have pets?

2 - The Pet Rabbit

- Where does Ann's rabbit live?
- Do we know the rabbit's name? If you had a pet rabbit, what would you name it?
- What does the rabbit do when it gets hot? Why does it go there?

3 - When Tim Is Seven

- How old is Tim now?
- Are you older or younger than Tim?
- How do you think Tim feels about turning seven? How does his mom help him with his feelings?

4 - Bam!

- What sport does Liv play?
- Do you know what a lob is? How would you hit a ball if it was lobbed to you?
- Have you ever played tennis? Do you know its rules / why Liv wins when she gets to six?

5 - Leo Can Run

- Who is the first pal that Leo passes as they run together?
- Who is the last pal that Leo passes?
- Do you think that Leo is always the fastest when the pals race?

6 - Yip!

- Where did Viv get the stuffed animals from in her room?
- What did she do with them?
- What do you like to do when you play alone? Do you have as much fun as Viv was having?

7 - Fuzz the Pug

- What type of dog is Fuzz?
- Why did Fuzz get sad? How do you feel when you get in trouble or get yelled at?
- How did Max react when his mom got mad? What would you have done?

Character Chart

Another way to encourage engagement with the text and check in on comprehension and detail retention is with our Character Chart (available as a download in our A - Z PDF Library). This multi-page chart features portraits of the main characters and lines below to add details about each. A child can track character traits (age, interests, etc.), actions taken, or activities participated in that stood out to them throughout their reading. Additionally, portraits of minor characters are provided with a sheet to paste their picture and lines below to track their traits.

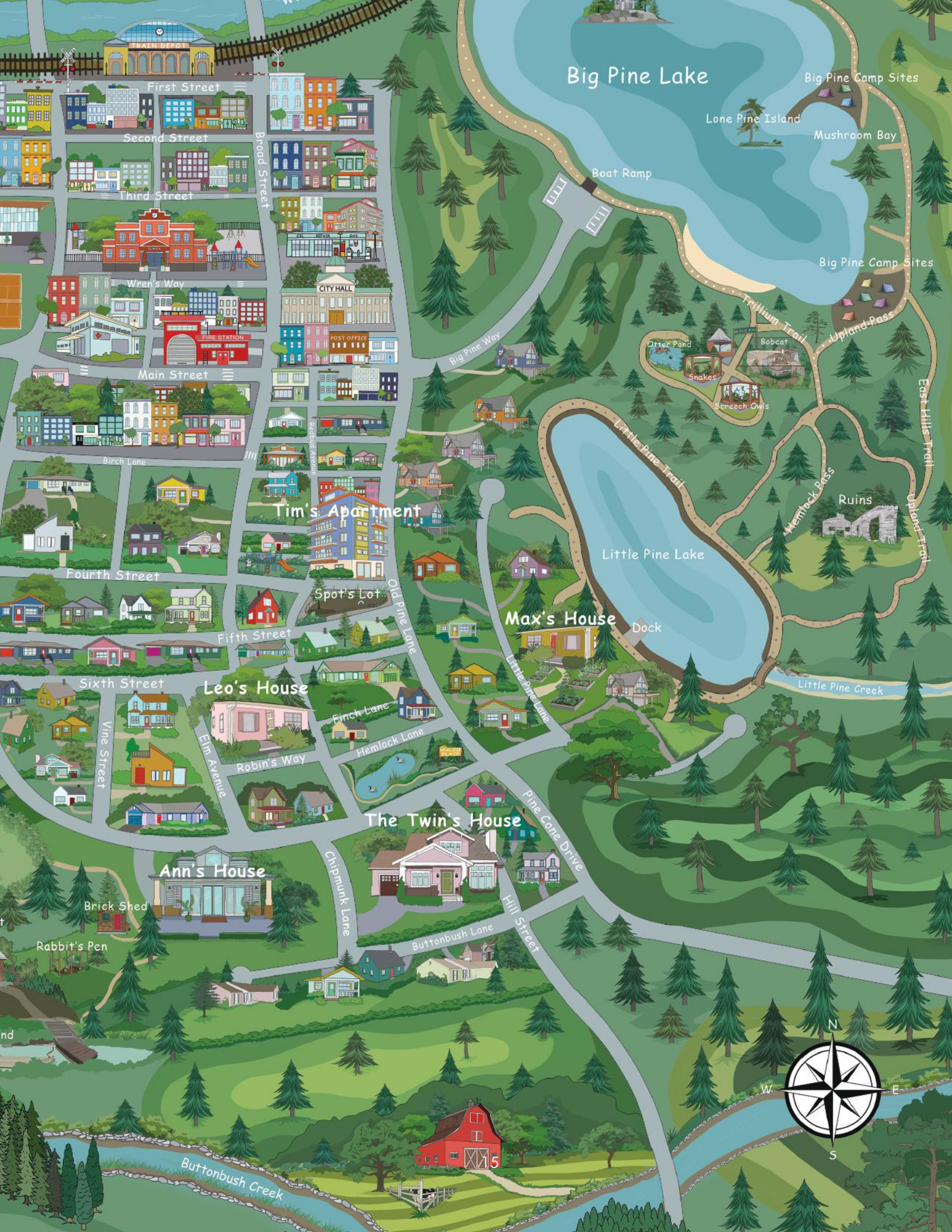
[illegible]

This chart may also be helpful as a refresher for jumping back into the story after time spent working on the next level of the Waseca Reading Program.

Map

We love interactive elements to help keep children engaged as they learn! What better way to help visualize the world of the *Six Pals* and track the pals' exploits than a map? With the large scale map included with the books, a child can find each character's home, locate all of the places the pals visit during their escapades, and track the routes characters take from place to place.

We hope this map may inspire the child to extend the adventures of the pals with some writing or storytelling of their own. Maybe they should go someplace they didn't visit throughout the course of these stories? What happens when they go there?



Big Pine Lake

Big Pine Camp Sites

Lone Pine Island

Mushroom Bay

Boat Ramp

Big Pine Camp Sites

Trillium Trail

Other Pond

Snakes

Bobcat

Screech Owls

Upland Pass

Ruins

East Hills Trail

Upland Trail

Tim's Apartment

Spot's Lot

Little Pine Lake

Max's House

Dock

Little Pine Creek

Leo's House

Finch Lane

Hemlock Lane

Robin's Way

The Twin's House

Ann's House

Brick Shed

Rabbit's Pen

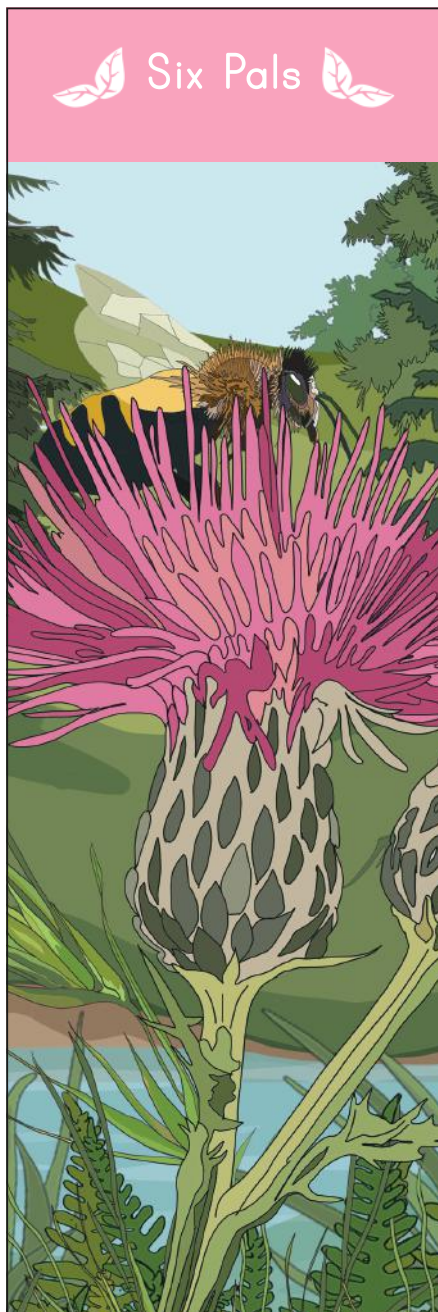


Buttonbush Creek



Name & Page Bookmark

We've included a second set of bookmarks with *Six Pals*. The Name & Page bookmarks feature an illustration from the book and space for a child to write their name and the page number they have reached during each reading session. We felt this alternative to the Word Lists Bookmark might be especially helpful in a classroom setting. A printable version of these bookmarks is available in the A - Z PDF Library.

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And, finally, now having gotten a detailed overview of the incremental skill building behind the writing and design of *Six Pals* and its supplemental materials, we do sincerely hope that you are able to use them in the way that suits you best so that the child (and you) can be fully absorbed by the thrill of reading and the adventures of your new friends, the six pals!





CHAPTER LISTS,
WORD LISTS,
& DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

RED CHAPTERS

- 1 - The Six
- 2 - The Pet Rabbit
- 3 - When Tim Is Seven
- 4 - Bam!
- 5 - Leo Can Run
- 6 - Yip!
- 7 - Fuzz the Pug
- 8 - Viv and Liv
- 9 - You Are It!



RED SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

	the	when	
	this	said	
	is	what	
	he	I	3
	has	or	
	a	you	
	that	are	
1	she	be	
	with	by	
	for	as	5
	and		
	all	was	
	his	were	6
		from	
2	to	they	9

RED CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

seven
rabbit
Leo

Chapter 2

Ann's

Chapter 3

happens

Chapter 4

tennis

Chapter 5

limit

Chapter 6

velvet
basket
pompoms
fantastic

Chapter 7

Max's

Chapter 8

picnic

Chapter 9

cactus



seven

rabbit

happens

tennis

limit

velvet

basket

pompoms

fantastic

picnic

cactus

Ann's

Max's

Leo

The focus of the red challenge words is multisyllabic words. While single syllable words abound in English, it is beneficial to help a child gain comfort and confidence with longer words early on in their reading experiences. The words included are all controlled for c-v-c formulations of the syllables. Please note that “basket” and “cactus” do not include short vowels in their second syllable. (Schwas, so-called “lazy vowels,” will be a focus of the yellow Challenge Words when the frequency of words containing them has increased with the use of more multisyllabic words and their stressed and unstressed syllables.)

There are also a few instances of the possessive apostrophe + s ('s). You can let them know when they see a word with apostrophe + s at the end, that will usually mean that the word following it *belongs* to the word with that apostrophe + s. It makes sentences shorter! Instead of having to say “the lap of Ann,” we can simply say “Ann’s lap.”

You can also note that this s, like the s of plural nouns and present tense verbs makes a sound like a z. You can review a few instances of this with words they are familiar with:

“Astrid has one cat and one dog. Sammy has two cats and three dogs!”

“I pat my head. Sarah pats her head. I tap my foot. Sarah taps her foot.”

You can let them know that s can do that in lots of other words, including ones they have learned as sight words like “is,” “was,” “as,” “his,” and “has!”

We have also included the character name, Leo, in this list as its long vowel sounds may be difficult for some readers.

RED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - The Six

- How many characters do you meet in Chapter 1?
- Do you remember all of their names? Which names do you remember?
- Do you know how old any of them are?
- Do any of them have pets?

2 - The Pet Rabbit

- Where does Ann's rabbit live?
- Do we know the rabbit's name? If you had a pet rabbit, what would you name it?
- What does the rabbit do when it gets hot? Why does it go there?

3 - When Tim Is Seven

- How old is Tim now?
- Are you older or younger than Tim?
- How do you think Tim feels about turning seven? How does his mom help him with his feelings?

4 - Bam!

- What sport does Liv play?
- Do you know what a lob is? How would you hit a ball if it was lobbed to you?
- Have you ever played tennis? Do you know its rules / why Liv wins when she gets to six?

5 - Leo Can Run

- Who is the first pal that Leo passes as they run together?
- Who is the last pal that Leo passes?
- Do you think that Leo is always the fastest when the pals race?

6 - Yip!

- Where did Viv get the stuffed animals from in her room?
- What did she do with them?
- What do you like to do when you play alone? Do you have as much fun as Viv was having?

7 - Fuzz the Pug

- What type of dog is Fuzz?
- Why did Fuzz get sad? How do you feel when you get in trouble or get yelled at?
- How did Max react when his mom got mad? What would you have done?

8 - Viv and Liz

- What did the Viv and Liv pack in the basket? Why did they pack it?
- Where do you think they went for their picnic?
- Have you ever had a picnic? Did you like it?
- What would you pack for picnic?

9 - You Are It!

- What game do they think they were playing?
- Where did Leo hide? Did he have any help?
- Where did Tim hide?
- What kind of plant did Liv hide near?
- What number did Max count to?
- What is the best hiding place you have ever had in a game of "hide and go seek?"

NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

[illegible]

ORANGE CHAPTERS

- 1 - The Hut
- 2 - The Club
- 3 - Stumps for All
- 4 - Club Stuff
- 5 - The Club Flag
- 6 - The Emblem
- 7 - A Club Mascot
- 8 - Rust the Dog
- 9 - Jazz It Up



ORANGE SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

	back	look	
	there	its	
	some	then	
	like	go	2
	time	see	
	make	each	
	write	now	
	do	words	
1	one	down	
	day	more	
	we	first	
	could	two	3
	me	out	
	my	no	
	would	into	
	have		
	will	other	4
	so	put	5
		about	6
		water	7
		their	8

ORANGE CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

crafted

Chapter 2

asked

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

looked

jumped

Chapter 5

lifted

dumped

liked

Chapter 6

front

Chapter 7

protect

Chapter 8

Chapter 9

pretend



crafted

asked

looked

jumped

lifted

dumped

liked

front

protect

pretend

The inflectional ending -ed is the main focus of the orange Challenge Words. The orange book introduces verbs that use -ed for past tense. While many children naturally decode inflectional endings easily (they probably read all of the -s inflectional endings in the red book with ease), this could be a good opportunity for discussing how many, but not all, verbs in English take this ending in the past tense: “I ask. She asks. I asked. She asked.” etc.

You could point out that the verbs that end in *t*, like “lift” and “craft,” make an *id* sound when you add -ed to form “lifted” and “crafted.” And, that, unlike the rest in the list, “looked” makes a *t* sound, instead of a *d* sound, when it gets -ed added to it.

We have also included three words with schwas as a challenge: “front,” “protect,” and “pretend.” These “lazy vowels” will be a focus of the yellow challenge words where there are four occurrences that stand as better examples to emphasize the stressed and unstressed syllables that cause them.

ORANGE VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

glum

Chapter 4

emblem

crest

mascot

grand

Chapter 5

brads

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

exotic

Chapter 8

inspects

frolic

Chapter 9

jazz

fronds

ORANGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - The Hut

- Who built the hut? What did he build it out of?
- What are some of the things in the hut?
- Why does Ann like to go to the hut?
- If you had a hut, what would you have in it and what would you use it for?
- Who are the twins? What do you think it would be like to be a twin?
- Who came up with the idea for a club at the hut?

2 - The Club

- What color is the flag on the hut?
- What do you think Tim, Leo, and Max thought of the hut?
- Are the pals excited to be in a club together? Would you be excited to be in a club? Who would you want to form a club with?

3 - Stumps for All

- What does “glum” mean? Why do you think Liv looked that way? Which pals noticed and what did they do about it?
- What are some of the things the pals found that were not stumps?
- Have you ever done something to make someone feel better or more included? When was it and what did you do?

4 - Club Stuff

- Why did the pals just sit and look at each other for a bit? Would you have ideas for what a club should do right away or would you have to think about it? What are some things you think would be fun to do with a club?
- Do you know what an “emblem” or a “crest” is? If you had to pick one as a symbol for yourself, what would it be?
- What is a “mascot”? What mascot would you choose for yourself or a club?

5 - The Club Flag

- Why did Ann grunt when she dumped out the fabric bin? Do you think it was light or heavy?
- Do you know what a “brad” is? What did the pals do with the clips, brads and pins?
- What color was the fabric the pals chose for their flag? What color was the trim?
- Whose idea was it to make a flag for the club?
- Have you ever worked on an art project with friends? What did you make?

6 - The Emblem

- What did Viv add to the emblem?
- Who added the six kids to the drawing?
- What kind of animal did Liv add?
- What would you have included in the flag? Why would you have added that?

7 - A Club Mascot

- Do you know what "exotic" means in this chapter? If you could have an exotic animal as a pet, what would it be? Do you think it would be easy to care for?
- Have you ever tried to catch a frog or a crab? What do you think you would need to make sure you could keep it safe and healthy?
- Who had the idea for a croc? Why was Ann against it? Why did she suggest her dog instead?

8 - Rust the Dog

- Where did the pals go to find Rust the dog? Was Rust excited to see them?
- What does Rust do that impresses the pals?
- Have you ever seen a dog do tricks? How do you think Rust learned his tricks?

9 - Jazz It Up

- What kind of plant did Tim bring to the hut?
- What did Leo bring to the hut?
- What did Ann bring to the hut? Do you think the pals will all camp together one day? Have you ever been camping? Did you like it / or do you think you would? Why?
- What would you have brought to the hut?

NOTES

[illegible]

[illegible]



YELLOW CHAPTERS

- 1 - What a Thrill!
- 2 - Trust
- 3 - Bug Hunt
- 4 - In the Shrubs
- 5 - Max and the Ants
- 6 - Leo's Plan
- 7 - The Stick Bug
- 8 - A Trill in the Thicket
- 9 - Skills



YELLOW SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

	want	use	
	try	where	
	here	work	
	too	things	
1	small	these	4
	made	which	
	know	many	
	around	long	
	three	little	
	give	right	5
	over	find	
	come	think	6
2	girl		
	does	very	7
	take	only	
	before	live	8
	show	sound	
	how		
	came		
	place		
3	who		
	call		
	boy		
	good		

YELLOW CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

finishes
says
tosses

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

snatches
branches

Chapter 5

ago
scratches

Chapter 6

rushes
dashes
catches
splashes
brushes
grasses

Chapter 7

bottom
inches
presses

Chapter 8

across
crunches

Chapter 9

watches
thrashes
crimson
stretches
crashes
passes



says

ago

across

bottom

crimson

finishes

tosses

snatches

branches

scratches

rushes

dashes

catches

splashes

brushes

grasses

inches

presses

crunches

watches

thrashes

stretches

crashes

passes

The yellow Challenge Words offer an opportunity to discuss a few things:

- The unique short e pronunciation of the -ay in the word says (sez).
- The emphasis of syllables that cause some vowels to act “lazy” (schwas):

To discuss schwas, you can start with a short vowel review with the child. Then, you can let them in on a secret:

“Quite often vowels are lazy! When they are ‘lazy,’ they just make an *uh* sound (the short u). This *usually* happens when a word has more than one syllable. We don’t stress each syllable in a word when we say it.”

Using the examples of “ago” and “across” from the bookmark, you can demonstrate how the initial syllable, a, is not emphasized in either word when we say them. The next two words, “bottom” and “crimson,” do emphasize the first syllable, so with these words the o’s in the second syllables act “lazy!” For fun, you can have them say the word banana, and then have them try to say it with all of the a’s stressed.

- The inflectional ending -es with words that end in s, sh, ch, tch, x or z:

The consonant digraphs ss, sh, ch, and tch in yellow present a great opportunity to discuss the inflectional ending -es that is used for plural nouns and third person singular present tense verbs.

You can ask the child if they notice a pattern with the third group of words on the bookmark (you may also use the printable Challenge Word cards provided in the A- Z PDF Library). If they don’t arrive at the conclusion that all end in -es, you can point it out and explain that instead of just adding an s to words that end with s, sh, ch, and tch an -es gets added. You can let them know that it happens with words that end in x or z too, like buzz, jazz, box, or fox.

You can choose a word like “brush” or “watch” and use some sample sentences to demonstrate that the -es ending works two

ways; it can show that a noun is plural, *and* it can be the ending for a verb when another single person or thing is performing that action.

“I have one paint brush. Greg has three paint brushes.”

“I only brush my hair in the morning. Sally brushes her hair in the morning and before bed.”

“My sister wants a new watch. My cousin has three watches.”

“I watch TV only on the weekends. My friend watches TV every night for an hour.”

If you feel like extending the grammar lesson a bit, you can point out that most of the words in that section of the list can act like nouns or verbs and that a lot of words in English can multi-task like that.

YELLOW VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

thrill

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

privet

Chapter 5

infest

tramp

splendid

Chapter 6

top-notch

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

trill

thicket

shrill

tromp

panic

Chapter 9

crimson

drenched

distress

YELLOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - What A Thrill!

- Why is Viv concerned about Max trying the stilts in the hut?
- Where does Ann take the pals to use the stilts? Why do you think she chose that place?
- Who helps Max use the stilts?
- Have you ever been on stilts? Would you try them if you could?

2 - Trust

- Who did a trick on the stilts?
- Why do you think Viv did not want to try the stilts? How does Viv let her friends know why she doesn't want to try them?
- What is something that you are afraid of? How would you let someone know?
- In the end, what made Viv decide to try the stilts?

3 - Bug Hunt

- Whose idea was the bug hunt? What did they bring to catch the bugs with?
- Who does Viv pick to hunt bugs with?
- Who does Liv pick to hunt bugs with?
- How do you think Tim and Leo felt about not getting picked? How does it feel when everyone gets picked but you?

4 - In the Shrubs

- Where do Ann and Liv go to find a bug?
- What is the plant called that they find the bug on?
- Who spots the stick bug first? Ann or Liv?

5 - Max and the Ants

- Why do you think Ann stays away from the anthill? Why does she tell Max they can't get ants as their bug sample?
- Why did the ant bite Max? Have you ever gotten bitten by an ant? Did it hurt? What's the best way to avoid getting bitten by ants?
- What does "splendid" mean? What kind of bug would you think is splendid?

6 - Leo's Plan

- Do Tim and Leo rush out of the hut with the other pals when the bug hunt begins?
- Where does Leo think he and Tim should try to find their bug?
- Why did Tim not want to get in the pond? Would you have gotten in the pond with Leo? Why or why not?

7 - The Stick Bug

- Why did Ann put leaves and branches in the tin?
- Why would the stick bug spit? What other kinds of defenses can insects have?

8 - A Trill in the Thicket

- Where do Viv and Max go next to find a bug?
- Why does Viv tell Max to “hush”?
- Have you ever heard a cricket trill? Have you ever seen a cricket? Where? What was it like?
- What does the cricket do when Max approaches?

9 - Skills

- What kind of insect is the “big, crimson” one that lands near Leo?
- Do you know what “distress” is? Why would Tim feel that way?
- Leo laughs that he fell down and got all wet. How would you react?
- What makes Tim change his mind about getting in the water with Leo?
- What kind of bug do you think Tim and Leo found?

NOTES

[illegible]

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GREEN CHAPTERS

- 1 - A Good One
- 2 - The Cricket's Song
- 3 - Good Job!
- 4 - What Now?
- 5 - Astonishing
- 6 - What a Hunt!
- 7 - Little Ship
- 8 - An Insect's Trick
- 9 - The Best Plan



GREEN SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

	same	move	
	near	between	
1	through	most	
	her	part	4
	your	air	
	may	below	
	need		
2	large	turn	
	again	found	
		any	5
	way	picture	
	should	kind	
	our		
3	point	even	6
	something	because	
	head	different	8
		answer	
		why	9

GREEN CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

gripping
letting
grinning
sopping
swimming
getting
clapping

Chapter 2

spotted
trotting
hopped
rubbing

Chapter 3

slipping
running

Chapter 4

grinned
flitting
flapped
stunning

Chapter 5

stopping

Chapter 6

grabbing
stuffing

Chapter 7

dipping
skimming

Chapter 8

hopping

Chapter 9

putting



spotted
hopped
grinned
flapped

gripping
letting
grinning
sopping
swimming
getting
clapping
trotting
rubbing
slipping
running
flitting
stunning
stopping
grabbing
stuffing
dipping
skimming
hopping
putting

The green Challenge Words highlight the doubling of the last consonant in a word when the inflectional endings -ed or -ing are added. You can ask the child if they notice a pattern with all of the words on the bookmark (you may also use the printable Challenge Word cards provided in the A- Z PDF Library). If they don't arrive at the conclusion that they all have doubled letters, you can point it out. You can ask if any of these words have doubled letters when they don't have -ed or -ing on the end. They don't? You can explain that each of these words has a short vowel at the end right next to that last consonant. To let a reader know that a vowel stays short when the -ed or -ing ending is added, the last letter gets doubled up!

GREEN VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

Chapter 2
tempting

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5
astonishing

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapter 8
galloping

Chapter 9

GREEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - A Good One

- When they get back to the hut, where do Liv and Ann find Leo and Tim?
- Do you think Ann is joking around when she asks Tim and Leo if they are fishing? What makes you think so?
- How does Leo get the bug from the net into the tin?
- What kind of reaction does Liv have when Leo shows her the bug?

2 - The Cricket's Song

- Why was the cricket in the big patch of grass? What kind of grass was he eating?
- How does the cricket react to seeing Max and Viv?
- Why does the cricket rub its wings together when he gets to his log? Does he get any response?
- What would you do if you were a cricket resting peacefully and a person came rushing up to you?

3 - Good Job!

- Where do Liv, Ann, Tim, and Leo leave their bugs when they go looking for Max and Viv?
- Where do they go to look for them? Whose idea was it to go there?
- Where do the other pals see Max and Viv going when they get to the big grass patch?

4 - What Now?

- Why is Max sad at the beginning of this chapter? Does Viv do anything to help him?
- What kind of tree does the moth land on? Why does it land on it?
- Why doesn't Viv want to catch the moth?

5 - Astonishing

- Why does Viv stop the others from rushing up to the tree trunk?
- What does "astonishing" mean? Why does Tim describe the moth as astonishing?
- Do you know what kind of "big silk moth" the pals found?

6 - What a Hunt!

- Why would an insect want to look bigger than it is? Or have a pattern that looks like eyes?
- Why did the group decide not to catch the moth and put it in the tin?

7 - Little Ship

- Why do the pals take the bugs back to the place where they got them to release them? Whose idea was it?
- Why does Viv compare the water bug to “a little ship”?

8 - An Insect’s Trick

- Can you think of any insects that can do “tricks”? What are they and what “tricks” can they do?
- How does the stick bug blend in? Why?

9 - The Best Plan

- Why does the stick bug make Tim a little sad?
- How does Viv feel about having been one of the people to suggest they all go and catch bugs?
- What did the pals learn from the big hunt?

100

100

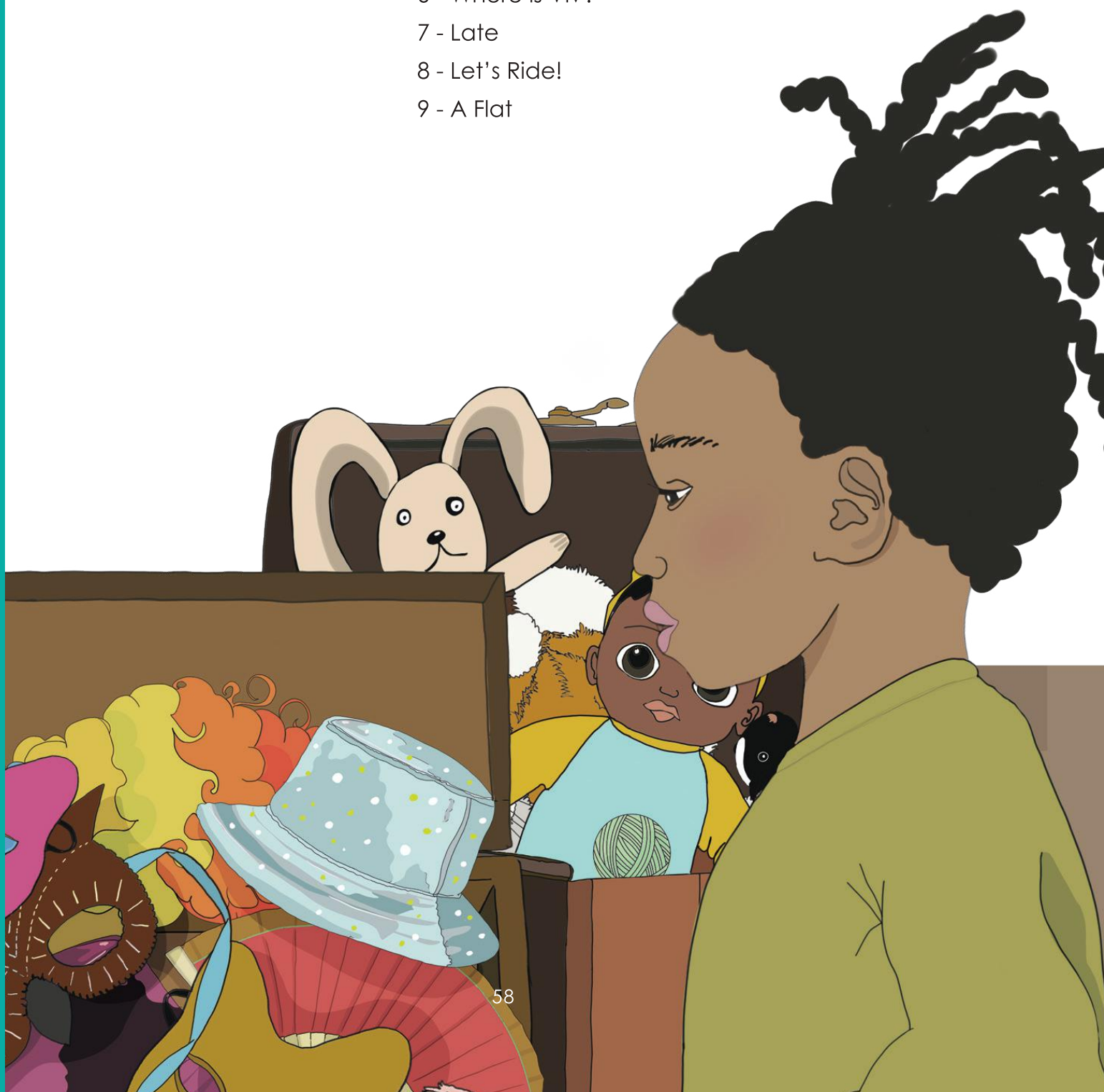
NOTES

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AQUA CHAPTERS

- 1 - What Next?
- 2 - Ann Rises
- 3 - Leo Wakes
- 4 - Viv and Jake
- 5 - Time to Bake
- 6 - Where is Viv?
- 7 - Late
- 8 - Let's Ride!
- 9 - A Flat



AQUA SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

	took	don't	
	keep	today	
	another	saw	
	might	begin	5
1	today	together	
	thoughts	line	
	house	great	
	those		
	name	every	
		mother	
	change	start	6
2	baby	began	
	close	open	
	eat		
		been	
	world	while	7
	play	few	
	food		
3	oil	after	8
	high	walk	
	eyes	old	
	grow	hard	9
	four	own	
	animal		
4	under		
	feet		

AQUA CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

chance
race

Chapter 2

spruce
dances
face

Chapter 3

traces
prepare
declares
slice
dice

Chapter 4

massive
bare

Chapter 5

Grace

Chapter 6

scare

Chapter 7

glanced
shoved
paced
glared
stared
embraced
forgive

Chapter 8

advice
unlace

Chapter 9

Carlos



slice
dice
advice
Grace
race
face
traces
paced
unlace
embraced
spruce

chance
dances
glanced

bare
scare
prepare
glared
stared
declares

shoved
massive
forgive

Carlos

By aqua, the child is now familiar with the three ways a vowel can be pronounced: short, schwa, and long. This juncture provides a good opportunity to congratulate the child on all of the progress they have made learning to read thus far. You may want to let them know that writing and reading are unique, almost magical, skills:

All natural languages developed as spoken languages and, eventually, people invented systems of symbols, letters for us, to record them as written words. This translation of spoken sounds to written words in English is complicated, and there are *many* rules and patterns that help keep it orderly and logical.

The “magic e” is a good example of a rule or pattern that helps the reader know how to pronounce the word. However, the “magic e” is not the only silent e in English, and they are ready to learn about a few more silent e rules and exceptions they will encounter.

- Silent e with soft c:

Discuss with the child how, so far, they are used to a c making the k sound (as in “cat” or “cup”), but c can also sound like an s. When a word ends in -ce, the c is always a soft c (s sound), and the e is always silent!

You can use the bookmark, or the printable Challenge Word cards provided in the A- Z PDF Library, to read a few of the words from the first group aloud and then ask them to read a few words paying attention to how the -ce at the end makes an s sound.

Choose one of the words and ask them if the vowel before the c is long or short: “Does it stand up and say its name? It does! So, these words demonstrate two rules at the same time! The “magic e” indicates that the vowel before it is long *and* the -ce ending indicates that the word is pronounced with the a soft c. How *nice* that the silent e is working *twice* as hard!”

You can then ask them to read the three words in the next group. Did they notice that those words are pronounced with a soft c as well? That’s because c with an e after it will *always* indicate that it is a soft c and makes an s sound no matter where in a word it is, and those words might not always have “magic e” vowels within them.

Please note that we cover soft c/hard c in more detail in the gold level of the Waseca Reading Program. However, we felt that aqua was a good time in these books to introduce some of these soft c words due to their high frequency in everyday speech and the “magic e” that often works in concert with it.

- The function of silent e with words that end in -are:

Before you review the third group of words on the bookmark (or in the printable cards) with the child, let them know that silent e also tips them off to how words ending in -are are pronounced. “You’ll *share* a secret they should be *aware* of that will *spare* them any problems reading these words: words that end in -are are pronounced like ‘air’!”

Please note that r-controlled vowels are covered extensively within the purple level of the Waseca Reading Program. However, the influence of a silent e after the -ar digraphs is not addressed directly. Again, due to the high frequency of words in everyday speech that end in -are, we felt that aqua was a good time to introduce the function of this silent e.

- Standard spellings of words in English never end in v:

The last group of words in the Challenge Words is short, but important. Begin by explaining that in English, standard spellings of words never end in v! If a word sounds like it should end in v, it will have a silent e after it. However, the vowel preceding it may *not* act consistently. Using the printable extension Challenge Words Cards for aqua, you can go through the words ending in -ove and -ive in the chart on the next page to highlight that while spelling is based on rules, there are exceptions.

Some words break rules because we adopted them from other languages. Some reflect really old pronunciations (like “move” and “give” which the child should recognize from their prior sight words). Others can be decoded more easily in the context of a sentence (like “dove” as a bird instead of a past tense noun).

You don't have to get technical with the vowels, you can simply ask the child to sort the words into columns that rhyme. Feel free to have them copy their work from sorting these cards onto the extension worksheet also included in the Challenge Words Cards pdf. There is even space for them to come up with more words that follow the pattern in each column!

o schwa + ve	long o + ve ("magic e")	o as long u + ve	i schwa + ve	long i + ve ("magic e")
shove	stove	move	massive	five
love	cove	prove	forgive	arrive
dove (noun)	dove (verb)	approve	live (verb)	live (adjective)
above	drove	improve	give	drive
glove	grove	remove	active	chive

Please note that only the bolded words in the chart above are included in the Challenge Words List in this guide and on the bookmark, but all of the words in the chart are included in the Challenge Words Cards pdf (coded as "extension" on the back) so that this discussion can be an activity for sorting by sound to guide and reinforce this concept.

- The character names Grace and Carlos are included in this list. Grace is one of the examples of silent e with soft c. Carlos is included because the r controlled vowel in the first syllable and the long o in the second syllable may trip some children up.

AQUA VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

inspired
compete

Chapter 2

spruce up
amuses
mope
appetites

Chapter 3

declares
chives
glazes

Chapter 4

gazes
dozes
massive

Chapter 5

lazed
rile
irritated
sublime
brim
desire

Chapter 6

groped
roved
no dice
scope
investigate
probe
assume
griped

Chapter 7

haste
paced
loped
collided
glared
exhaled
embraced
ashamed

Chapter 8

dispute
advice

Chapter 9

inflate

AQUA DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - What Next?

- Why did Ann wink at Viv?
- What kind of things does Tim say he likes that the pals do? What did he suggest for their next activity?
- How did the pals decide on what to do together next? What did they decide to do? What are some activities you would have suggested?

2 - Ann Rises

- What does Ann do when she first wakes up? What do you do when you first wake up?
- Did she wake up early or late? Do you wake up early or late?
- When she first goes in, who does Ann find in the kitchen? Do other people in your household wake up before you? What do they do before you wake up?
- What does "mope" mean? Why does Ann pretend to mope?
- Where do Ann and Blake go? Do we find out Ann's rabbit's name? What is it?
- What do Ann and Blake do at the rabbit pen? Do you have any pets that you take care of? What do you do to take care of them?
- What does Ann's dad make for breakfast? What do you like to have for breakfast?

3 - Leo Wakes

- What does Leo do when he first wakes up? Did he wake up early or late?
- How many siblings does Leo have? What are their names? Do you have any siblings? What are their names?
- Who does Leo find in the kitchen? What does she ask him to do with her? Is he happy or unhappy about it? Do you ever help cook at your house? What do you like to help make?
- What do you think Leo and his grandma made for breakfast?

4 - Viv and Jake

- What does Viv do when she first wakes up? Did she wake up early or late?
- Does Viv sleep with a lot of stuffed animals or just a few? Do you sleep with any stuffed animals or have any favorites?
- What kind of animal is Jake? Which of Viv's stuffed animals would be your favorite? Why?
- Have you ever gone outside in the morning to watch the sunrise? If so, what was it like?

5 - Time to Bake

- What woke Max up?
- Who else was sleeping in Max's bed? How did Max wake him up?
- Who did Max find in the kitchen?
- What did Grace have Max eat before they started to bake?
- What did Grace and Max bake together? Have you ever made cupcakes or baked anything else? Was baking fun?

6 - Where is Viv?

- What does Liv do when she first wakes up?
- Why do you think Liv believes Viv is hiding in their room?
- Who does Liv find when she goes down to the kitchen?
- Who points Liv in the right direction for finding Viv? Where is Viv when Liv finds her?

7 - Late

- What does Tim do when he first wakes up?
- Did he wake up early or late? How does he react to it?
- How do Tim and his mom work out the problem when he gets upset? How do you calm down after you've gotten upset?

8 - Let's Ride!

- What chore does Ann do before she heads out to meet up with the pals?
- What is happening with the twins when Ann rides up to their house? Why is Viv upset? How does Ann make her feel better? Would you have done the same thing or something different?
- Can you trace the route Ann took to get to the twins' house on the map?

9 - A Flat

- After breakfast, where did Tim and his mom go to get his bike?
- When Tim and his mom reach Leo's house, what is Leo doing? How do he and his dad fix the problems with their bikes?
- Can you trace the route Tim and his mom took to get to Leo's house on the map?

NOTES

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



BLUE CHAPTERS

- 1 - Good to Go
- 2 - Treats
- 3 - Woo-hoo!
- 4 - Little Sneak
- 5 - Call Me Cuckoo
- 6 - Like a Cheetah
- 7 - The Upland Trail
- 8 - Scoot It!
- 9 - Bold



BLUE SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

1 morning
leave

quiet
door
2 follow
hear

white
3 until

friends
4 half

group
5 able

might
6 far

7 forest

book
8 above
enough

9 never

BLUE CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

squeak
squinted
quit
quite

Chapter 2

pushes

Chapter 3

Buttonbush

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

squeeze
chaos
bushes

Chapter 6

quick

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

echo
squeal

Chapter 9

scheming
squishing



quit
quite
quick

squeak
squinted
squeeze
squeal
squishing

chaos
echo
scheming

pushes
Buttonbush
bushes

Now that a child is getting more comfortable decoding and their knowledge base includes short vowels, schwas, and long vowels (including digraphs that create long vowel sounds), they are well on their way to fluency with reading! With these challenge words, they can add a few more phonetic elements to their repertoire and be on the lookout for u as short -oo:

- The digraph qu as kw and the consonant cluster squ:

Have the child read the first group of three words on the bookmark, or in the challenge word cards. If they read them without issue, congratulate them and point out that this letter combination is consistently pronounced like kw regardless of the letters that surround it. If they struggle, explain that a q and u written next to each other makes a kw sound (“quiz,” “quiet,” “quad,” “quash,” and “quack” are good examples to share with them).

Move on to the next group of words on the bookmark, or in the challenge word cards, to reinforce that qu is pronounced kw, but point out that these words all have an s in front of them so they start with the sound skw. Can they come up with more words like this (“squat,” “squad,” “squid,” “square,” “squirrel”)?

- The digraph ch as k:

You can use the third group of words on the bookmark, or in the challenge word cards, to let the child know that ch is not always pronounced the way they are used to, like in words such as: “such,” “much,” “switch,” and “branch.” Sometimes, the ch is pronounced as a k!

Have them read the words to you making sure that they are pronouncing ch as k.

If you would like to introduce more words that demonstrate ch as k, we have included extension cards with the blue Challenge Words Cards. They can be used as a sorting exercise to help the child gain familiarity and confidence with words that have this pronunciation. You can feel free to have them copy their work from sorting these cards onto the extension worksheet also included in the Challenge Words Cards pdf.

ch	k
finch	chaos
each	echo
such	scheming
attach	ache
chat	school
check	architect
champ	choir
chest	chrome
inch	mechanic

Please note that only the bolded words in the chart above are included in the Challenge Words List in this guide and on the bookmark, but all of the words in the chart are included in the Challenge Words Cards pdf (coded as “extension” on the back).

- u as short -oo (/ʊ/):

We recommend you simply have the child read these words aloud to check that they do not struggle with them. Most will pronounce the three instances of the single u spelling of this high, back, lax vowel with ease. They are common words (or as in the case of “Buttonbush,” a compound word consisting of two common words), and the child has already encountered the orange sight word “put” (which has a u as short -oo) many times in text of these books.

The various spellings of the short -oo (oo, o, u) are covered more extensively in gold in the Waseca Reading Program. Please note that regional accents often make this nuanced vocalization hard to distinguish (think “roof,” “hoof” or “wolf”) and any extended lessons on it are more appropriate in the gold level where spelling is the focus. However, if you’d like to provide some more words for them now, some good samples to help them hear the differences at this point are:

“pun” and “pug” (for short u)

“plume” and “puny” (for long u)

“put” and “push” (for short -oo)

BLUE VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

sly
sheepish

Chapter 2

aroma
frenzy
traipses
zeal

Chapter 3

momentum
strain
preening

Chapter 4

careens

Chapter 5

keen
giddily
beeline
chaos
mosey
lofty
veers
crowing

Chapter 6

beams
feat
boasts
jockeys
elated

Chapter 7

intently
grueling
incline
dense
approaches
terrain
slogs

Chapter 8

hightails
belts
refrain
crooning

Chapter 9

scheming
dainty
antics
friskily

BLUE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - Good to Go

- What are the twins' parents' names? What else do we learn about them in this chapter?
- When Viv's dad says that he needs to check some things before he "can release you all into the wild," is he serious or is he joking? What does he mean?
- What does "sheepish" mean? Can you look sheepish? What is something you might do that would make you feel sheepish?

2 - Treats

- What is an "aroma"? Can you name some aromas?
- What was Fuzz smelling?
- What does Max think of Fuzz's frenzy?
- Why does Grace stick a toothpick in the cupcakes? What happens to the toothpick if the cupcakes are ready?

3 - Woo-hoo!

- Why does Liv want to lead the way as the girls set off on their ride?
- What kind of bike does each girl have? What does Viv have on her bike that the others do not?
- Which street has the "little dips and valleys" that Ann thinks are so much fun to ride over? Can you trace the route the girls take in this chapter on the map?
- Where do they first see Tim, Leo, and Carlos? Are they excited to see the them?

4 - Little Sneak

- What does Grace remind Max to do before his friends get to his house?
- What does it mean when Fuzz "careens after Max"? Can you demonstrate?
- What is Max's mother's name? What is she dressed for when she comes into the kitchen?
- Why does June gasp in this chapter?
- How do you "showily" eat a cupcake? Can you demonstrate?
- Why does everyone laugh at the end of the chapter?

5 - Call Me Cuckoo

- Can you find Max's house on the map? How do you think the other pals and Carlos got there from Hemlock Place?
- What is Viv confused about when she tries to comfort Grace? Why does Leo groan? Are you ever impatient when you are excited to do something?

- Do you know what “chaos” means? Why do you think Carlos calls the kids’ exit from the house “chaos”?
- The pals and who else head down to the lake? How many people is that?
- Are any of the pals afraid of the steep path? Is Carlos?

6 - Like a Cheetah

- How does Carlos know that Leo is teasing when he says his feat was “a little slow”?
- What does Viv do that surprises all of the pals? How do they respond?
- Is Viv upset when Max passes her?
- Can you find a simile in this chapter?

7 - The Upland Trail

- What does “grueling” mean?
- Is a twenty degree incline steep? Can you use a protractor and a ruler to see what it looks like? Do you think that would be an easy hill to bike a long way up?
- What does Carlos encounter on the East Hills Trail?
- Can you track his ride so far on the map?

8 - Scoot It!

- Does Viv stay very focused on riding fast? What are some of the things she notices once she slows down?
- How many onomatopoeic words (words that mimic sounds) can you find in this chapter?
- Do you ever make up silly songs? Can you remember any of them?

9 - Bold

- Does Max like the attention that he gets from riding so fast?
- Why does Max compare Viv to a mongoose? Why does Liv contradict Max’s comparison by talking about a snake?
- What happened earlier in the day that would make Ann confused about why Viv was riding like she wanted to race? What does Viv tell Ann about why she rode so fast?

NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

[illegible]



PURPLE CHAPTERS

- 1 - June's Morning Swim
- 2 - Chores
- 3 - Hard Work
- 4 - Little Pine Creek
- 5 - Controversy
- 6 - Old Man Goat's Island
- 7 - Buttercream
- 8 - Just a Little Farther
- 9 - Summer Bounty



PURPLE SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

- 1 energy
done
- 2 heard
whole
- 3 sure
sentence
- 4 toward
mountain
- 5 pulled
imagine
knew
- 6 since
people
- 7 measure
color
- 8 once
- 9 year

PURPLE CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

precise
exercise
agile
final
surge

Chapter 2

nectar
herbs

Chapter 3

forges
nature
curious

Chapter 4

urges
charges
enormous
gently
excitement

Chapter 5

towel
lecture
emerge
adventure
forward

Chapter 6

island
labor
converge
opportunity
favorite
pedaled
decided
rumor
terrorizing
ventured

Chapter 7

sugar
refrigerator
decorating
recipe
memorized
bowl
strawberries
mixture
texture
vertical
coral
orange
berry

Chapter 8

colossal
huge
nervously
carnivorous

Chapter 9

joyously
scissors
veggies
moisture



final
coral
towel
nectar
sugar
labor
rumor

nature
lecture
adventure
terrorizing
berry

curious
enormous
nervously

precise
recipe
scissors

surge
forges
emerge
gently
refrigerator
huge

agile
veggies

herbs
island
bowl

Many children have “broken the code” for reading by the time they reach purple. To continue to build their skill sets, purple’s Challenge Words expand upon the diphthongs and digraphs they have just learned to highlight the pronunciation of vowels in unstressed syllables with l or r combinations and explore the pronunciations of words with -ture, -ous, and -err. Soft c rules are expanded and soft g is introduced (again with both soft c and soft g to be covered more extensively in gold). Additionally, three words with irregular pronunciations are also included.

We suggest having the child read some of the words on the bookmark aloud to you before they begin independent reading of the book. This will help you assess how much discussion of each group is necessary, if any. As they have become more adept at decoding, much of the fine-tuning of the work they are doing is now more focused on spelling; many will easily read the words on their own despite not being familiar with the spelling rules or patterns they exhibit.

- Unstressed syllables with vowel + l and vowel + r:

Purple familiarizes the child with r-controlled vowels and the l-controlled a. We have included many instances in the purple book of words spelled with vowel + l and vowel + r that do *not* conform to the r-controlled or l-controlled pronunciations that are the focus of the level.

These instances present a great opportunity to review and discuss how vowels in unstressed syllables usually sound like a short u (a schwa). We have included seven instances on the bookmark, but all eighteen in the text are included in the Challenge Words Cards pdf.

Please note that three of the Challenge Words in purple contain two challenges: “refrigerator,” “terrorizing,” and “scissors.” “Refrigerator,” for example, demonstrates both a soft g and unstressed vowel + r. The coding on the back of these Challenge Words Cards reflects both challenges they present.

- -ture as *chur*:

Expanding upon the mastery of the r-controlled u explored in purple, this is a good time to highlight that words with -ture have a silent e at the end and that the t is pronounced *ch* resulting in the syllable *chur*. We have included three instances on the bookmark, but all seven in the text are included in the Challenge Words Cards.

- -err as “air”:

Words with -err (such as “berry,” “ferry,” “terror,” etc.) do not follow the r-controlled short u pronunciation of -er that is explored in purple (as in “river” or “fern”). We have included two instances on the bookmark, but all three in the text are included in the Challenge Words Cards.

- -ous as “us”:

The o is not pronounced in words with the consonant vowel combination -ous. Unlike the words that they just learned, like “hound” and “cloud,” the ou in these words will not make an ow sound. Instead, it is pronounced with a short u as in “us.” We have included three instances on the bookmark, but all five in the text are included in the Challenge Words Cards.

- c + i as a soft c:

Expanding upon the soft c rule that was covered in the Challenge Words in aqua (c + e always makes the c soft instead of hard), you can discuss how words that include c followed by i are *always* pronounced with a soft c (s sound) as well. There are three instances on the bookmark and six included in the Challenge Words Cards.

- Soft g:

We have introduced soft g words in purple as they appear quite frequently in concert with r controlled vowels (“large,” “forge,” “emerge,” etc.).

- g + e is usually pronounced with a soft g (*j* sound):

You can remind the child how they have learned that c + e always makes a soft c sound and tell them that g follows that same pattern, but *not* all the time like c does. A g followed by an e *usually* makes the g soft like a *j*, but there are some exceptions

like “get” or “gear.” We have included six instances on the bookmark, but all ten in the text are included in the Challenge Words Cards.

- g + i is usually pronounced with a soft g (*j* sound):

Again, following the pattern of soft c's, g + i *usually* makes the g soft like a *j*, but *not always* (“gift,” “girl” or “begin” are some good examples that do not follow the rule). There are two examples of these words within the purple book. Both are included on the bookmark and in the Challenge Words Cards.

- Irregular words:

Finally, the purple text also includes three words that have irregular spellings for their pronunciations: “herbs” (American speakers usually do not pronounce the h), “island” (silent s), and “bowl” (most words with this pronunciation are spelled -oll). These words are featured on both the bookmark and in the Challenge Words Cards.

PURPLE VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

agile
azure
invigorating
fluidity
reserve
astounded
awesome

Chapter 2

puttered
skittered
revive
murmured

Chapter 3

prowess
forges
butter up
boundary

Chapter 4

scamper
strewn
hesitating
lumbers
clambered
enormous
perched
announces
scorn
sternly
interjects
bicker

Chapter 5

controversy
embarked
overexerted
lecture
brawl
intervene
exasperated
emerge
bantered
evaporated
drooping
shroud
ushered
serene
immersed

Chapter 6

toil
labor
converge
opportunity
smattering
rickety
deserted
pondered
rumor
terrorizing
ventured
hence

Chapter 7

scoured
uttered
perused

Chapter 8

reverence
craning
colossal
meandering
squawk
gawking
navigating
unperturbed
nervously
carnivorous
concerned

Chapter 9

capered
trellis
verdant
bumper crop
hue
fragrant

PURPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - June's Morning Swim

- What does "precise" mean? Can you think of something that needs to be done precisely?
- June is an "expert swimmer." What does that mean? Are you an expert at anything? Is there anything you want to be an expert in?
- What does "agile" mean? What other water animals can you think of that are agile?
- What does "invigorating" mean? Have you ever felt "invigorated"? When?
- What does "fluidity" mean? What other kinds of movements might one describe as fluid?
- Can you move your arms and head to show the swimming stroke called the front crawl? How about the backstroke? The butterfly?
- What does "astounded" mean? Why are most of the pals astounded to see June doing her final lap?

2 - Chores

- What does "puttered around" mean? Have you ever puttered around? What were you doing then?
- Why did Grace not want to frost the cupcakes when they were still hot?
- Do you have chores that you take care of? How do you feel when you are doing them?
- What does Fuzz do when he is on the deck with Grace? What does Grace do when she is on the deck?

3 - Hard Work

- Do you know what "prowess" means? Do you have prowess in anything?
- Why does Tim say that June is "like a force of nature"?
- Have you ever put hard work into practicing something to get better at it? How did it make you feel? Is there anything that you would like to get better at?
- What does June mean when she says that Max is trying to "butter her up"?

4 - Little Pine Creek

- What does "clambered" mean? Why do you think that Liv had to "clamber down to the creek's shore"?
- Do you know what "scorn" is? Why would Viv say something with a "hint of scorn"?
- Can you think of a different name for a crawdad or a new name? Can you think of other animals that have more than one name?

- Would you have done the same thing Ann did when the pals started to bicker, or would you have handled it differently?

5 - Controversy

- What does “controversy” mean? Have you ever had a controversy?
- What does “overexerted” mean? Have you ever overexerted yourself? What did you do to recover?
- Do you know what “exasperated” means? Was June right in thinking that Ann looked like she was exasperated, even from so far away?
- Think about what happened from each pal’s perspective. Is anyone right? Is anyone wrong?
- What does “evaporated” mean? A word can have more than one meaning or be used in different scenarios. Which meaning works in the story?
- How did Mr. Brown react to all of the activity at the lake? Have you ever been so absorbed in doing something that you didn’t notice things around you?

6 - Old Man Goat’s Island

- Earlier, Carlos joked that he would train hard. Does his ride seem easy so far, or does it seem like he is actually training hard?
- What did you think the goat could have done to “terrorize” something that came onto the island?
- Do you think either of the stories about Old Man Goat’s Island name are true? Can you come up with a story of why it would be named that?
- Can you think of a reason why Mushroom Bay would be named that?
- Can you track Carlos’ ride on the map so far? Where do you think he will go next?

7 - Buttercream

- What does “perused” mean?
- Can you make a list of ingredients for buttercream frosting from the story?

8 - Just a Little Farther

- What does “colossal” mean? Can you think of something that is colossal?
- Have you ever been in a place in nature that seemed “magical”? Can you describe it?
- Did the pals seem to like being in the woods? Who did and didn’t?

9 - Summer Bounty

- What does “verdant” mean?
- What do you think a “bumper crop” is?
- Have you ever grown food to eat? What plants did you grow? Are there any that you would like to?

NOTES

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PINK CHAPTERS

- 1 - Little Snake Creek
- 2 - Deer Should Know
- 3 - Hustle and Bustle
- 4 - The Knights of Little Pine Castle
- 5 - Loblolly
- 6 - The Knaves
- 7 - Bright, Simple, and Fresh
- 8 - Mighty Wand
- 9 - Lost in Thought



PINK SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

- 1 clear
full
- 2 circle
notice
guess
listen
- 3 quickly
warm
piece
- 4 exciting
building
- 5 rhythm
direction
beautiful
movement
- 6 upon
course
- 8 question
pair
- 9 ocean
correct

PINK CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

warble
Carolina
ensemble
muscles
break
trestle
dead
narrow
thistle

Chapter 2

shoulder
inaudible
wary
subtle

Chapter 3

hustle
bustle
delightful
laughs
pauses
bread
fruits
halves
double
nestles

Chapter 4

jostle
saunters
solemnly

Chapter 5

depot
view
tongue
heights

Chapter 6

doubt
taunts

Chapter 7

couple
trouble
spreads

Chapter 8

guys
rightful
vulnerable
rustling
haughtily

Chapter 9

dwarfed
canoes
sorry
cruises



trestle	fruits
thistle	cruises
hustle	heights
bustle	shoulder
nestles	guys
jostle	inaudible
rustling	pauses
depot	saunters
subtle	taunts
doubt	haughtily
halves	Carolina
solemnly	narrow
dead	wary
bread	warble
spreads	dwarfed
couple	ensemble
trouble	muscles
double	break
vulnerable	laughs
delightful	view
rightful	tongue
	canoes
	sorry

Pink challenge words continue to build spelling skills. They highlight singular silent letters, short vowel digraphs, ul pronounced with short -oo (/ʊ/), long vowel digraphs, -au as a substitute the digraph -aw, -ar pronounced like “air,” -ar pronounced like “or,” and eight irregular words.

You may have the child read some of the words on the bookmark aloud to you before beginning independent reading, or you can let them approach you with any words that they find tricky to decode. All of the words are included on the bookmark and in the Challenge Words Cards.

- Singular silent letters:

As the Waseca Reading Program focuses on combinations that produce silent letters, we have also highlighted words in the pink book that include single silent letters. You can let the child know that *almost* every letter in the alphabet can be found as a silent letter somewhere in a word within English! V is the *only* letter that is *never*, in all the spellings of English words, silent!

The first group on the bookmark includes eight instances of silent t. The first seven of these emphasize their common occurrence with the -le ending also explored in pink in the Waseca Reading Program. There are two silent b words, one silent l word, and one silent n word.

- Short vowel digraphs:

- ea as short e: The ea digraph presented in the blue level of the Waseca Reading Program familiarized the child with the long e pronunciation of this spelling. Like any vowel itself, this combination can be said as a short vowel, long vowel, or schwa.
- ou as short u/schwa: The ou digraph presented in the purple level of the Waseca Reading Program highlighted the ow pronunciation of this vowel combination. The samples we use here highlight its use as a short u or schwa, especially when found in combination with words ending in -le.

- ul pronounced with short -oo (/ʊ/):

Expanding upon the u as short-oo briefly covered with words such as “put,” “push,” and “bush” in the blue book, the pink book introduces this high, back, lax vowel in combination with l. Again, the various spellings of short -oo (/ʊ/) will be covered more extensively in gold, but many children will pronounce these words with ease at this point.

- Long vowel digraphs:

There are five examples of words with long vowel digraphs that differ from what was encountered in the blue level of the Waseca Reading Program. Two demonstrate ui as a long u, one demonstrates ei as a long i (instead of a long a), one demonstrates ou as a long o, and one demonstrates uy as a long i.

- -au as a substitute the digraph for -aw:

You can let the child know that the aw sound that they are familiar with reading as -aw can also be written -au. This spelling is found at the beginning or in the middle of the word ("laundry," "autumn," "pause"). The -aw spelling tends to be used at the end of a word ("law," "straw," or "paw") or followed by l, n, or k ("crawl," "lawn," or "hawk").

- -ar pronounced like "air":

As the child might recall from learning about words with -are that sound sound like "air" and have a silent e in the aqua Challenge Words, this pronunciation can also occur in words that do not have a silent e like "arrow," "carry," and "marry!"

- -ar pronounced like "or":

The digraph ar can also be pronounced like the word "or." Some more examples that you can cite to familiarize them with this spelling include: "warn," "warm," "toward," "award," and "swarm."

- Irregular words/exceptions:

There are eight words included here that are irregular or demonstrate exceptions to spelling rules. As the child gains fluency with reading, they will continue to encounter more sophisticated words and words that exhibit irregular spellings or exceptions to standard to spelling. Many of these words are loan words (borrowed from other languages) or common words that resisted the Great Vowel Shift hundreds of years ago.

PINK VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

drone
warble
harmony
full-throated
chorus
Carolina wren
ensemble
trestle
dead nettle
thistle
ambles

Chapter 2

mutters
inaudible
horror
knucklehead
wary
intensity
subtle
forelimb

Chapter 3

hustle
bustle
skedaddles
rifles
allergic
debacle
serrated
ample
nestles

Chapter 4

jostle
dumbstruck
gee whillikers
dapples
saunters
whim
chuckle
solemnly
somerly
dub
stifles
wry

Chapter 5

whippersnapper
depot
captivate
immense
humongous

Chapter 6

knave
wrests
adorable
doubt
gullible
dawdle
taunts
dueling
hark
bough
trait
quibble
invincible
fray

Chapter 7

feta
balsamic
chortles
aplomb
parmesan
brittle
biodegradable

Chapter 8

spar
tussle
heaves
frustrated
vulnerable
rustling
haughtily
feeble
noble
succumb

Chapter 9

dwarfed
muses
laden
dumbfounded
rambles
gaggle
aloft
spectacle
creatures
affable

PINK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - Little Snake Creek

- What sounds does Carlos notice as he is riding?
- Do you think the bumblebee is after pollen, nectar, or both? What does it do with nectar? What does it do with pollen?
- Can you find the spot where Carlos took a break? Where is the train track?

2 - Deer Should Know

- Why is Tim so jumpy?
- How does Viv make it worse when she tries to make Tim feel better?
- What does Tim say to make Viv feel better?
- Why does Viv "sigh with relief"?
- Why does Tim think the deer "should know if there is something scary here"?

3 - Hustle and Bustle

- Do you think that Fuzz liked the smell of basil? Why?
- What is a "debacle"? How could Grace have created one?
- How do you think Grace knows that Leo likes tart things?
- What has Grace made for the picnic so far?

4 - The Knights of Little Pine Castle

- Can you describe the place Max brought the pals to? Do you think it really was a castle?
- Do you know about a time when there were knights, kings, and queens?
- Who decides to rebel against "Max the Great"?

5 - Loblolly

- If someone not reading the story asked you what Carlos was like, what would you tell them? What does he seem to like or take interest in?
- How tall was the tree when Carlos was a boy? How tall does he think it is now?
- Can you imagine how everything around you would look if you grew to be a giant?

6 - The Knaves

- What does "gullible" mean? Have you ever been gullible? What does Viv mean when she says that even she "is not that gullible"?
- What does "dawdle" mean? Do you ever dawdle?
- What is a "knave" in the context of a time with kings and queens? Why would Liv say that Viv can't be a knave because she argues?
- What does "invincible" mean?

7 - Bright, Simple, and Fresh

- What does “chortle” mean? Can you think of other words for laugh?
- What does “aplomb” mean? Do you think that Grace is a confident cook or baker? Do you do anything with aplomb?
- What else has Grace added to the picnic feast?

8 - Mighty Wand

- How does Viv react to not doing well in the battle? Is she keeping her promise to her mom?
- What does Viv find on the ground in the “castle”? Do you think she stopped the battle in the way that she wanted?

9 - Lost in Thought

- Can you imagine how everything around you would look if you were as tiny as a mouse? Describe something you do now that would be funny or hard to try to do.
- Why does Carlos almost have a wreck?
- What is the girl unloading from the truck? Does she seem upset that Carlos almost crashed? Was Carlos?
- What inspires Carlos to walk through the Rescue Zoo?
- What does “affable” mean? Do you think otters seem affable? Are there other animals that seem to be?

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NOTES

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GOLD CHAPTERS

- 1 - Eastern Hognose
- 2 - Meditation
- 3 - Disguise
- 4 - Giggle Fit
- 5 - Pearl
- 6 - Magical Wizard Woman
- 7 - The Game
- 8 - A Giant
- 9 - The Picnic



GOLD SIGHT WORDS

Six Pals

- body
- 1 ready
- certain
- 2 against
- learn
- 4 though
- 5 separate
- 9 couldn't

GOLD CHALLENGE WORDS

Chapter 1

broad

Chapter 2

guidance

beneficial

Chapter 3

disguise

guard

guiltily

Chapter 4

composure

massaging

Chapter 5

potential

enclosure

languidly

distinguish

Chapter 6

suspiciously

roguish

guide

Chapter 7

partially

Chapter 8

ferocious

yeah

Chapter 9

ogre

delicious

especially

aunt

chef

gourmet

casual

issues



guidance

disguise

guard

guiltily

languidly

distinguish

roguish

guide

composure

enclosure

casual

issues

suspiciously

ferocious

delicious

beneficial

potential

partially

especially

broad

massaging

yeah

ogre

aunt

chef

gourmet

Gold challenge words continue to build spelling skills by highlighting combinations and endings that appear in more sophisticated words. These include the silent u in words with gu + vowel, the palatalization of some words with su (resulting in a *sh* pronunciation), and the endings -cious, -tial, and -cial. Again, there are also instances of words that are irregular or exceptions.

You may have the child read the bookmark aloud to you before beginning independent reading or you can let them approach you with any words that they find tricky to decode. All of the words are included on the bookmark and in the Challenge Words pdf.

- g + silent u + vowel:

When a u is found between a g and another vowel, the u is usually silent. We have included eight instances of words that follow this pattern.

- The palatalization of some words with su:

You can let the child know that there are instances where the s in words spelled with su, sounds like *sh*. They may have already noticed this in words like “sure,” “measure,” “usually,” and “sugar!”

- -cious:

We have included three instances of words that include this letter combination. When reviewing these, point out that the sound *shus* in a word is written -cious. Can they think of any other words that make that sound? They are usually pretty fancy words like “precious,” “luscious,” “spacious,” or “audacious!”

- -tial and -cial:

Words that have the sound *shul* are spelled either with -tial or -cial. These words *usually* follow these rules:

- If this sound comes after a consonant, it is spelled with -tial.
- If it comes after a vowel, it is spelled with -cial.

Let them know that as few rules in English spelling are hard and fast, there are exceptions! In fact, one of the most controversial is that the word “controversial” is the only common word in English that breaks these rules completely.

We have included extension cards with the gold Challenge Words Cards that you can use as a sorting exercise to give them familiarity with words that follow these rules and the seven common exceptions.

-tial after a consonant	-cial after a vowel	exceptions
potential	beneficial	financial
partial	social	commecial
essential	facial	spatial
substantial	special	initial
celestial	official	palatial
torrential	crucial	provincial
influential	artificial	controversial

You can feel free to have them follow up this sorting exercise with the fill-in-the-blanks extension worksheet also provided in the Challenge Words Cards.

Please note that only the bolded words in the chart above are included in the Challenge Words List in this guide and on the bookmark, but all of the words in the chart are included in the Challenge Words Cards pdf (coded as “extension” on the back).

- Irregular words/exceptions:

Gold also includes seven words that are irregular or demonstrate exceptions to spelling rules. As with pink, most of these words are loan words from other languages. “Aunt” is included because of the two common, but widely varying, pronunciations in American English (*awnt* vs *ant*).

GOLD VOCABULARY

Chapter 1

stout
illumination
dread
fascination
haltingly
exceedingly
rationally
console
recedes
agape
phobia

Chapter 2

incessantly
gorgeous
symphony
concentration
raucous
beneficial
placid
independence
contemplates

Chapter 3

disguise
dignified
humiliation
exaggerated
imitation
ceases
guiltily
meekly
domination
imagination
concocts
combative
pleads
magnificent
triumphantly
morph
gambol

Chapter 4

ecstatic
comical
satisfaction
composes
guffaw
ridiculous
contagious
baffled
hysterically
massaging
vacant
snickers

Chapter 5

vigilant
probable
partitions
hotfoots
potential
escapee
trillium
mottled
evidence
anxiety
encompasses
junction
gander
enclosure
recess
diligently
terrace
languidly
domestic
distinguish
elegantly

Chapter 6

mimics
flounces
delicate
gait
whinnies
braying
menacing
cowering
suspiciously
traverse
roguish
enthralled
emphasis
expeditions
phoenix
sphinx
feigns

Chapter 7

ceremoniously
bellows
trudges
enthusiastically
hesitates
cacophony

Chapter 8

compliments
improvisation
gingerly
ferocious
waivers

Chapter 9

rascals
phenomenal
delicious
convenient
chef
gourmet
outrageous
dibs
casual
explorations
issues

GOLD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - Eastern Hognose

- Why is there a heat lamp in the snake house?
- Why do you think the snake got so aggressive?
- What is a “phobia”? Have you ever had a fear that you could not talk yourself out of?

2 - Meditation

- What does June compare the bird calls and songs to? Is that an example of a simile or a metaphor?
- How do you meditate? Why?
- Are the ruins really a castle?
- Why do parents need to protect and guide children? Why do they need to let them be independent?

3 - Disguise

- How did the pals react to Viv saying she is the “Most Noble Queen Wizardess of the Whole Universe”? How does Viv react to them? What do the pals do when they see she is crying?
- How does Ann turn the situation around? What would you have done in that situation?
- Do the pals respond well to changing how they were playing? Would you have gotten on board with a new game so quickly?
- What does Viv say she can do as the “Most Noble Queen Wizardess of the Whole Universe”?

4 - Giggle Fit

- Why does Grace have such a hard time latching the gate?
- What causes the laughing fit?
- What does “contagious” mean? How can laughing be contagious?
- Why was Grace’s wrist sore?

5 - Pearl

- Can you describe Pearl’s enclosure?
- Can you think of a reason an animal would need to have a cage for a while?
- What distinguishes a bobcat from a domestic cat?

6 - Magical Wizard Woman

- Why does Liv look at Viv suspiciously?
- What does “enthralled” mean?

- What reason does Viv say give for traveling “through outer space as an elephant”?
- What animal would you like to morph into?

7 - The Game

- Where was Carlos on the map when he heard the pals making animal noises? Can you trace his route from the beginning of his bike ride until then?
- Why do you think Carlos hid to watch the kids play?
- What does “cacophony” mean? What were the pals doing that made a cacophony?

8 - A Giant

- What does “improvisation” mean?
- What word makes all of the pals decide to go back to the lake?
- Why do you think Carlos does not downplay Tim's concerns?

9 - The Picnic

- Why does Grace blush? Why is she thrilled when Ann says the cucumbers are “so fresh!”?
- Why do Carlos and the pals giggle like they have a secret?
- Why was June trying to “act casual” when she asked the pals about their time in the forest?
- Do you think the pals kept the issues they ran into a secret from the grown-ups? Why would they do that?
- Thinking back on all of the adventures the pals had together, what's an example of a time they resolved a problem with “kindness and imagination”?

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circles. Liv capers about with a delicate gait. A whinnies expertly as Tim gallops about, sputtering praying. Suddenly, Viv stops prancing. She crouches and paces about on all fours, a menacing look on her face. The others watch with fascination. Viv growls, "Sometimes, I roam the galaxy as a wolf!" She bares her teeth, "With huge fangs!" Leo makes a show of cowering in fear. With confidence, Liv steps forward. "But," she says, "those fangs don't change your true gentle nature, right?" Viv nods, exclaiming, "Of course!" She sidles over to cuddle Liv's knee. Liv, eyeing her suspiciously, asks, "You traverse the universe to bring peace, right?" With a sly grin, Viv shrieks, "Clearly!" She bounds to the wall and pulls herself atop, "But that doesn't mean I can't showcase my talents!" The pals stand below enthralled. "You guys! Sometimes, I travel through outer space as an elephant!" Swinging her arm like a wrecking ball, Viv blares loudly. The others copy her. She slapping her head for dramatic emphasis, "That way I can always remember where I have been!" Viv enjoys the undivided attention of her friends! She says, "I've visited lots of forms in my many expeditions!" Counting with her fingers, she starts to rattle off a list. "I've had a

APPENDIX:

Six Pals - Coded

SIX PALS - CODED

We worked diligently to write each level of Six Pals so that all word selections correspond to that level of the Waseca Reading Program. We used the Challenge Words as an opportunity to expand the decodable words and sight words by introducing words with related phonetic elements, variations, or spelling rules not covered in the Waseca Reading Program. We feel these constraints resulted in books that give a child the opportunity to build and expand their skills and confidence with reading while being exposed to sophisticated storytelling.

On the following pages, you will get a sneak peek at how we controlled for phonetics while we wrote. We've included the key to our coding and the first chapter of each book. Feel *more* than free to not spend time learning the coding key. We encourage you to, instead, peruse the chapter sample pages to get a visual impression of what words are decodable as the story progresses.

CODING KEY & SAMPLES

Color: The color of a word, or element of a word, corresponds to the color level of the Waseca Reading Program where it is introduced. Black indicates that the phonetic element was not addressed in the Waseca Reading Program. (These elements are covered in the Challenge Words level by level as they appear.)

Bold: A bolded word is one that appears in the cards or phonogram booklets of the Waseca Reading Program.

Italic: An italicized word is a sight word in the Waseca Reading Program Workbooks.

Underlined: A word, or portion of a word, that is underlined indicates that it is decodable because that phonetic element was addressed in the Waseca Reading Program materials.

Here is an example of a coded sentence from Chapter 1, The Six, in the red book:

*She has a **dog** and a rabbit.*

- *She, has, a,* and *and* are italicized because they are sight words from the red Waseca Reading Program Workbooks.
- **dog** is bold and red because it is a word presented in the red level of the Waseca Reading Program.
- rabbit is red and underlined because it is decodable after work with red in the Waseca Reading Program. Rabbit is a multisyllabic c-v-c word, so it is one of the Challenge Words for red.

To push it a little further, here is an example of a coded sentence from Chapter 2, Trust, in the yellow book:

Viv **just** plucks *some grass and tosses* it in *the* **wind**.

- Viv, it, and in are red and underlined because a child can decode these words after works with the red level of the Waseca Reading Program.
- **just**, **grass**, **tosses**, and **wind**, are bold because they are words presented in their respective colors of the Waseca Reading Program materials.
- The -es in **tosses** is in plain black text because it is an inflectional ending (not covered in the Waseca Reading Program, but discussed with the yellow Challenge Words of Six Pals).
- plucks is underlined because each of its phonetic elements are covered by the corresponding color in the Waseca Reading Program
 - pl = beginning l blend in orange
 - u as a short u in red
 - ck as a consonant digraph of yellow
- *some*, *and*, and *the* are italicized because they are sight words from the Waseca Reading Program Workbooks of their respective colors.

Red - Chapter 1

The Six

This is Max.

He has a **pup** that is **tan**.

This is Viv.

She has a **cap** with a **pin**.

This is Liv.

She has a **top** with the **sun** on it.

This is Tim. Tim is six.

He is **big** for six.

This is Ann. Ann is seven.

She has a **dog** and a rabbit.

This is Leo.

He has **fun** with all of his pals.

Orange - Chapter 1

The Hut

Back by the pond, on Ann's land, there is a hut. Ann's **dad** crafted it from **logs**.

The hut has a **big red flag** on top. The **flag flaps** in the wind.
In the hut, there is a desk and a **rug**. There are some **bins** and some **stumps** to sit on.

Ann likes to spend time in the hut. There, she makes stuff. There, she writes.
There, she **plans fun stuff** to do with the pals.

One day, Ann went to the hut with the **twins**, Viv and Liv. Viv jumped up on a stump and said, "I like this hut a **lot**!"

Liv said to Ann, "We could make a **club** in this hut! With me, my sis, and you, plus Leo, Max, and Tim, we would have six." To that, Ann said, "We **must**! A **club** will be so **fun**!"

Yellow - Chapter 1

What a Thrill!

Max wanted to try Leo's stilts. "Do I **just** strap them on and **stand**?" he asked.

"No! **Not** here! You **will** be much too **big**!" said Viv. Leo said, "But, the stilts are small."

"Well, what if he **fell** and **hit** a **stump**?" asked Viv. She went on, "What if he made the hut **crash** down?"

"I know a **spot** to try the stilts!" said Ann. She **led** the pals out of the hut, around the **back**, and down the **hill**.

"Here is a patch of flat, thick **grass**," said Ann. "If I **fell**, it would be like I **fell** onto a **mattress**!" Max said.

Liv and Tim **helped** Max **step** up onto the stilts. Leo **fixed** the straps to Max's shins. Max rocked a **bit**, but, then, was still. He went three **steps**! He yelled, "What a thrill!"

Green - Chapter 1

A Good One

To **bring** the **stick bug** to the hut, Ann and Liv take the same **path back** to pass by the pond. As they near the **dock**, they see Tim and Leo **standing in** the water.

The girls jog to the pond's **bank**. The boys are looking down into the **net**. Tim is gripping the **net**, letting water drift through it.

Ann **springs up on** the **dock**. "What are you doing? **Fishing**?" she asks grinning. "No," Leo says looking up at her. "We are **bug hunting**, and we have **got a good one**!"

"You are sopping wet, Leo!" says Liv, flinging off her clogs. "**Did** you go swimming to **catch** your insect?" she asks, splashing over, trying to get a look in the **net**.

"No, but I may when we **finish getting this bug** into the tin," says Leo, crossing over, to **block** Liv from seeing into the **net**.

Leo **dunks** the tin into the water in the **net**. It **sinks a bit** as it **fills**. He **lifts it**, and there is the water **bug clinging** to the rim. He shows the **bug** to Liv. **Clapping**, she yells, "**That** is a **good one**!"

Aqua - Chapter 1

What Next?

With the **bug hunt** completed, the pals started to make their way **back** to the hut, the **club**'s **home** base. As they passed the rabbit's pen, Ann took off running. The others gave chase.

Back in the hut, Viv chose a safe **spot** up on a shelf to keep the **nets** and tins. "Maybe, some**time**, we **can** use them for another **game**." Ann winked and said, "I **think** there might be a chance!"

"On **that** **note**," said Ann "before we all go **home** today, we should **pick** what to do next **time**. Any thoughts?" Tim, **thinking** about the day, **got** inspired and said, "I like all the **things** we do outside. Could we go on a hike?"

Max rose up on his **stump**, "Or a **bike** ride would be **fun**! There is **that** **lake** by my house with the paved **path**." Leo chimed in, "Oh! We could make it a **bike** race and compete for a prize!"

"Those are all **fine** by me," said Liv. "Should we take a vote?" The pals all nodded. "**Just** pick one," said Ann. As she named each **thing**, the pals voted by a show of **hands**.

Tim and Viv chose the hike. Max, Liv, and Ann chose the **bike** ride. Leo chose the race. "A **bike** ride at the **lake** it is!" said Max. "Be at my house around **ten** on **Sunday**!"

Blue - Chapter 1

Good to Go

Tina and Bob, the twins' mom and dad, came outside to see the girls off on their ride. Bob waved and said, "Good morning, Ann!" as they walked to the driveway. "Hi!" Ann said, acting a little shy.

Bob called to Viv, who was riding in loops on the street. "Viv, hold up. Come here. As dad, it is my duty to check some things before I can release you all into the wild." Viv began to steer back with a sly grin.

Viv coasted up to her dad. Her tires gave a little squeak as she braked hard, stopping just inches from his feet. Bob pretended to panic, made a wacky face, squinted, and said jokingly, "Quit it. Let's please not start the day by running over someone in the family!"

Bob made quite a show of inspecting each bike's chain. He pinched each tire. He tapped each helmet. He rang the bell on Viv's trike. At last, he said, "Ladies, you are good to go!"

"Wait!" said Tina "Before you leave, all three of you need to repeat after me: I will ride safely, and I will not be grumpy if I do not get my way." Viv blushed and asked, "Were you spying on us?"

Tina was sheepish for a moment. Then, she gave Viv a kiss on the cheek and replied with a smile, "Indeed, I was!" The three repeated Tina's words before setting off happily on their ride.

Purple - Chapter 1

June's Morning Swim

As the kids start another lap around the lake, June continues her morning swim. She always does the front crawl for her first four lengths of the lake. She carves her path through the calm water with each precise stroke.

Every day when June swims, she tries to perfect her form. She counts her kicks for each stroke. She keeps her mouth close to the surface as she turns to breathe. She is an expert swimmer.

But, June does not swim just for exercise. Swimming makes her feel more centered, more connected to everything. June can hear the shouts of the kids as she goes. She can see some agile trout darting beneath her.

June switches to the backstroke for her fifth lap. She never hurries this length. She enjoys watching the clouds float lazily across the azure sky. The cool water on her skin is invigorating. Moving with such fluidity is a joy for June.

Soon, June reaches the marshy bit at the northern tip of the lake. She stands for a moment to gather the energy she has held in reserve. Just as June begins her final lap back to the dock, the kids zip past. She is doing the butterfly!

As the pals ride, they watch June surge from the water over and over again to perform the demanding stroke. All but Max are astounded to see June powering across the lake. "Wow!" says Ann to Max. "Your mother is an awesome swimmer!"

Pink - Chapter 1

Little Snake Creek

Carlos whizzes along Big Pine Trail's straightaway on the northern side of the lake. The whirl of his wheel's spokes blends with the drone of insects. The chatter, trill, and warble of birds, invisible in the thick brambles, adds to the harmony as Carlos hurtles toward Little Snake Creek.

A call that sounds like strokes on the teeth of a metal comb dissolves into a clear, full-throated song that Carlos hears as, "Tea Kettle! Tea Kettle! Tea Kettle!" More birds join the chorus. "Oh," thinks Carlos, "I'd know that refrain anywhere. Carolina wrens are the stars of today's nature ensemble."

Carlos' muscles are beginning to feel tight. He resolves to take a break at the creek near the trestle. As soon as he arrives, he hops out of the saddle. He lays his bike in a dense patch of dead nettle awash with tiny purple blooms. His legs tingle as he waddles down to the creek's narrow bank.

Carlos settles down on a large, smooth stone. He rubs his thighs to help with his aches. He watches a bumblebee shuttle from some white clover to a dandelion near his feet. It wiggles and waggles all over the flower. Carlos puzzles over whether it is after pollen or nectar.

The bumblebee tootles off to land on a towering swamp thistle. It ambles around the bright pink bristles and long prickles at the tips of its leaves for a while. It zooms across the creek where Carlos loses sight of it in a tangle of honeysuckle growing up a tree.

in the creek, four snapping turtles huddle on a log. Carlos observes them basking in the warmth of the summer sunlight. The rumble of a freight train on the nearby Eastern Line does not disturb them until its whistle blows. They each slip from the log into the water, barely creating a ripple.

Gold - Chapter 1

Eastern Hognose

The otters seem to have had enough of their frolicking and games. They settle down on the pond's bank, nosing and nudging each other as they snuggle up to nap. "Well," thinks Carlos, "I guess it's time I leave them to their rest and relaxation." He doubles back toward the Zoo's entrance.

Again, Carlos does his best to avoid the snake house, but as he walks past, he notices a large, black snake on a ledge in the window. Its stout body is coiled loosely. Its broad, upturned nose faces a heat lamp in the corner. Under the lamp's warm, white illumination, its scales appear to glow.

Full of both dread and fascination, Carlos advances haltingly in that direction. He has always been exceedingly afraid of snakes. He knows, rationally, he is not in danger. He inches nearer, shakily muttering, "It's okay. Don't panic. There is thick glass between us," to console himself.

Carlos' motion has caught the snake's attention. It slowly turns its face toward him. It lazily flicks its tongue once and, then, twice. Carlos braces himself. The snake rears up. It sways aggressively. It sucks in air, and the skin around its neck and head expands. Now, it looks like a cobra!

"It can't be a cobra!" thinks Carlos, feeling a little woozy. The snake leans back, as if ready to lunge. It opens its jaws to hiss. Carlos cannot hear it through the glass, but the sight alone causes him to break out in a cold sweat. With caution, he backs away. As he retreats, the snake grows more calm.

Now, unconcerned by Carlos' presence, the snake's hood recedes. Carlos watches, mouth agape, as it slithers off the ledge and out of view. He catches his breath, "Well, I guess it's good to confront a fear, but that certainly did not help me overcome my phobia today!"

