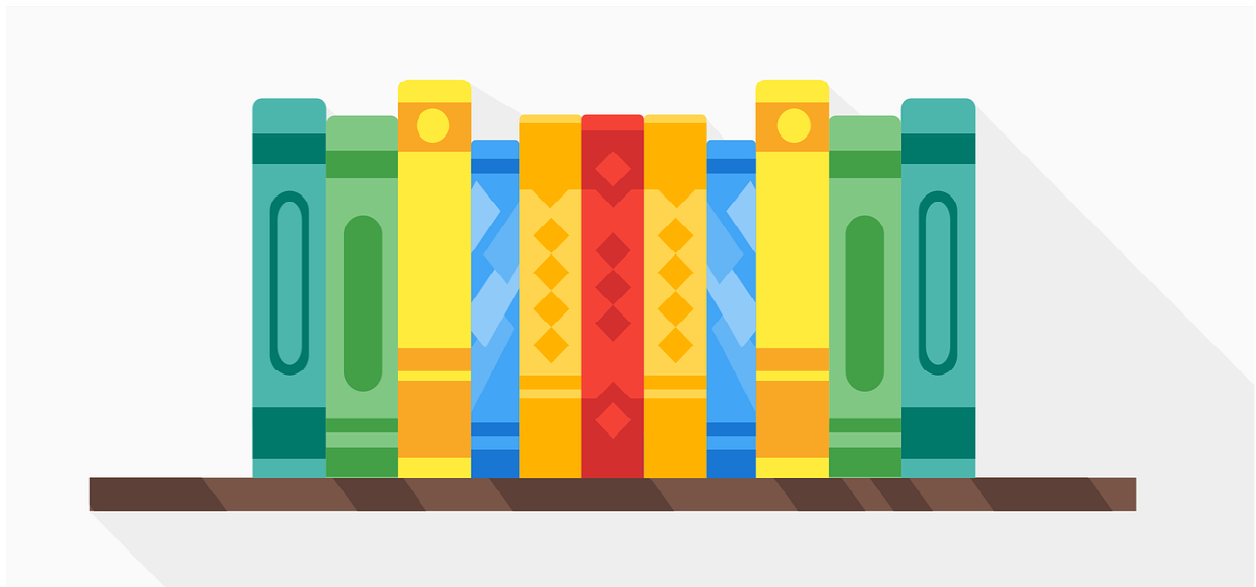


# Teaching: Teach Reading

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To access additional materials, go to:  
[Teachreadingathome.com](http://Teachreadingathome.com)

To ask questions about the Course, email:  
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# Table of Contents

Why Teach Reading?.....	1
Three common reasons why students can't read.....	2
What to do about these common problems	
How to teach reading.....	3
Teaching Sounds and Letters.....	5
Sounding Out and Blending.....	7
Cumulative Courses are Best.....	8
Reading is about what is On The Page	
Whole Word.....	9
Phonics	
Focusing on the Basic Building Blocks Saves Time	10
Use this method to teach your student 90 words	
Let's look at the size of the problem for a moment.....	11
What's causing the problem then?	
So how can the problem be solved?.....	12
And I've left the 2 most important reasons until last	
How much time does this take?.....	13
Be realistic – What do you REALLY need to succeed?	
The Course itself is very easy to understand, too.....	14
So now YOU can solve the problem	
Start your student on the road to success today!.....	15

## Just a note about the materials

I'd like you to note that: All my materials are in pdf format, and are designed to be read on large-ish screens such as computers or laptops (or printed on A4 paper). My materials are not designed to be read on small screens such as mobile phone screens.

## Why Teach Reading?

The purpose of this article is to show why it's important that people who are not teachers, should teach their child to read. This information applies also, to people considering teaching a friend or acquaintance to read.

Does World War III break out in your home every evening because you and your children have to struggle through homework they can't even read?

Are teachers acting as though your child is stupid, when you know that just isn't so!

Do you feel that the teachers don't have a clue what to do about your child's difficulties, or that they don't even care? Do you suspect that they've put your child in the "too hard basket"?

Has it gone further than that - is your child being denied a normal education because of poor literacy?

Or have things got to the stage where he or she is condemned to taking unskilled jobs, or being unemployed, because of illiteracy?

Are you angry now you realise it's going to be up to you to fix the problem - when you've been told time and time again to leave it to the "experts"? And wasted...Years!

But you're willing to do whatever it takes to succeed. You're determined to fix the problem yourself. But you don't know exactly what to do. And you're frightened of making a bad situation even worse. Well, you've come to the right place. I can help you teach your child to read.

This Course is so simple you don't need any training to teach it, and your child won't have to sweat blood to learn it - **because the Course makes sense.**

Even you, an experienced reader, will say things like, "Oh, that's why letter e is silent!", and "Now I understand why *one* is spelt like that," and "Now, I'll never confuse *quite* and *quiet* again!"

And if you get stuck or confused, or your child asks a question you can't answer - you can just email me, and I'll come up with the answer (or at least an answer!).

## Three common reasons why students can't read:

1. They don't understand words are made up of individual sounds, or can't "hear" the sounds;
2. They don't know that reading means saying the sound for each letter as they come to each letter in a word; or
3. They don't know which sound to say when they see a letter.

## What to do about these common problems

When people don't know about the individual sounds in words, they can't learn to hear them.

If students just don't know what reading really is, you can tell them that reading is just looking at the letter as their eyes move from left to right along a line of print, and saying the sound the letter represents.

Many students have been taught that reading is sounding out the first letter then 'just saying' a Sight Word (a written word they have committed to memory) that begins with that letter and is about the right length, and/or more-or-less fits in with the meaning of the rest of the sentence. I call that guessing, and I think it's a LOT more work than just sounding out the word on the page!

While many parents understand the importance of sounding out, they don't know how to teach it - especially when words get beyond the one letter = one sound stage.

I teach the rules in my courses. (If you're allergic to the word *rules*, you can call them patterns.) And I provide enough work for the students so they get used to applying the rules. They don't need to memorise them; all they have to do is use them often enough, and then they'll recognise the pattern when they see it, and know what to say.

And now we come to the most common reason for poor literacy - that most students have never been taught the sound/letter combinations. There are about 150-160 very common combinations; most students are lucky to be taught one sound for each of the 26 alphabet letters. No wonder they can't read – they've been taught less than 20% of what they need to know!

Once students know that words are made up of individual sounds, and that reading is just saying the right sound when they see the letter, and when they know the common sound/letter combinations - they can make very rapid progress, and become independent readers.

## How to Teach Reading

While anyone who is literate and has sufficient patience is capable of teaching reading, there are three things prospective tutors should take into account before committing themselves to such an important task:

1. Ask yourself if you are willing to put in the time and effort necessary to bring the student to the stage where he or she has become an independent reader;
2. Ask yourself whether your student has the necessary abilities to succeed: adequate levels of sight, hearing, speech, attention, and motivation; and
3. Ask yourself if you have found a sufficiently comprehensive, well-structured course that you could use to teach this student.

If you can answer these questions in the affirmative, then you are ready to proceed.

The next step in preparing to teach reading is for tutors to equip themselves with several basic skills:

- They need to learn how written English works - from the perspective of a non-reader. Tutors can use my FREE *How Do I Start Teaching Phonics at Home* ebook to quickly learn this information. They can then teach this information to their students – no matter what course the student uses to learn to read.
- They need to learn how to say the sounds correctly. (You don't have to learn all the sounds before beginning teaching; you only need to be a few sounds ahead of your student.)

Written English is based on individual sounds, so being able to say the sounds separately and accurately is important. The information about the sounds is contained in my FREE *Sounds: Sound/Letter Combinations* ebook.

Learning to say each sound individually isn't difficult, but it does take a little work because the last time most of us used that skill was when we were babies. Babies learn to speak by listening to normal speech, isolating the sounds, then practicing those sounds. Once they can say the sounds clearly, their brains switch to paying attention to words and their meanings, instead. This means that most tutors and students have to relearn the skill of saying individual sounds.

- Then, tutors need to learn to sound out a word, and blend the sounds back into a word. The *How Do I Start Teaching Phonics at Home* ebook includes this information.

## Teaching Sounds and Letters

One of the problems with English is that our sounds don't appear to have a link to the letters we use to represent them. In the original language, there was a link between a sound and its letter (or picture). But if ever there was such a link in English, it has been well and truly lost.

This means that there is no logical link between an English sound and its letter. And learning something that doesn't make sense can be ridiculously difficult, especially for the types of people who can't understand things that don't make sense; I call these people "Engineer" types. But there's a way around this problem of learning things that don't make sense.

Originally, when people wanted to write about something, for example, a man, they drew a picture of a man. Eventually it was agreed that, in order to write about anything and everything (and not just things that could be represented by a picture), people would write a picture or symbol for each sound in a word e.g. the word man has three sounds\*: /m/ /a/ /n/ - so to write man, they had to write 3 symbols. Then they would sound out the symbols, and blend those sounds back into the word *man*.

\*A sound is represented by two slash marks with the letter most commonly used to write that sound in between e.g. /m/ /a/ /n/. To refer to a letter, I'll write: e.g. Letter m.

In those times, there was a direct correlation between a sound and the sign used to write that sound – the sound that began the word for ox, was represented by a very simplified picture of an ox.

The sound that began the word for fish, was represented by a simplified fish; and the same was done for fence, water, snake, and eye, etc.



So, people only had to say the sounds in a word in order, and write the picture for each sound in the same order – and they'd written the word. To read, they just said the first sound for each symbol in order, and blended those sounds back into the word. That made sense.

Then people with other languages decided they liked the idea of writing so much that instead of working out the sounds in their own languages, and choosing a relevant picture for each sound, they took a shortcut and copied the signs of the original inventors. So there was no longer a direct link between reading and writing. The symbols or letters for reading and writing no longer made sense.

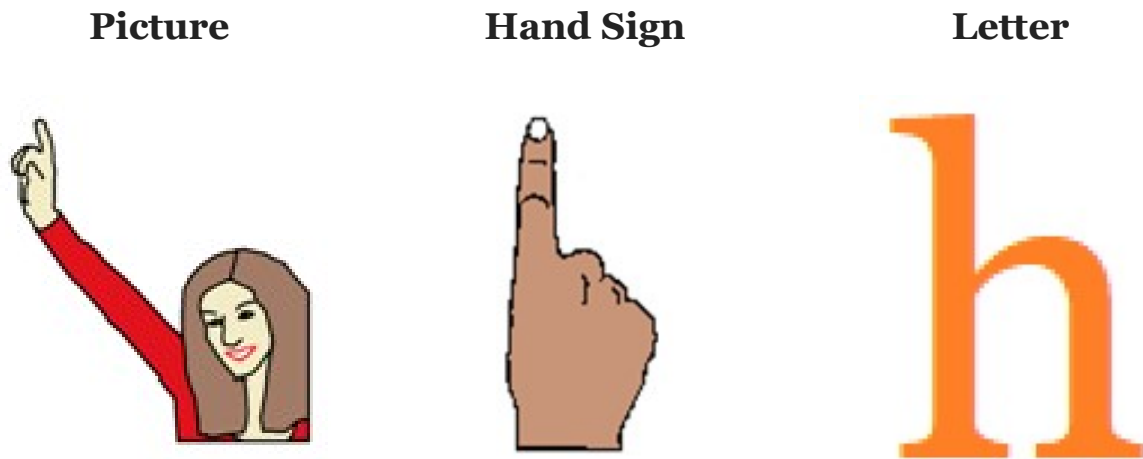
So, I went back to the drawing board, and copied the idea the original inventors' idea. In my Course, when students begin a lesson, they are shown a picture, and learn its name. The name of the picture begins with the sound taught in that lesson.

Then I went a step further. As soon as students can say the sound correctly, my Course teaches a hand sign. The reasons for using hand signs are:

- to reinforce the memorization of the sound and memory word, AND
- to provide bridge that will help students remember the shape of the relevant alphabet letter, that will be taught next.

Doing things this way means that in just a few minutes, a student can learn a sound, its memory word, its hand sign used for representing the sound visually, **and** its letter – in a way that's easy to remember because they all link together and reinforce each other.

Here's an example: Sound /h/ in here. (When a teacher calls a student's name during roll call, the student puts up her hand and says, "Here".)



Teaching a hand sign also equips tutors and students with a way to signal which sound is being used, without having to say the letter name (which is an irrelevant distraction, when learning to read).

A hand sign is also a way to make invisible sounds “visible” - so they are easier to think about. All this can be done without having to stop and write letters down, which, for some students, can be a major distraction when learning to read.

## Sounding Out and Blending

Once students know the sound, hand sign, and letter, they can start sounding out and blending real words that use that new sound and the previous sounds they have been taught.

## Cumulative Courses are Best

It's important that courses are written in a cumulative way. That means students are presented only with work that requires knowledge they have already been taught.

Students might have to think for a minute in order to recall previous work. They might have to ask for help (or at least a hint), but they should be confident that no-one is trying to trick them or make them look stupid by expecting them to do something they haven't been taught.

Guessing is not a reading skill, neither is having to work out which word would "make sense". In fact, a number of currently popular "reading strategies" have no part in basic reading instruction.

## Reading is about what is On The Page

The purpose of learn to read instruction is to teach students to read and comprehend what is on the page in front of them. The basic skills required in order to do this are:

- "look at the letter and say the sound" skill;
- "look at the letter team, and say the sound";
- "look at these old ways of writing that sound";
- "look at these letters that follow rules"; and finally,
- "look at these letters that are used to write foreign words".

Once students have progressed through these stages, they can read thousands and thousands of words.

## Whole Word

There are two major methods of teaching beginning reading. One is the Whole Word method – which goes by numerous names; the other is the phonics method – which teaches sound/letter combinations. (There is also the eclectic method, which mixes both these methods that is really another form of Whole Word reading.)

When students are taught using the Whole Word method, they need to be able to rapidly retrieve from memory each word they are seeing; they have to learn each word individually.

Many Whole Word methods focus on teaching fluency by teaching: individual letters, beginning consonant blends, ending consonant blends, syllables, and word families. Learning all these different things requires years of study, and not only appears overwhelming; it is overwhelming. This is because there are:

- 27 beginning consonant blends;
- 57 ending consonant blends;
- over 10,000 syllables; and
- 37 common word families.

No course teaches all of these, or even tries to. This means that students learn smatterings of information that leave them ill-equipped to become independent readers.

## Phonics

With a thoroughly phonics-based method of teaching reading, tutors need to teach only a limited number of skills: sounding out, blending, and practicing until students say the sound automatically when they see the letter/letter team.

The amount of phonics knowledge required by students in order to be equipped to read well, is surprisingly limited, when compared to the Whole Word method.

Phonics students need to learn:

- the alphabet sound/letter combinations;
- the multiple sound/letter teams (e.g. **sh**ip and **th**ing);
- the old or historical sound/letter teams (e.g. **kn**ife and **mo**at); and
- the foreign sound/letter teams for writing foreign words in English (e.g. **Elle** & **ph**oto).

In addition to this, students need to know, and be able to apply, the 21 reading rules (such as: “Double letters are only said once” e.g. **inn**). These rules are easiest to learn by reading words where the rules are applied, while committing the rule to memory.

## Focusing on the basic Building Blocks Saves Time

Focusing on these most basic building blocks saves a lot of time, as although competent adult readers read thousands of words (between 20,000 and 50,000+ words), almost all of these words are made up of only about 160 sound/letter building blocks.

Good phonics-based courses focus on teaching these basic reading blocks, thereby equipping students to be able to read independently in weeks, rather than years.

## Use this method to teach your students 90 words

The *How Do I Start Teaching Phonics at Home?* ebook available on my site provides you with everything you need to take your student through the beginning stages listed above – and teaching them to read the first 90 words in the Course.

## Let's look at the size of the problem for a moment

How many adults (people 16 and over) can't read at all, or can't read properly?

40-50% Shocking, isn't it!

I'm quoting the figures regarding adults (rather than the literacy rates for children) because the results from the independent international literacy test for adults are harder to hide or 'massage'! The full name of the test is: *The International Adult Literacy Survey* (IALS), and it is run every few years.

And the thing is, those adults didn't suddenly become poor readers - they've been poor readers throughout childhood, so the figures give us a good idea of the child literacy rate.

So, the person you're thinking of teaching is one of millions of people who can't read properly. His or her problem is not caused by laziness or stupidity. And most illiteracy isn't caused by dyslexia, either. (See my *Problems: Dyslexia* ebook for more information.)

## What's causing the problem, then?

Use of the wrong teaching methods. The way most people were taught reading is so ridiculous that millions of sensible, intelligent, hard-working people can't learn to read. It's not their fault they can't read.

And I don't totally blame the teachers, either, because all they're doing is teaching the way they were taught to teach. I blame the professors who taught them, the governmental agencies that require teachers to teach faulty methods, and those making money from those faulty methods.

## So how can the problem be solved?

You're going to need to teach your child or student yourself. It's the only way to make sure the job is done properly.

I've found that parents and tutors have a far higher success rate at teaching reading - far better than the 50-60% success rate at schools!

This is probably due to a mixture of things:

- the peace and quiet at home (compared with all the distractions in a busy classroom);
- the far lower stress level at home and learning one-to-one;
- teaching one-to-one (The most effective way to teach someone in difficulty.);
- the freedom to adjust to how that student learns best;
- the flexibility of being able to work at it for however long it takes;
- the extra time parents and tutors have, that teachers just don't have;
- the greater kindness and patience shown by a parent or tutor;
- students' increased willingness to admit in private that they haven't understood something;
- the ability to go over material again and again, until the student really does understand it;
- willingness to skip work the student already knows e.g. the names of the alphabet letters. This reduces the frustration level hugely!;
- freedom to use a course that actually works, instead of being restricted to using material that doesn't work!

## And I've left the 2 most important reasons until last:

- parents who have been told their child is too dumb or lazy to learn to read are **MOTIVATED**. These parents will do whatever it takes to teach their child to read; **AND**
- parents and tutors often have an in-built understanding that words need to be sounded out (whereas many teachers have had that idea drummed out of them), and this helps parents and tutors persist - because they know this is how it works!

## How much time does this take?

It has taken most people:

15 minutes a day (about 1 page of work) each school day for a year. This might suit a small child.

30 minutes a day (2 pages of work) for 5 days a week for 20 weeks, or

60 minutes a day (4 pages) for 5 days a week for 10 weeks. This might suit a teenager or adult.

If other tutors and students can do this, so can you. It's no longer an impossible pipe dream for you and your student.

## Be realistic - What do you REALLY need to succeed?

In order to successfully teach reading you need:

- a course that makes sense to you and your student;
- the 'stickability' to do the work regularly and **with full attention**;
- the patience to be helpful and kind to your student; and
- a student who is willing to go back to the beginning and learn what reading really is.

You'll notice that a degree in Rocket Science is not on the list. In fact, in my experience, the more 'clever' a potential tutor, the less likely they are to succeed - because many very clever people focus on making everything complicated, instead of focusing on being helpful and kind and just sticking to the instructions!

The key to succeeding with my Courses is to follow the instructions, and contact me if you get stuck. It's that simple.



## The Course itself is very simple to understand, too

If you look at the *How Do I Start to Teach Phonics at Home?* ebook, you'll see just how simple teaching the first 90 words is. That's what the rest of the Reading Course looks like. It isn't designed to be entertaining; it's designed for speed and ease of use.

The Course is easy to understand and teach, and it's easy for your child or student to learn, too, because it makes sense.

## So now YOU can solve the problem!

With this Course, you have the information you need to teach your child or student how written English works.

Soon, your student will know more about how the alphabet works than his or her teacher! (I know that probably isn't hard to do, but it's still a massive confidence booster - for your student!) (Just a warning: Teachers don't appreciate having a student know more than they do!)

And I've got some bad news for you - If you teach your child to read with this Course, your home life may still not be easy, because students delight in knowing - make that **crowing** - because they know the rules better than their parents or tutors.

But as a past Prime Minister of Australia used to say, "Life wasn't meant to be easy!"

If you're still worried about whether you'd be able to do this, keep reading.

## Start your student on the road to success today!

You don't want this problem to get any worse. You know it won't fix itself.

Now you know you can solve the problem yourself. You can do it. It will take time, but you'll find it surprisingly easy.

You no longer have to WISH you knew how to solve the problem. Now you know what you need to do. And you and your child or student no longer have to rely on people who have failed them in the past.

You can FIX the problem yourself!

Give your child his or her confidence and pride back by teaching independent reading.

Give your students a future - the future they deserve, instead of the one that's staring them in the face.

And don't forget me. I'm here to help you if you get stuck. I've written a number of ebooks, so have a good look around my site. If I haven't included information about your particular concern, send me an email.

If my Course isn't the right one to solve that problem, I might be able to point you in the right direction.

*Mary*