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Reading Made Easy
with
Blend Phonics for
the First Grade

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Lesson Plans and
Teacher's Guide

Hazel Logan Loring

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WHY TEACH BLEND PHONICS?

It is my belief that most reading failures are caused by the perfectly normal and very common tendency of many children to look at words from right to left. That this tendency is not abnormal nor pathological is evidenced by the fact that many languages are written from right to left: Hebrew, Arabic, etc. Before the time of Homer, Greek inscriptions were written in the boustrophedon (pathway of the ox) form: one line from left to right; the next line from right to left. Oriental languages are written in a vertical manner. There is no "physiologically correct" or incorrect direction in which a language may have been developed.

When a child sees a word as a whole he or she has no way of knowing in which direction it should be looked at until the correct direction is shown. Each child will look at it in whatever direction his/her tendencies dictate. If the word is in English and the child looks at it from right to left, he/she is in BIG TROUBLE: "ten" is not the same as "net"; "pat" is not the same as "tap" and if instead of "fun" some children see "nuf" they are heading toward confusion.

It has been common practice to teach the word as a whole in the first grade and, then, later in the second grade, to introduce phonics in the form of word analysis. That is, the child is expected to break down the whole word into its component phonetic parts and thus deduce the relationships between phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (symbols).

This method can be reasonably successful if the child has a natural left to right tendency, is capable of deductive reasoning, and has memorized the whole word accurately. But what of the children of equal or even superior intelligence who have a natural right to left tendency? They cannot deduce correct phoneme/grapheme relationships because they are working from a false premise when they see the whole word in a reversed order. Even though they may have 20/20 vision they do not see what the teacher sees in the expected order. They hear the phonemes in a left to right order, while seeing the graphemes from right to left—or perhaps in a confused—direction. This explains why some people think of word analysis as "phony phonics," and why the confused child is thought to have a learning disability or "dyslexia."

To be fair, although most techniques in word analysis are useless for the children with directional problems—or may even add to the confusion—there is one technique that may be helpful, i.e., that of teaching the sound of the initial consonant as part of the whole word. As long as care is taken to be sure that each child looks at the *first* letter in the word as the sound is heard, the children will be able to learn the consonant sounds. **BUT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH.** They must also learn the vowel sounds and it is imperative that they be given early directional training.

I have a daughter who for more than eleven years has taught remedial reading in an urban adult education institute. High school graduates, who have diplomas but who cannot read at a second grade level, come to her for tutoring. She tells me that most of them know the consonant sounds, but they cannot learn to read until after they have had training in blend phonics.

Directional guidance is inherent in the system of blend phonics. First we show the student the initial consonant in isolation and teach its sound. (True, we

cannot pronounce the pure sound in isolation but must add a neutral vowel - or schwa - sound. However, this is of no importance because the schwa sound will be elided when we make the blend.) Next we show the student the vowel grapheme and teach its sound. *Then we blend the two sounds together* before adding the next consonant. There is no way for the child to go except from left to right, and with enough practice an automatic left to right habit is acquired. Then, to insure comprehension, it has been my practice to have the student use the completed word in a *verbal* sentence.

Directional guidance is also inherent in spelling and writing. They are the other side of the same coin and much practice should be given in all three skills: spelling, writing and reading, reading and more reading.

There is nothing new about the material that we use in teaching blend phonics. It can all be found in "A Guide to Pronunciation" in the front of any dictionary. Take a look at it and you'll say, "Wow, teach that to first graders? Impossible!!" It is not surprising that some anti-phonics persons say that it cannot be done. The trick is to present these seemingly complicated facts in a simplified, streamlined, bare bones version that can be assimilated by a six-year old or younger. There are bound to be differences of opinion as to the order in which the facts should be presented, and also as to which grapheme/phoneme relationships occur with sufficient frequency to be considered "regular," and which are so rare as to be called "irregular." Even pronunciations may vary due to geographical and ethnic differences.

English is a wondrous and varied means of communication, but at heart it is simple and consistent. In first grade we must teach the *heart* of the subject and not get bogged down with linguistic niceties. In this way we can provide the *basic* tool that a person can develop and expand all through life to enjoy a means of communication to express the most complex thoughts and feelings, and to understand those of fellow human beings.

I found I could provide this tool adequately in its simplest form to my school children in daily half-hour sessions in the first semester of the first grade. By starting in September, children have gained a working knowledge of the 44 phonetic elements in the English language and an overall concept of its basic structure before winter vacation. While their knowledge may not be 100% perfect, it will be sufficient so that they can, with the teacher's continuing help as needed, utilize the phonic key to unlock 85% of the words in the English language. (The other 15%, while largely regular, contain phonetic irregularities which sometimes require a little extra help from the teacher.)

The format of these lessons consists in taking a regular word and building it up phonetically as a class exercise. Then a child is called on to use it in a sentence. At first it is sometimes practically necessary to put the words in the child's mouth until it is understood what is meant by making up a sentence. As soon as the child catches on, the lessons become lively and spirited. The children are eager to participate. (When I inadvertently failed to give a child a turn, I heard about it!)

It was something like "Show and Tell" without the "Show." Instead of using a "Show" object as an inspiration for conversation, we used the key word which we had built up phonetically. Actually it was a language lesson as well as a reading lesson because the children learned to speak in complete, correct sentences. The context was limited only by the children's speaking vocabularies

and was not confined to sentences like, "Go, go, run, run, see, see" or like "A fat cat sat on a mat."

I recall one instance when we had sounded out the word "mill." To avoid missing anyone, ordinarily I called on the children in turn, but this time I simply had to break the rule to call on the little fellow who was waving his hand frantically and just bursting to tell us something. He blurted out, "My daddy has a sawmill." Now that's what I call reading with comprehension!

True, we read only one word at a time but it was always phonetically regular and there was no guesswork. By the time we had completed the 44 Units, the children had the feeling of security that comes from knowing that the language was basically an ordered, dependable system. As we came to words in our books that contained irregularities, they were welcomed as something surprising, unique, different and thus easy to remember.

It is possible to teach this work from the chalkboard, but it means that the teacher is half turned away from the class. An overhead projector is ideal because the lighted area holds the children's attention and, since the teacher faces the class directly, there is better control and more eye contact.

As to textbooks with which to implement this study, it would no doubt be easier for the teacher who is using blend phonics for the first time if phonics-based texts were available, correlated more or less with the structured phonics lessons. However, I can vouch from both tutoring and actual classroom experience that any books—old or new—can be used if they are of interest to the children and suitable for their age level. A few problems may be encountered in the first four months if the books have words that contain phonetic elements that have not as yet been introduced in the structured phonics lessons, but it is not too difficult to muddle through this phase. After the children have been exposed to the 44 phonetic elements, they can tackle anything with a little help from their teacher. Frequently, delighted parents reported to me that their children were reading from newspapers and magazines and were devouring library books at a great rate.

In the second semester we used much enrichment material. All of the children belonged to our Book Club. They took home books that they selected during regularly scheduled visits to the school library. My Room Mother arranged to have a volunteer mother sit in the hallway outside the classroom two afternoons a week. The children were excused from the classroom one by one to give brief book reports to the mother who added a star to the child's bookmark for each book read.

Blend phonics is just about the easiest lesson to teach that can be imagined. No preparation is needed (except to have at hand a copy of the groups of words as given in the LESSON PLANS); no papers to correct for this phase of the reading lesson; no compulsory tests to be given. The children themselves do most of the work by making up sentences, and thus they learn by doing. It's easy; it's inexpensive and it works!

LESSON PLANS FOR THE TEACHING OF BLEND PHONICS IN FIRST GRADE

Do not delay teaching the names of the letters of the alphabet. They are not only necessary in spelling and in the use of the dictionary, the telephone directory and alphabetical filing systems, but they will help in teaching the sounds. The sounds of many consonants are heard in the letters' names and the long sounds of the vowels **a, e, i, o** and **u*** are identical to their names.

(NOTE: Because the soft sounds of the letters **c** and **g** are heard in these letters' names and thus are easier to teach, we introduce the hard sounds first and provide plenty of opportunity to practice them. Also we make sure the student is familiar with the short sounds of vowels before we present the easy-to-teach long sounds.)

The vowels are **a, e, i, o, u** and sometimes **y**. If a letter is not a vowel, then it is a consonant.

In our first lessons in blend phonics (or word building) we teach the sound of a consonant, then the short sound of a vowel. The child is taught to look at these letters **from left to right** (IMPORTANT) as they are presented to him one by one and as the sound is blended. Then we add another consonant to form a word which the child uses in a **verbal** sentence to insure comprehension.

It is true that, when we pronounce the sound of a consonant in isolation, it is necessary to add an extraneous neutral (or schwa) sound. This is of no importance because, when the consonant is blended with the vowel, the schwa sound is elided. For example:

b says **b-uh**

a says **ă**

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

The **uh** sound has disappeared.

The great advantage of this technique is the fact that the child has received directional guidance and has been taught, step by step, to look at the word from **left to right**. This is extremely important because many children have a normal, natural tendency to look at words from right to left. When shown the word as a whole they may not see what the teacher sees. If shown the word **ten** the child may see **n-e-t**. Such reversals cause serious confusion when the child is shown whole words as is the case in the look-say method which incorporates no detailed directional guidance.

After you make the blend, **ba**, add the letter **t** to form the word **bat**. Have the child make up a verbal sentence using the word **bat**. If necessary, use leading questions to help the child think of a sentence. For example:

TEACHER: If you have a ball, what do you do with the bat?

CHILD: I hit the ball with the bat.

Use this format to teach each of the words in Unit 1 for the short sound of **a**. Then introduce the short sound of **i** and teach the children to sound out as many of the words given in Unit 2 as are necessary for good practice. Choose the words that will be most interesting to the class and, of course, **let the children take turns using each word in a verbal sentence**. Continue in the same manner with short **o**, short **u** and short **e**. Short **e** may give some difficulty because the sound of this letter is easily confused with the short sound of **i**. (We have all heard some people say "git" for "get" and "ingine" for "engine.")

**u has two long sounds. One is the same as its name; the other is like long oo.*

When teaching this work to an individual, use a chalkboard, slate or paper and pencil. For teaching a class, a chalkboard is adequate but an overhead projector is ideal because the teacher is able to face the class directly.

You will notice that the units, if taught in the order given, are cumulative. That is, only one new phonetic element (or related group of elements) is introduced in grapheme/phoneme relationship(s) plus those that were used in the previous units. The work proceeds step by easy step. It is not obligatory to teach phonics in this particular order but this presentation is one that has proved successful over the years.

When your students have completed all 44 units they will have been introduced to all of the regular phonetic elements in the English language. They will then have the tools with which they can sound out 85% of all words. Most children will need help in implementing this basic knowledge in actual reading and may need help in identifying the graphemes in a word. For example, when the student comes to the word, **teaching**, it may be necessary to help break it down into its phonetic components: **t-ea-ch-ing**. Often it takes only a quiet hint: (**ea** sounds like long **e**) to give the child the clue needed.

To help students with the 15% of words that contain phonetic irregularities, consult your dictionary. Write the word as it is given in parentheses following the correct spelling in the dictionary. For example said (sed). Although students must learn the correct spelling, they can sound out the word as it is given in parentheses.

Phonetic irregularities occur most frequently in short, commonly used words. As the child reads more advanced material the phonic training will become increasingly useful and the child can achieve independence in reading unfamiliar words.

The basic work should be presented to a class in one semester (Sept.-Dec.) in half-hour periods daily in the first grade. Where large groups of words are given (as in Units 2, 6, 13, 14, etc.) choose **only** the words that will be most interesting. **You do not need to teach all of them**. Large word lists have been included to demonstrate how the phonics system provides the key to unlock unlimited numbers of words ... unlike the narrow capabilities of the "controlled vocabularies" associated with the look-say method.

It is helpful to lay out a schedule at the beginning of the semester, allotting certain time periods in which to present words from a given number of units. The objective would be to introduce all of the units before winter vacation. Remember that this formal introduction is merely the foundation. It starts the child off right by giving strong directional guidance and an overall understanding of the phonetic structure of the language. **It must be accompanied by—and followed by—much practice in writing and reading of books.**

If one is adapting this material to individual work—rather than a class—it is well to plan on at least 50 hours in which the basic units are supplemented by exercises in writing and practice in reading.

Phonics-based textbooks are useful—especially for those who are teaching phonics for the first time. However, the lack of such textbooks is no excuse for the failure to teach the material in these Lesson Plans. Any sort of book may be used. The writer has done it successfully using the only books at hand: look-say basal readers! When words are encountered which contain sounds that have not as yet been taught in formal phonics lessons, they may be offered as whole words or better still, if the teacher feels up to it, may be presented as a "pre-view" of what is to come in the formal sessions.

The writer knows from actual classroom experience that, even though the textbook material is not coordinated with the structured phonics lessons, the problem will solve itself when, in a few weeks' time, the class has completed the 44 units in these Lesson Plans. Don't make a big issue of it. Be patient, pleasant and adaptable during textbook reading lessons but, on the other hand, do not let anything interfere with the daily half-hour formal phonics sessions. At the end of the first semester, with the guidance and assistance of the teacher and with supplementary work in writing and spelling, the children will be able to sound out words in any reading material suitable to their age level.

If millage failures and tight budgets—or the prejudice of school administrators or supervisors—preclude the possibility of new phonics-based textbooks, don't despair. Remember how many persons in history learned to read with only the Bible or Pilgrim's Progress for textbooks and, though Abraham Lincoln never saw a basal reader, he achieved mastery of the English Language.

Do plan a tentative schedule before you begin to teach this material. The 44 units in these Lesson Plans should be completed in about four months. Do not linger over any one unit. Do not expect the student to know perfectly the sound in one unit before you go on to the next. After all, this material is arranged to provide a continuing "built-in" review. For example, if you are teaching the word "toothbrush" in Unit 30, the only new sound is that of long oo. The other sounds, t, th, b, r, u and sh are review elements. When all 44 units have been completed, don't worry if the student has not learned thoroughly every phonetic element that has been presented in this preliminary work. From now on, every time the student reads any written matter whatsoever it will constitute a review of the material in these Lesson Plans. It is to be expected that the student will need help and reminders for some time after the four months of initial instruction is completed. The more practice the student has in reading, the sooner complete mastery of phonic skills will be achieved.

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			UNIT 1	UNIT 1	UNIT 1	
	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 2	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	
	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 5	
	UNIT 6	UNIT 6	UNIT 6	UNIT 7	UNIT 8	
	UNIT 9	UNIT 10	UNIT 11			

Here is a blank calendar for four months on which to write in the units on the days you plan to teach.

SAMPLE

SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

FIRST MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

SECOND MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

THIRD MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

FOURTH MONTH

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

Now you are ready for the first lesson. You have before you groups of words to guide you but, remember, these are the mere skeletons of your lessons. It is your task to inspire the children to put flesh on the bones and to breathe life into them. Here is a sampling of a proven teaching method:

THE TEACHER SAYS:

The name of this letter is **b**.
It says **b-uh**.

The name of this letter is **a**.
Its short sound is **ă**

Blend **b-uh** and **ă** and they say **bă**

Now we'll add the letter **t** that says **t-uh**.

What is the word?
(Pronounce it with the class.)

CLASS: bat

I'll draw a picture of a bat.

Johnny, if you have a ball, what do you do
with the bat?

JOHNNY: I hit the ball with the bat.

Good, let's sound out another word.
This word also starts with **b** that says **b-uh**.

The next letter is **a** that says **ă**

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

Now we'll add the letter **g** that says
(hard sound of **g**)

What is the word? (Pronounce the word
bag with the class). I'll draw a picture of a **bag**.

Mary, in what does your mother carry
groceries home from the store?

MARY: She carries them home in a bag.

That's fine. You have read two words this
morning. Let's sound another word.
b says **b-uh**

a says **ă**

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

Now we'll add **d** that says **d-uh**.
The word is? Class?

CLASS: bad

THE TEACHER WRITES:

b

a

ba

bat

b

a

ba

bag

b

a

ba

bad

Billy, a dog walked on mother's clean floor
with muddy paws. Was that good?

BILLY: No it was bad.

(NOTE: If Billy has a dog he will probably want to tell about something bad
that he did. Point to — and pronounce — the new word whenever it is used.)

Now we'll start the next word with
another letter. It's name is **c** and it has
more than one sound, but today we will
learn only the hard sound: **k-uh**

You remember **a**; it says **ă**.

Blend **k-uh** and **ă** together to make
ca.

Now we'll add the letter **p** that
says **p-uh**.

The word, class, is?

CLASS: cap

Donald, what do you wear on your head?

DONALD: I wear a cap.

Continue in this fashion. After you have finished Unit 1, you need not try to
teach *all* of the words in the longer units. Choose the words you think will be
most interesting to the children. Stay on your schedule so that the work will be
completed in about four months.

It is important that each child has a turn making up a sentence. This is the
"bait" that is used to hold the children's attention. They will not realize that
they are sounding out "lists of words" because they will be so intent in
expressing their own thoughts as they incorporate the "key" words in sentences.

If anyone is bashful or slow in responding, gently ask leading questions to draw
the child out. Don't be afraid to improvise. Talk about the "key" words as much
as is needed. Then ask the child to tell you something about it even if, at first,
the response consists only of a parrot version of your ideas. The children will
soon have their own delightful, original sentences. Of course, our purpose is to
encourage them to think of the meaning of the "key" words. A six-year old
child's verbal vocabulary is said to consist of 5,000 - 10,000 words or more.
These lessons provide a means of exercising that vocabulary and developing a
reading vocabulary at the same time.

UNIT 1

SHORT SOUND OF a

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

UNIT 2

SHORT SOUND OF i

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

UNIT 3

SHORT SOUND OF o

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

UNIT 4

SHORT SOUND OF u

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

UNIT 5

SHORT SOUND OF e

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

UNIT 6

FINAL CONSONANT BLENDS (Short sounds only of vowels)

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

UNIT 7

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: sh

cash	hush	shelf	shot
dish	shall	ship	shut
fish	shed	shop	

UNIT 8

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: th (Voiced)

than	them	this	with
that	then	thus	

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: th (Unvoiced)

bath	thick	thump
thin	thud	

UNIT 9

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: ch, tch

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

UNIT 10

CONSONANT DIGRAPH: wh

BLEND **wa** SOUNDS LIKE **wō**
wha SOUNDS LIKE **whō**

want	watch	which	whisk
was	what	whiff	
water	when	whip	

UNIT 11

ng (ang, ing, ong, ung)

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

UNIT 12

nk (ank, ink, onk, unk)

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

UNIT 13

INITIAL CONSONANT BLENDS:

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

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

UNIT 14

WHEN THE FINAL e IS SILENT, THE VOWEL IS USUALLY LONG
(long sound of vowel is the same as its name):

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

UNIT 15

PHONOGRAMS USING LONG VOWELS:
old, olt, ost, ild, oth, oll, ind

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

UNIT 16

SHORT WORDS ENDING IN A LONG VOWEL:

be	he	no	she
go	me	so	we

UNIT 17

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

ENRICHMENT REVIEW

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

UNIT 18

PHONOGRAM: ar

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

UNIT 19

PHONOGRAM: or

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

UNIT 20

PHONOGRAMS: er, ir, ur and sometimes or

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

UNIT 21

VOWEL DIGRAPH: ai, ay

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

UNIT 22

VOWEL DIGRAPH: ee

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

UNIT 23

VOWEL DIGRAPH: ea

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

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

UNIT 24

VOWEL DIGRAPH: ie

(two phonemes: long i and long e)

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

UNIT 25

FINAL VOWEL: y

(Some dictionaries give it the sound of short i; others say long e. Take your choice.) Long i in one syllable words.

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

UNIT 26

VOWEL DIGRAPH:

oa, oe, (like long o)

boat	load	roast	Joe
boast	loaf	soapy	toe
coat	road		toes
coach	soap	foe	woe
coast	soak	goes	
goat	toad	hoe	
float	throat	hoed	

UNIT 27

DIGRAPH: ow

(like long o)

DIPHTHONG: ow

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

UNIT 28

DIPHTHONG:: ou

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

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

UNIT 29

DIPHTHONGS: oy, oi

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

UNIT 30

LONG SOUND OF oo

boot	moon	stoop	foolish
booth	roof	spoon	smooth
bloom	loose	spool	teaspoon
coo	room	shoot	noonday
cool	proof	too	toothbrush
boost	mood	tool	scooter
droop	gloom	tooth	papoose
food	noon	troop	tooting
groom	soon	coolness	school
goose	roost	zoo	
doom	stool	cooler	

UNIT 31

SHORT SOUND OF oo

book	good	hood	shook
booklet	foot	look	wool
cook	footstep	looking	wood
crook	goodness	soot	wooden
brook	hoof	took	woolen
cooker	hook	stood	footstool

UNIT 32

VOWEL DIGRAPHS: aw, au

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

UNIT 33

PHONOGRAMS: al, all

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

UNIT 34

DIGRAPHS: ew, ue

blew	flew	news	flue
brew	threw	pew	glue
chew	dew	stew	true
crew	few		due
drew	mew	blue	hue
grew	new	clue	Sue

UNIT 35

UNACCENTED a AT THE BEGINNING OF A WORD. ALSO THE WORD a WHEN NOT USED FOR EMPHASIS:

a	ajar	around	asleep
about	alike	arose	astir
adrift	ahead	apart	awake
afar	amuse	aside	awhile

UNIT 36

PHONOGRAMS: ul, ull, ush
(u SOUNDS LIKE SHORT oo)

careful	full	fullback	put
pull	push	full moon	
bull	bush	fulfill	

UNIT 37

SOFT SOUND OF c

(before e, i and y) Usually sounds like s: sometimes like sh.

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

UNIT 38

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

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

UNIT 39

SILENT gh AND gh SOUNDS LIKE f

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

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

UNIT 40

SILENT k, w, t, b and l

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

UNIT 41

se SOUNDS LIKE z

choose	noise	please	those
chose	nose	rose	wise
cheese	pause	rise	as
ease	pose	tease	has
because	praise	these	is

UNIT 42

ph SOUNDS LIKE f

elephant	prophet	phonograph	telegraph
nephew	pamphlet	phone	
orphan	photograph	telephone	

UNIT 43

FINAL le, tion, sion

battle	handle	attention	partition
bundle	puzzle	action	portion
bottle	scramble	addition	station
buckle	scribble	affection	section
circle	sprinkle	invitation	
little	struggle	foundation	expression
middle	tickle	education	impression
pickle	wiggle	mention	mission
sample		nation	

UNIT 44

ed WITH SHORT e

added	ended	painted	waited
acted	folded	planted	
counted	landed	printed	
crowded	lighted	rested	

ed SOUNDS LIKE 'd

aimed	changed	saved	stayed
burned	filled	rained	turned
called	named	rolled	

ed SOUNDS LIKE t

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

CONSONANTS and VOWELS

A SUMMARY of PHONETIC SOUNDS

Our alphabet has 26 letters.

Each letter has one name, and one or more sounds.

The consonants are all the letters, except a, e, i, o, u.

Consonants: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z. Vowels: a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y (which is sometimes a vowel and sometimes a consonant).

Most single consonants have only one sound.

Example: the "b" sound you hear in "baby"

Exceptions: "c" has a **hard sound "k"** (as in "cat") and a **soft sound "s"** when followed by e, i, or y (as in "cent, city, fancy")
 "g" has a **hard sound "g"** (as in "go") and sometimes a **soft sound "j"** when followed by e, i, or y (as in "age, ginger, gym")

In a **consonant blend** you hear the sounds of two or three consonants blended together.

Example: Single consonant	rap
Consonant blend with two consonants	trap
Consonant blend with three consonants	strap

In a **consonant digraph** you do not hear the separate sounds of the consonants, but you do hear a new sound. (Most consonant digraphs are a consonant followed by an "h.")

Example: ch - church	th - that	ph - phone
sh - shop	wh - when	gh - laugh

Some letters are **silent**, that is do not have any sound in the word.

Example: Silent consonant "b" - comb. Silent vowel "e" - dat.

Every word has one or more **syllables**. A syllable is a "beat" in the word.

This symbol ' means the syllable is **accented**, or has the **heavy beat**.

Example: un' der be gin' in for ma' tion

Every syllable has a **vowel sound**. The vowels are a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y.

("y" is usually a consonant when it is the first letter in the word, as in "yes," but a vowel when it is in the middle or at the end, as in "gym" or "my")

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

A single vowel usually has the **short sound** (- means short).

Example: ädd, ēxit, ìt, òn, ùp

A single vowel may have the **long sound** (= means long).

The long sound is the same as the **name** of the vowel.

Example: dāte, mē, Ī, gō, ūse

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

Example: gōt

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

Example: gō

Silent "e" at the end of the word usually makes the vowel before it **long**.

Example: āte, Pēte, rīde, hōpe, tūbe

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

Example: ēe - tree ai - rain ie - pie oa - road ue - blue
 ea - eat ay - day oe - Joe ui - suit

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

Example: oo - moon oo - book au - Paul

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

Examples: oi - oil oy - boy ou - out

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

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

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

Example: aw - saw ow - cow ew - new
 ow - slow

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

The symbol "ə" stands for the **schwa sound**, that is the sound of the **unaccented short "u."**

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

Example: about, elephant, politics, ebony, crocus

Other common letter combinations using the vowels are:

āng - sāng	ānk - bānk	all - ball	ōlt - bōlt	īnd - fīnd
īng - sīng	īnk - pīnk	alt - salt	ōll - rōll	īld - chīld
ōng - sōng	ōnk - hōnk	a/k - walk	ōld - cōld	
ūng - sūng	ūnk - jūnk			

ti, si, ci can say "sh"

Example: nation, tension, special

TO THE TEACHER

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

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

HAZEL LOGAN LORING

(1902-1983)

Born in Massachusetts in 1902, Hazel Loring viewed the recent history of reading instruction from the unique perspective of one who taught under both the phonics and the "whole word" methods.

After attending what is now the University of Massachusetts for two years, she had her first experience teaching phonics in 1923-24. While raising a family of three children, she maintained a keen interest in reading problems and later returned to the teaching profession. Mrs. Loring earned her B.S. in Education from Wayne State University, received her Michigan State Permanent Elementary Certificate, and taught a first grade classroom in Oscoda, Michigan for ten years from 1960 to 1970.

As a retired teacher she joined the Reading Reform Foundation and served as its Michigan Chairman. She was a member of NRTA and a Retired Member of NEA.

Hanna

VOWEL SOUND CHART

I-6.1

The "igh" as in light, night, etc., is best taught as "3-letter long i." The numbers in parentheses are the numbers of English words in which each vowel pattern appeared at the time the list was created. Note that the "ough" which anti-phonics people complain about is involved in only 37 words, a mere "drop in the bucket" which should not be used as an excuse for failing to teach the useful patterns of the alphabetic system in general.

Vacation came on a rainy day,
so eight great reindeer
would not obey!

	A	E	I	O	U
SHORT VOWELS	a__ (apple) (4656)	e__ (Eddie) (4403) ea__ (bread) (156)	i__ (Italy) (6368)	o__ (operate) (hot dog) (3241) wa__ (want) (92) -a__ (fa la la)	u__ (uppercut) (1545) o__ (month) (136)
LONG VOWELS	a__e (make) (1023)	c__e (here) (92)	i__e (like) (878)	o__e (hope) (424)	u__e (cute) (338)
	-ay (play) (143)	-e (he) (7)	y__e (type) (23)	-o (go) (148)	-ew (new) (66)
	ai__ (rain) (308)	ee (see) (307)	-y (my) (128)	-oe (toe) (15)	-ue (true) (43)
	ei__ (they) (19)	ea (eat) (325)	-ie (pie) (11)	-ow (slow) (130)	ui__ (fruit) (16)
	-ey (their) (51)	ie__ (piece) (77)	-igh (night) (88)	oa__ (boat) (132)	eu__ (neutral) (39)
	-igh (great)	i before a vowel (radio) (1719)	-ind (kind)		
	(eight)	-y (happy) (1628)	-ild (child)		
	(vacation)	-ie (movie) (18)	-ign (sign)		
VOWELS CHANGED BY R OR L	-ar (car) (606)	-er (her) (206) (jerk)	-ir (sir) (girl) (114)	-or (fox) (718) (fork)	-ur (fur) (247) (turn)
	-all (ball) (96)	ear__ (heard) (32)		-oll (roll) (84)	our__ (journey) (49)
	-alt (salt)			-old (cold)	our out your soup!
	-alk (walk)			war (warm) (79)	
OTHER VOWEL SOUNDS	-aw (jaw) (77)	long oo (too) (shoot) (187)	short oo (book) (116)	-ow (cow) (122) Snow plow, slow cow ou__ (out) (279)	-oy (boy) (53)
	au__ (August) (169)		u__ (put) (150)	oi__ (noise) (109)	

The Hanna Vowel Sound Chart, though not 100% perfect in settling all arguments, is thoughtfully organized and the most comprehensive guide in compact form. It focuses on vowel sounds, for example, in the second part of the first column in the group with "long a" sounds you will find -ey as in "they" and ei- as in "their." The ai- and ei- frequently write the long a sound within a word; the ay and -ey write the long a sound at the end of a word. Similarly in the last box, bottom right, "oy" and "oi" are used to write the same sound blend, but -oy is used at the end of a word, -oi- is used within a word.

ough is wild (though, through, thought, enough) (37)

Her first nurse works early!

Note from Internet Publisher: Donald L. Potter

April 23, 2015

This edition of Hazel Logan Loring's 1980 *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade* is presented here for historical interest. This is the copy that Mr. Charlie Richardson sent me several years before he passed away. He told me that he had given away zillions of copies.

Since first retyping the program in May of 2003 for publication on the www.donpotter.net website, I have made minor modification to the program for use with my private tutoring students and my tutoring students at the Odessa Christian School in Odessa, Texas.

The main changes are the addition of regular Dolch List sight-words – so called - in their proper pace in the phonics sequence. All but 37 of the 220 Dolch List Word are taught with phonics in my edition of *Blend Phonics*. The 37 words are listed at the end of Unit 45. I added unit 45 so the kids would have practice with long vowels in open syllables. I developed the Table of Contents and Progress Charts. None of the changes in anyway affect the basic program. Anyone who inspects the original program here with my published program can verify for himself or herself that none of my change affect the essential nature of the original program.

A beautiful paperback edition of *Blend Phonics* are available from my CreateSpace Store. This edition contains my *Blend Phonics Fluency Drills*. It can also be purchased from Amazon or Barnes and Nobles.

<https://www.createspace.com/4306673>

The free pdf version is available at www.blendphonics.org.

For those who would like decodable stories for the kids to read, I have published *Blend Phonics Lessons and Stories*. This book follows the Mrs. Loring's scope and sequence. It contains stories with comprehension questions and spelling words. I teach the original program from the chalkboard and then send this book home for the children to practice reading the Lessons and Stories to their parents. The children love the stories, and their parents are delighted to listen to their children read the stories again at home. This helps to build fluency. It can be ordered from Amazon or Barnes and Nobles.

The following pages include material I have been able to collect from my research into Mrs. Loring's method. I think everyone will find it interesting.

Says a retired campaigner:

Intensive phonics is the only way to go

By Mrs. Hazel Loring

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Article by Kathryn Diehl on Loring’s *Blend Phonics*

The Barbara M. Morris Report

May 1983

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

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

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

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

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

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

This page last edited: 2/18/06.

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

Dear First Grade Teacher:

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,
(signed)
Hazel Logan Loring

In Tribute to Hazel Loring

by Mr. Lloyd Loring

South Bend, Indiana

(Son of Hazel Loring)

I thank you very much for coming and for helping us, our family and her friends, to honor the memory of Hazel Loring. I'm one of three Loring children. Also here this evening is my older sister Jean Mehienbacher and her husband Skip. They are residents of Grand Marais, MI. Jean works at the local school and she's a feature columnist for perhaps the most intriguingly-named bi-monthly in Michigan, **The Grand Mara: Pilot and Pictured Rocks Review**. I also want to introduce my younger sister, Pat Lent and her husband, Doug Lent. Pat teaches reading (what else?) to disadvantaged adults in Detroit at the Urban Adult Education Institute. This is a Central City organization. She has created her own phonics instruction system to deal with the very special problems of older non-readers and both Pat and Doug are very active in the nuclear freeze movement. Their daughter, Jody Lent, is also here, and she represents the *next* generation of phonics teachers: She teaches in Brooklyn (special education) and also was inspired by my mother's example and success. As for me. I'm an advertising writer and I live in South Bend, IN.

While for many of you Hazel Loring was this powerful booklet that I'm sure most of you have seen, to the three of us she was, and always will be, a whole lot more. You know, it's quite possible that I, or perhaps my sisters and I, provided the inspiration that led her to this long-standing devotion to phonics.

Let me tell you the (probably apocryphal) story about my reading prowess that Mom was so fond of repeating: It happened back when I was not yet in school. She had asked me to get some butter from the ice box (this was a long time ago) and as I dawdled over to her I asked, in all innocence, "Does butter come from bulls?" She replied, "Of course not, but why do ask?" "Because it says right here, 1 BL., 1 bull," sounding out the abbreviation for pound in reverse, in my best 4-year-old phonics! Well, needless to say. Mom never let up on my phonics training, nor on the directional training she felt was so important to developing good reading skills ... talk about INTENSIVE phonics, we had it! As a result, all three of us became avid readers ... an ability which has been vitally important all our lives.

I can tell you that my problems with reversals were no "bull." As a matter of fact, they still are — and are very real. At the office they can't understand why I go through more correction tape than typewriter ribbon. Imagine what might have happened with that kind of problem if I had been born in another era — say this one — without a "phonics fanatic" for a mother! I can just hear the sober, seemingly-authoritative pronouncements of dyslexia, non-cognitive learning disability (I think I just invented that one) and all the rest. If I had been relegated to the ranks of a poor reader (rather than considered as a victim of faulty instruction techniques), I might not now be earning my living with words and ideas. Who knows?

Because our family had to move quite often during our formative years, reading became a treat and a solace when we found ourselves as "the — new kids on the block " time after

time, in town after town. But we made friends with books very early in life, and these were friends that never let us down, never failed to expand our horizons and our knowledge of the real world — and the fantasy world of imagination.

Because we DID get our phonics at home in full measure, based on what Hazel had learned in her first years of teaching school back East. You know, she also ran into anti-phonics way back then — and that was 60 years ago! The new methods were all the rage in the '20s. It seems that “new” is an even more important word in the lexicon of the educational theorist than it is in the far more primitive art of advertising. Maybe we should take a cue from my field — advertising — and insist that the Federal Trade Commission look over their shoulders when they say “new and improved” ... just to be certain they can document their claims.

Well, Hazel resisted those “new” look-say methods which were based on the novel (at that time) precepts of Gestalt psychology. The Gestalt explanation of why kids don't need to learn their letters was based on the idea that anyone could recognize a chair. You didn't have to know that it had rungs, and a seat, and legs. You didn't have to know those names ... It's a chair. So why should children need to know the parts of words? As best I can tell from reading the **Informer**, their ideas haven't really improved in the last six decades, and their success rate in teaching reading hasn't improved much either

For years Hazel was out of teaching, devoted to bringing up her family and instilling basic values in her children. But once they had grown, and after a series of personal crises, including several bouts with illness, she reevaluated her life, her own self worth, and her role in the world. She wasn't content to take just any job (although she did take some from time to time, but even so, it wasn't satisfying) and the vocation of teaching still called her. So she went back to college. But illness forced an end to that. Then she got an opportunity in the early '60s to teach in the small town of Oscoda, MI. This led to her re-enrolling at Wayne State University to get her full teaching credentials, although at first they turned her down. (They said she was too old to graduate and still teach.) Little did they know! Of course she was already a crackerjack teacher, according to her peers, her students, and their parents — just about everybody. But the state must be mollified and the bureaucracy must be sated. So, with fellow students easily young enough to be her children, she took the required courses and gained her teaching degree, often with her mouth tightly clamped to keep her from saying what she KNEW was right from classroom experience, especially when it came to reading instruction.

Lest you think that phonics was a monomania with Hazel, she was also a very talented gardener, and later an expert photographer, and not just snapshots, either. She had several 35mm cameras, and a complete darkroom where, as a grandmother, she learned to process her own color film and she made some exquisite color prints. She was not your typical grandmother (or maybe she was). Because my mother's life was just as messy, and non-linear as yours and mine, there were all kinds of other things to distract. These included several serious bouts with cancer that slowed but didn't stop her time and time again.

Mom spent a number of years teaching the first grade at Oscoda, and while she gave lip service to the official state-mandated curriculum for first graders, you can just bet she found ways to give her kids all the phonics they needed to get their reading skills off to a good start. This was actually the start of the book she was later to create. At first, it was just

notes to herself, typed up as a course of personal action to help her in tutoring the many older kids who failed to learn with the “look-say” method.

Which brings up a point that intrigues me. You know, it seems funny that so many students have difficulty, learning to read in the regular classroom, using the approved techniques, yet those same students, offered an alternative teaching technique in remedial classes, are virtually ALL able to learn at a rate far faster than can be taught in class: Yet this obvious demonstration of the worth of phonics used so often in remedial schools, seen over and over, completely escapes the theorists. They seem intent only on finding a new theory for a doctoral thesis, which hopes it can be turned into a book to supplement their income while adding to their prestige. Ah, the boundless mysteries of the academy!

Well, Mom did just fine at Oscoda. She was busy tutoring her special students and nurturing her first-graders into readers far before their time. As you know, she “bootlegged” phonics — right in the face of critical curriculum advisers. It was sort of a game, but a very serious one for Hazel. Eventually retirement ended her formal teaching career, and it was back to her garden and her photography and — of course — always her grandchildren. But that seemed not enough. She still had her notes on how to teach phonics in a hostile world; she still did some tutoring; and she had written a paper on the ocular mechanisms involved in reading, which she hoped to get judged fairly on its merits. And then she heard of the **Reading Reform Foundation**, and she met that remarkable lady, Bettina Rubicam.

Suddenly there was new purpose in her life. She could help LOTS of kids and parents deal with reading from her special vantage point. She became the Michigan Chairperson of RRF, and when people asked for help she gave it. So she sent out her hand-typed teaching guide, revising it as she got more and more feedback. And then, seeing the need, she sat down to recreate her method as a serious book intended to help first-grade teachers include blend phonics in any classroom.

She enrolled the whole family, even her neighbors, in this project. It seemed as if every phone call and every family gathering had to have at least 50 percent phonics content, at least if Morn was around. We all encouraged her in this project, and she got some very special help from my sister Pat, who was involved in a volunteer reading instruction program in the heart of downtown Detroit. So Pat helped Mom, and vice versa, with Pat’s effort finally escalating into a full-time job just as fruitful in its way as was Hazel’s work with the first grade.

As Pat can tell you, (and she’ll be here all this weekend for the various speeches and workshops) the techniques of reading instruction for small children are different from those for adults in many ways. Thus, some of those mother-daughter discussions were more like debates. But the goals were similar, the basis in phonics was identical, and those differing viewpoints helped both of them to clarify their own ideas and needs. And for Mom to see her work in phonics being carried out by her daughter in behalf of truly disadvantaged adults was a source of great pride and satisfaction for Hazel.

With Pat’s help and encouragement, and with Jean (my other sister) offering her assistance and support, the work went on. And, since I was an advertising man, I was the family expert on printing and production and became her editor and publisher. We worked together to refine the text, to double-check the word lists, and triple check the

typesetting. God forbid you should make a typo in a book about reading! It was sort of a one-family remote-control cottage-industry publishing empire, but with a major, and significant difference.

When you have a truly better mousetrap, not only does the world generally arrive at your doorstep, they'll usually pay handsomely for the privilege of entering. But Morn simply wouldn't let that happen to HER book. Not in the SLIGHTEST! It was her goal to get her book in the hands of every possible teacher, without the teacher spending a dime — not a penny! She believed that publication of a teaching aid such as this one **MUST NOT** be profit motivated, and that there was a basic conflict between teaching professionalism and publishing for profit. She carried this idea rather farther than is commonly accepted, because she felt that the push to sell more and newer texts back in the '20s had created the anti-phonics methods in the first place.

While hers may seem an idiosyncratic view to some; she held it firmly and honestly. She had only her retirement money for resources, so she turned to her friends and supporters for help in getting distribution for her book. She created a non-profit organization to receive the funds and urged others to form similar groups to distribute the book in other parts of the world. Meanwhile, she took on the job of getting her book into the hands of every first grade teacher in the state of Michigan ... and darned if she didn't do it!

Using her teacher's pension money as seed money, and with the special encouragement of Dr. Ralph W. Lewis, Professor Emeritus here at Michigan State, the work went forward with a most generous personal grant from Bettina Rubicam to Mom's **Logan Institute for Educational Excellence**. The organization was set up for the sole purpose of getting this book to the teachers. We found a print shop in South Bend, which gave up much of their profit to produce the book at the lowest possible cost, and we bought a mailing list of Michigan first grade teachers. When the booklets finally were printed, friends, neighbors, family all pitched in to attach the labels, seal the envelopes; stuff them, and all the rest. Special recognition should be give to Steve and Alice Mehienbacher (Steve is Mom's grandson) for their extraordinary efforts helping the **Logan Institute** to operate, and also to Mom's neighbor, Berlyn Hooper, who gave many hours to the project.

At last the books went into the mail, but that wasn't the end of the story. Feedback from classrooms and parents was exceptional, as Bettina has already suggested, with thank you notes and requests for extra copies from allover. With the help of the *Informer*, the word literally spread around the world. That brought requests for copies that far exceeded Mom's available funds for free distribution of the books, so she sent letters to all who asked, telling them how they could duplicate her non-profit organization locally to keep down the cost of distribution.

RRF received a goodly quantity of the books to distribute to those seeking classroom help in teaching phonics. These seemed to disappear like chocolate chip cookies just before dinnertime. Although health problems were escalating for Hazel, she never stopped in her efforts to help teachers learn about intensive blend phonics. At the Toronto Conference of the **Reading Reform Foundation** in July of 1982, Hazel Loring was awarded the *Watson Washburn Memorial Award* for her work. I can't tell you how moved she was by this honor. It was proof — if any was needed — that she **HAD** made a difference and that there was a very real value to her work.

Mother's final year was filled with pain, and long bouts in the hospital. But there were some highlights. Two were particularly notable. A young writer, Michael Betzold, learned of Mom's story from my sister Pat and wrote a marvelous story, which became the cover article for the February 13 issue of *DETROIT* magazine in the *Detroit Free Press* with distribution around the entire state. The article generated more thousands of requests for the booklet. By this time she was in the hospital for the final time and was resigned to the fact that her active days were over. Still she hung on long enough to hear about this article and the success of the book and the new wave of requests for teachers and parents from Michigan and adjoining states.

The second highlight for Mom was the receipt of a short note from Rudolf Flesch, thanking her for what she had done, and expressing the hope that a copy of her book could be put in the hands of every teacher and parent in the country. Although she was to pass away less than two months later, both the article and the letter put that indomitable twinkle back in her eye.

One other honor should also be mentioned: *The Michigan State Board of Education* passed a resolution on May 4, 1983, honoring Hazel Loring for her life-long dedication to education and for the publication of her book on blend phonics. All of these honors, while much appreciated, weren't the point to Hazel. She knew the importance of blend phonics, and she knew it worked in the classroom. She had a high regard and a respect for classroom teachers and no desire to be divisive. Instead, It was her goal to make it as easy and as positive as possible for good teachers to add the benefits of blend phonics to their curriculum. She was acutely aware of the infighting and the politics of education, and she would have none of it. A quiet end run around the establishment was fine with her if it could accomplish her goal of quality reading instruction. That would make her very happy.

There's one other point I'd like to mention. Forgive me, for I'm no educator, I'm not a reading specialist, not a researcher, not even a college graduate, much less a psychologist or any other kind of expert. However, that may give me an advantage in thinking through some of the problems and their solutions.

You see, my mother taught me to read using intensive blend phonics. While she knew she was teaching me reading in a manner that allowed me to go on successfully reading words I'd never seen before and perhaps even understand them without reaching for the dictionary, she was also teaching me (and my sisters) something else, and perhaps something even more basic.

There seems to be a strong trend amongst educational theorists to keep teachers from actively teaching. Teachers are supposed to be a passive background and a support system so that kids can learn how to learn on their own. No plans. No rules, No direction. And I say: BALDERDASH.

By learning to read with phonics, and its discipline, I was given an essential problem-solving tool that I've used all my life without even knowing it. I learned to start with the small, easily digested elements in order. Learned to recognize them on sight, and how to deal with them. But most important, I learned that these individual details can be assembled to make a meaningful whole. I could build a complete answer from each of these small problems as they came up. It sounds pretty simple, once you've been through the discipline of phonics.

While some reading instruction methods encourage guesswork, with rewards even if the answers aren't TOO wrong, it is a lousy preparation for life, over and above the problems of not knowing how to read. My clients don't pay me to guess. Or to be "sorta" right. Or not mostly wrong. Or even to just do the obvious. They expect me to be a master of language, not its slave. They give me the pieces of a marketing or sales problem, and they want logical, useful, and hopefully creative answers. While it would presume on your credibility to say phonics was the only key to success, I am here to tell you it did work for me. Perhaps far better than my mother ever dreamed. I want to publicly proclaim tonight, "Thanks, Mom!"

Finally, in some ways I suspect that my mother and Clara Peller could be sisters! Neither were fooled by fancy talk and big promises. Faced with the educational fast food menus of so many experts, Mom yelled at the top of her voice, "Where's the phonics?" And she's not alone. Thank you *ALL* for your help in opening the eyes of the world to the need for blend phonics for everyone. And thank you, Bettina, for all you've done and all you've meant to my mother. My sisters, myself, and our families are very proud to be with you tonight.



Hazel Logan Loring
(1905-1983)



Lloyd Loring, Jodi Lent, Pat Lent, and Jean Mehlenbacher. Lloyd, Pat and Jean are Hazel's children, and Pat is Jodi's mother.

Notes from Internet Publisher: Donald L. Potter

February 14, 2009

I found this wonderful tribute in *The Reading Informer*, Vol. 12, No. 1 – Sept.-Oct., 1984. The 23 Annual Reading Reform Foundation Conference Report, July 20-22, at East Lansing, Michigan. Thanks to Dr. Samuel Blumenfeld for sending me a box of *Reading Informers*, one of which contained this “Tribute.” I have been using Loring’s method since 2007 in my private tutoring and remedial reading work at the Odessa Christian School in Odessa, TX. I republished Loring’s *Blend Phonics* back in 2003. I am happy to report that many parents and teachers have downloaded it and are using it to help the children of American to learn to read the “Blend Phonics Way.” Below I will add material I have gleaned about Mrs. Loring and her method.

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

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

Further Note from Internet Publisher – Donald L. Potter

November 6, 2005 (Revised 8/30/08)

I first learned of Loring’s pamphlet from the 1997 article mentioned above by Robert W. Sweet. I immediately got a copy of Loring’s *Blend Phonics* from the *Interlibrary Loan*. That was in 1999. I was so impressed that I retyped it for Internet publication on May 28, 2003. Later Mr. Charlie Richardson sent me a copy along with his excellent instructional article, “The Alphabet Code & How It Works,” which I republished and provided with an mp3 audio instruction file. Mr. Richardson told he had mailed out a zillion copies of Loring’s work. There is also a “Table of Contents” at the end of this document.

I am delighted to report that the *Blend Phonics* has received many thousands of hits since I first published it on the Internet. It is my earnest prayer that every pre-service reading teacher, every reading supervisor, and every kindergarten, first and second grade teacher in America will receive the information contained in Hazel Loring’s 25-page booklet and apply its message so that there will be such a dramatic decrease in illiteracy in this country that the national media will be forced to take note. I use *Blend Phonics* extensively in my private tutoring practice. I have the students **spell the words orally** in each Unit after I have taught them to sound out the words with Loring’s blend phonics technique. Although the title says it is for first grade, I have used it with several adults with outstanding success. Loring’s daughter, Pat Lent, used it in adult education classes. It can be used with anybody who needs to learn to read - regardless of age.