

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer

242 Decodable Words

Five Timed Fluency Drills

242 Decoding Fluency Cards

To prepare young students for Step-One of

Blend Phonics Lessons and Stories

Or

Any Other Good Beginning Phonics Program

A Superior Phonics-First Approach

for Teaching Beginning Reading

with Built-in Dyslexia Prevention

By Donald L. Potter

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Blend Phonics Pre-Primer

Step 1: Short -a- n r f s (8 words)

Lesson 1: Mm (monkey)

Lesson 2: Aa (at) am

Lesson 3: Nn (nest) an, man, Nan

Lesson 4: Rr (rabbit) ran, ram

Lesson 5: Ff (fan) fan

Lesson 6: Ss (saw) Sam

Step 2: Short -e- t l g c k ck b (37 words)

Lesson 7: Ee (ed) men

Lesson 8: Tt (top) mat, set, ten, met, sat, at, tan, Nat, net, fat, rat

Lesson 9: Ll (lead) let

Lesson 10: Gg (goat) rag, gas, tag, get, sag, gag, leg, nag

Lesson 11: Cc (can) can, cab, cat

Lesson 12: Kk & ck (key) keg, tack, lack, sack, rack, Mack

Lesson 13: Bb (bear) Ben, bag, Tab, bat, beg, bet, back

Step 3: Short -i- h d p (69 words)

Lesson 14: Ii (ish) bit, tin, bib, big, sit, in, fit, fin, fig, rib, rim, it, tick, if

Lesson 15: Hh (horn) hat, hit, hem, ham, him, hen, hack, hick

Lesson 16: Dd (duck) red, hid, sad, rid, had, did, lad, mad, den, led, mid, din, lid,
bed, dig, fed, bad, dim, kid, kit, nod, deck

Lesson 17: Pp (pig) tap, map, pin, tip, lap, pig, pen, rip, lip, pet, rap, cap, pat, sip,
dip, pit, sap, hip, nap, pan, peg, pad, pun, pack, pick

Step 4: Short -ǒ- j w (37 words)

Lesson 18: Oo (op) log, rod, got, fog, pot, cob, hop, rob, not, lop, hot, sod, top,
pod, lot, dot, cot, cod, on, dock, tock, lock, sock

Lesson 19: Jj (jug) jam, jet, jig, jug, jog, jot, Jack

Lesson 20: Ww (wagon) wag, wig, wit, wet, web, win, wick

Step 5: Short -ǔ- z x qu v y (53 words)

Lesson 21: Uu (uck) gum, pug, run, hum, bun, fun, tug, gun, bug, tub, sun, hub,
cut, rub, hut, jut, mud, bud, rug, sup, up, hug, cup, but, pup,
nut, us, duck, buck, luck, suck

Lesson 22: Zz (zebra) zap zip,

Lesson 23: Xx (xox) ax, box, six, mix, fix, tax, Max, ox, fox

Lesson 24: Qq qu (queen) quit, quack, quick

Lesson 25: Vv (valentine) vat, van, Val

Lesson 26: Yy (yard) yes, yet, yam, yack

Step 6: Double Letter Endings: -ff, -ll, -ss, -tt, -gg, -nn, -zz, -dd (38 words)

Lesson 27: Double-Letter Word Endings: pass mass lass mess less fuss Bill fill bill
fell Jill ill will till tell well sell yell jell bell dull moss boss toss loss kiss
muss muff off puff huff cuff puff cuff mutt jazz buzz fuzz Ann add

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 1 (Step 1: -a- e, r, f, s)

am	an	man	Nan	ran
ram	fan	Sam	ram	am
ran	an	Nan	fan	Sam
an	Sam	fan	man	Nan
ran	fan	Sam	an	ran
ram	man	am	Nan	am
am	ran	an	am	an
Sam	Nan	ran	Sam	man
Nan	ram	man	an	Sam
fan	am	fan	ram	fan

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 2 (Step 2: -e- t, l, g, c, k, ck, b)

men	mat	set	ten	me
sat	at	tan	Nat	net
fat	rat	let	rag	gas
tag	get	sag	gag	leg
nag	can	cab	cat	keg
tack	lack	sack	rack	Mack
Ben	bag	tab	beg	bet
back	men	sack	met	rat
ten	keg	tack	ten	set
net	let	gas	gag	nag

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 3 (Steps 1 & 2 Review)

set	ten	met	sat	at
men	mat	set	ten	met
sat	at	tan	Nat	net
fat	rat	let	rag	gas
tag	get	sag	gag	leg
nag	can	cab	cat	keg
tack	lack	sack	rack	Mack
bet	back	tab	bat	beg
am	ten	man	ran	met
Sam	fan	ram	met	set

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 4 (Step 3: -i- h, d, p)

bit	tin	bib	big	sit
in	fit	fin	fig	rib
rim	it	tick	if	hat
hit	hem	ham	him	hen
hack	hick	red	hid	sad
rid	had	did	lad	mad
den	led	mid	din	lid
bed	dig	fed	bad	dim
kid	kit	nod	deck	tap
map	pin	tip	lap	pig

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 5 (Steps 1 - 3 Review)

pen	rip	lip	pet	rap
cap	pat	sip	dip	pit
pit	sap	hip	nap	pan
peg	pad	pun	pack	pick
am	sack	gas	tag	leg
rid	rag	lack	at	ram
pan	man	sit	lip	lap
can	beg	ran	dim	kid
him	ham	hat	in	fit
tip	tap	pan	pen	pen

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 6 (Step 4: -o- j, w)

log	rod	got	fog	pot
cob	hop	rob	not	lop
hot	sod	top	pod	lot
dot	cot	cod	on	dock
tock	lock	sock	jam	jet
jig	jug	jog	jot	Jack
wag	wig	wit	wet	web
win	wick	top	jig	sock
lop	jam	wig	dot	top
cot	rob	web	dock	win

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 7 (Steps 1 - 4 Review)

am	dip	jam	rag	hat
jog	Nan	keg	jig	pot
fan	leg	bat	fit	tick
wig	cob	lap	tag	sack
Ben	him	ram	gas	fin
rid	dock	Jack	met	bat
hid	deck	pin	fog	win
an	bed	kid	tag	rack
net	cab	big	dog	hog
men	wag	wig	dot	top

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 8 (Step 5: -u- z, x, qu, v, y)

gum	pug	run	hum	bun
fun	tug	gun	bug	tub
sun	hub	cut	rub	hut
jut	mud	bud	rug	sup
up	hug	cup	but	pub
nut	us	duck	buck	luck
suck	zap	zip	ax	box
six	mix	fix	tax	Max
ox	fox	quit	quack	quick
vat	van	Val	yes	yet

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 9 (Steps 1 - 5 Review)

yam	yack	ten	hit	pad
quit	up	cab	fit	lap
wit	quack	but	zip	Max
am	hem	sag	lock	sup
mat	mix	mad	mud	mid
ax	get	tack	keg	back
win	sock	beg	duck	suck
Nan	fat	lap	pad	dock
jam	jot	rack	cat	fan
sun	sat	rag	cup	nut

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 10 (Step 6: Double Letter Endings)

pass mass lass mess less

fuss Bill fill bill fell

Jill ill will till tell

well sell yell bell dull

moss boss toss loss kiss

muss muff off puff huff

cuff mutt jazz buzz fuzz

Ann add mass tell kiss

boss muff off bill fell

huff well fill pass mass

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Drills

Drill 11 (Steps 1 - 6 Review)

am lid rod wit sock
mess fill run sit cup
ram Sam bag hem dim
got ten man toss duck
fix fox yes yack zap
mud net sack fed bad
pad dock pod wag win
gag keg nab nod red
lap lip pet cab cat
fan fit fog jell fell

THE ALPHABET

a b c d

e f g

h i j k

l m n o p

q r s

t u v

w x y z

THE ALPHABET IN CURSIVE

a b c d
e f g
h i j k
l m n o p
q r s
t u v
w x y z

Note to the Teacher

Mr. Potter designed The *Blend Phonics Pre-Primer* to be taught to young children **before** they begin the 45 Units of *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade*. Decoding Fluency Cards are available.

I highly recommend using the *Phonovisual Charts* in conjunction with both the *Blend Phonics Pre-Primer* and the *Blend Phonics Lessons and Stories*. The charts teach 43 of the 44 English speech sounds and their major spelling patterns. An older edition of the charts is included at the end of this document to give an idea of how the sounds-correspondences are scientifically organized on the chart. The new charts are in color and have newer pictures. I recommend purchased them for the students: www.phonovisual.com I have a YouTube video explaining in detail the use of the charts.

Once the students know the 26 sound-to-symbol correspondences and are able to blend and spell the words in the *Blend Phonics Pre-Primer*, they will be ready for success with the *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade*, its accompanying reader, *Blend Phonics Lessons and Stories*, and *Blend Phonics Timed Fluency Drills*.

The section below “On Teaching Phonics” was largely taken from Florence Akin’s 1913 all time phonics classic, *Word Mastery: Phonics for the First Three Grades*. I have published a paperback reprint of Akin’s book, available on Amazon or Barnes & Nobles.

Students who learn to read with the *Blend Phonics Preprimer* and *Blend Phonics Lessons and Stories* will never develop the whole word guessing habit. The whole word guessing habit is caused by sight-word “instruction” It is the main reason for children struggling with reading. Guessing words from shape and context always leads to reduction in comprehension. Conversely, good decoding skills lead to high comprehension, when students pay attention. Remember that attention is related to consciousness, will, and judgment. It is essentially un-trainable and cannot be automated. Many supposed comprehension deficiencies are nothing more than poor decoding skills that lead the children to misunderstand the meaning of the text. The tests for silent comprehension are a poor means of accessing a student’s reading difficulties.

The best test currently available for telling if a student has artificially induced whole-word dyslexia is the *Miller Word Identification Assessment*, available on my website. Students who take their first steps into literacy with the *Blend Phonics Lessons and Stories* will avoid these common man-made hindrances.

Parents and teachers should take as long as necessary teach the *Blend Phonics Pre-Primer*. I also recommend that the student learn to identify the letters by letter name so they can begin oral spelling right away.

If the student is old enough, start them on writing the letters so they can practice writing the words. It is better to have them write on a chalkboard at the start so they can use their large motor skills.

The letters *m, n, r, f, s, l* represent sounds that may be prolonged. This make them the easiest of sounds to blend, and therefore are taught first.

The *Blend Phonics Pre-Premier* teaches more than meets the eye. The children learned to write legibly and identify with facility **all** the letters of the alphabet. They learn **all** the consonant and short vowel sounds and spellings. They develop a mental set for reading without guessing. The brain is literally programmed for success in learning to read well. Last updated on 5/30/2016.

On Teaching Phonics

By Florence Banks Akin

The teacher must decide the amount of time given daily to the work in phonics. Classroom conditions make it possible for some to give twenty minutes a day while others can give but ten. Two exercises a day of ten minutes each is perhaps the ideal arrangement. The exercise should never be continued until pupils weary of it. At the first indication of lagging or weariness it is time to stop.

The teaching of phonics includes

1. Ear training,
2. Tongue training,
3. Eye training,
4. Word building.

Ear training may begin on the first day the child enters school. Say to the pupils, "We shall play a little game. You may do what I tell you, but do not speak a word." Then say to one, "Bring me a b-o-x," speaking the last word very slowly (phonetically); to others, "Show me something r-e-d," "Tap on your d-e-s-k," "Touch something made of t-i-n," "Cl-a-p your hands," "R-u-n to the d-oo-r," "H-o-p to the w-i-n-d-ow," etc. Sufficient interest will soon be aroused to permit the teacher to leave off the play and say words phonetically, one after another, asking pupils to tell what each word is. In a few days they will be able to recognize almost any word that may be sounded. Occasionally tell a little story, saying a word phonetically here and there, and allowing pupils to pronounce the word. This form of training may be profitably continued throughout the first half-year.

Tongue training should begin about the third or fourth day. Sound a word and have a pupil tell what sound he hears first, what sound he hears last. Be very careful that he gives the sound correctly. There is a natural inclination to voice a breath, or voiceless sound, such as *h*. Holding an object before a pupil, have him say the name slowly (phonetically), as *h-u-t*, *c-a-p*, *v-a-s-e*, *p-e-n*, *b-oo-k*, *f-a-n*, etc. A picture may be placed before the class, and a pupil may be asked to say phonetically the name of each thing he sees in the picture. After a few days' practice offer a sound (it may be a simple speech sound, as *l*, or a consonant blend, as *sl*); have the pupils see how many different words they can think of beginning with that sound. This training should be continued for several months. Ear training and tongue training should be practiced for eight or ten days before taking up eye training.

Eye training begins with the book, — teaching the pupil to associate the sound with the symbol. Ask the pupil to name the picture used to represent the sound *monkey*, *m*. Ask him what sound he hears first (the ear and the tongue training have prepared the way for prompt recognition), and he will reply, /*m*/. Now tell him that the pictures represent the first sound and that hereafter they will help him to tell words. The pupil next learns the sound of *a*, in the same way. Then he learns the sound of *n*. Now he says the sounds of the three letters *m-a-n*, and thereby discovers the word *man*. At first the pupil will say these sounds so far apart that he cannot hear a word, but keep him trying to say them more rapidly, as, *m—a—n*, *m—a—n*. *m-a-n*, *m-a-n*, until he does hear the word and tells it. Proceed in like manner with the lessons that follow.

242 Words in the Blend Phonics Pre-Primer

In Alphabetical Order

add am an Ann at ax

back bad bag bat bed dig beg bell Ben bet bib big Bill bill bit boss box buck bud bug bun but buzz

cab can cap cat cob cod cot cuff cup cut

deck duck den did dim din dip dock dot dull

fan fat fed fell fig fill fit fin fix fog fox fun fuss fuzz

gag gas get got gum gun

hack had ham hat hem hen hick hid him hip hit hop hot hub huff hug hum hut

if ill in it

Jack jam jazz jell jet jig Jill jog jot jug jut

keg kid kiss kit

lack lad lap lass led leg luck

less let lid lip lock log lop loss lot luck

Mack mad man map mass mat Max men mess met mid mix moss mud muff muss mutt

nag Nan nap Nat net nod not nut

off on ox

pack pan pass pat peg pad pen pet pick pig pin pit pod pot puff pug pun pup

quit quack quick

rack rag ram ran rap rat red rib rid rim rip rod rob rub rug run

sack sad sag Sam sap sat sell set sip sit six sock sod suck sun sup

tick Tab tack tag tan tap tax tell ten till tin tip tock top toss tub tug

up us

Val van vat

wag web well wet wick wig will win wit

yack yam yell yes yet

zap zip

consonants



p-



b-



m-



wh-



w-



qu-



f-
ph



v-



th-

this

th-



t-



d-



n-



l-



s-
c



z-
s



r-



sh-



y-



ch-
tch



j-
g



k-
c ck



g-



-ng
n(k)

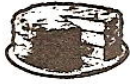


-x



h-

vowels



a-e
ay ai



ee
-e ea



i-e
-y igh



o-e
oa ow -o



u-e
ew



-a-



-e-
ea



-i-
-y



-o-



-ū-



aw
au a(ll)



oo



ur
er ir or



a(r)



oo
u



ow
ou



oy
oi



o(r)

Blend Phonics Reading Program

Brief Suggestions for Teaching

The Blend Phonics Pre-Primer

The students should be able to identify all the words and spell them *accurately* and *rapidly*. This combination of accuracy and speed is called “automaticity.” It is proof that the “reflex bonds” or “neurological connects” are correct and strong. The establishment of these bonds requires frequent, short episodes of spaced practice.

Teach the sounds represented by the letters using the Phonovisual Chart. Have the student say and spell the word being learned. Then teach the next word the same way.

When using the Decoding Fluency Cards, have the students read the words in mixed order. Then lay the words on the table and ask the student to point to the word when you say it. Eventually you can do several words at a time. Hide the deck behind your back and show a word at random to make sure the student can identify the word instantly, and does not confuse words. Take deck of words they have worked with, holding the cards so the student cannot see the words, and ask the student to spell the words. Do this with just two word at first and then add more words as their skills increase.

Remember that the subconscious mind works between training sessions. Students who cannot perform satisfactory during one session often perform quite well later, after the subconscious mind has had time to process the new learning. As William James observed, “We learn to skate in the summer.” NEVER practice until students become tired or discouraged because *frustration* is a leading cause of reversals and maladaptive behavior that works against learning.

The Pre-Primer is **very beneficial** because it introduces ALL the consonant sounds and short vowel sounds in an optimal sequence for easy mastery. It is **essential** to automate this level **before** satisfactory progress can be made further up the ladder in the acquisition of the necessary sub-skills. Often failure at the higher levels is due to a failure a lower level. For example, an apparent comprehension problem is more likely due to lower level decoding deficits than actual problems with comprehension. Misdiagnosing a decoding deficit as a comprehension deficit can lead to a tremendous waste of instructional time addressing the wrong problem. Conversely, targeting decoding problems inevitably leads to huge gains in comprehension. The so-called top down model assumes (falsely) that student will learn lower-level skills independently by extracting them from reading text that has the lower-level skills embedded in them. This is a false assumption that has led to the tragically high illiteracy rates in our country. Real phonics is also known as part-to-whole phonics. Phony phonics is often known as whole-to-part, often associated with Guided Reading and Whole Language.

This Pre-Primer is characterized by its unwavering faithfulness to the principle of phonics-first and the total absence of instruction in guessing.

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer

Scope & Sequence of Sound-to-Symbol Correspondences

Lesson	Card Numbers	Sound-to-Letter Correspondence	Phonovisual Sound-Picture	Sample Words
Step 1: Short-ă n r f s				
1		M m	monkey	
2	1	Short A a	cat	am
3	2-3	N n	nest	an man
4	5, 6	R r	rabbit	ran ram
5	7	F f	fan	fan
6	8	S s	saw	Sam
Step 2: Short-ě t l g c k ck b				
7	9	Short E e	bed	men
8	10-20	T t	top	mat sat net fat
9	21	L l	leaf	let
10	22-29	G g	goat	rag gas sag leg
11	30-32	C c	key	can cat cab
12	33-38	K k ck	key	keg, back
13	39-45	B b	bear	bag bat bet Tab
Step 3: Short-ĩ h d p				
14	46-58	Short I i	fish	bit fit it rim
15	59-66	H h	horn	hat hit him hen
16	67-88	D d	duck	red did dad mad
17	89-114	P p	pig	tap pan pit pad
Step 4: Short-õ j w				
18	115-136	Short O o	top	log rod cob top
19	137-143	J j	jug	jam jet jog jot
20	144-151	W w	wagon	wag wig web set
Step 5: Short-ũ z x qu v y				
21	152-181	Short U u	duck	gum pug fun hug
22	182-183	Z z	zebra	zap zip
23	184-192	X x	box	ax box fix tax
24	193-195	Q q qu	queen	quit
25	196-198	V v	valentine	vat van Val
26	199-204	Y y	yard	yes yet yam
Step 6: Double Letter Endings				
27	205-242	-ff, -ll, -ss, -tt, -gg, -nn, -dd		less bill box huff

The phonics sequence is based on pages 5 to 25 of Florence Akin's 1913 *Word Mastery: Phonics for the First Three Grades*. It begins with the letters *m, n, r f, s, l* because these letters represent sounds that may be prolonged (continuants). This makes them the easiest consonant sounds to blend, and therefore to learn first.

This is a Pre-Primer. A Pre-Primer is a book to be taught **before** the Primer. My *Blend Phonics Lessons and Stories* is an example of a good phonics Primer. A primer is a book for teaching beginning reading.

Prepared by Donald L Potter on April 8, 2014. www.donpotter.net www.blendphonics.org

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Cards: Numbered

242 Cards

Step 1: Short -a- n r f s (8 words)

Lesson 1 (Mm):

Lesson 2: (Aă): 1-am

Lesson 3: (Nn): 2-an, 3-man, 4-Nan

Lesson 4 (Rr): 5-ran, 6-ram

Lesson 5 (Ff): 7-fan

Lesson 6 (Ss): 8-Sam

Step 2: Short -ě- t l g c k ck b (37 words)

Lesson 7 (Eě): 9-men

Lesson 8 (Tt): 10-mat, 11-set, 12-ten, 13-met, 14-sat, 15-at, 16-tan, 17-Nat, 18-net, 19-fat, 20-rat

Lesson 9 (Ll) 21-let

Lesson 10 (Gg): 22-rag, 23-gas, 24-tag, 25-get, 26-sag, 27-gag, 28-leg, 29-nag

Lesson 11 (Cc): 30-can, 31-cab, 32-cat

Lesson 12 (Kk, ck) 33-keg, 34-tack, 35-lack, 36-sack, 37-rack, 38-Mack

Lesson 13 (Bb) 39-Ben, 40-bag, 41-tab, 42-bat, 43-beg, 44-bet, 45-back

Step 3: Short -ī- h d p (69 words)

Lesson 14 (ī) 46-bit, 47-tin, 48-bib, 49-big, 50-sit, 51-in, 52-fit, 53-fin, 54-fig, 55-rib, 56-rim,
57-it, 58-tick, 59-if

Lesson 15 (Hh): 60-hat, 61-hit, 62-hem, 63-ham, 64-him, 65-hen, 66-hack, 67-hick

Lesson 16 (Dd) 68-red, 69-hid, 70-sad, 71-rid, 72-had, 73-did, 74-lad, 75-mad, 76-den, 77-led,
78-mid, 79-din, 80-lid, 81-bed, 82-dig, 83-fed, 84-bad, 85-dim, 86-kid, 87-kit,
88-nod, 89-deck

Lesson 17 (Pp) 90-tap, 91-map, 92-pin, 93-tip, 94-lap, 95-pig, 96-pen, 97-rip, 98-lip, 99-pet,
100-rap, 101-cap, 102-pat, 103-sip, 104-dip, 105-pit, 106-sap, 107-hip, 108-nap,
109-pan, 110-peg, 111-pad, 112-pun, 113-pack, 114-pick

Step 4: Short -ō- j w (37 words)

Lesson 18 (Oō) 115-log, 116-rod, 117-got, 118-fog, 119-pot, 120-cob, 121-hop, 122-rob,
123-not, 124-lop, 125-hot, 126-sod, 127-top, 128-pod, 129-lot, 130-dot, 131-cot,
132-cod, 133-on, 134-dock, 135-tock, 136-lock, 137-sock

Lesson 19 (Jj): 138- jam, 139-jet, 140-jig, 141-jug, 142-jog, 143-jot, 144-Jack

Lesson 20 (Ww): 145-wag, 146-wig, 147-wit, 148-wet, 149-web, 150-win, 151-wick

Step 5: Short -ŭ- z x qu v y (53 words)

Lesson 21 (ŭ): 152-gum, 153-pug, 154-run, 155-hum, 156-bun, 157-fun, 158-tug, 159-gun, 160-bug, 161- tub, 162-sun, 163-hub, 164-cut, 165-rub, 166-hut, 167-jut, 168-mud, 169-bud, 170- rug, 171-sup, 172-up, 173-hug, 174-cup, 175-but, 176 pug, 177-pub, 178-nut, 179-us, 180-duck, 181-buck, 182-luck, 183-suck

Lesson 22 (Zz): 184-zap, 185-zip,

Lesson 23 (Xx): 186-ax, 187-box, 188-six, 189-mix, 190-fix, 191-tax, 192-Max, 193-ox, 194-fox

Lesson 24 (qu): 195-quit, 196-quack, 197-quick

Lesson 25 (Vv): 198-vat, 199-van, 200-Val

Lesson 26 (Yy): 201-yes, 202-yet, 203-yam, 204-yack

Step 6: Double Letter Endings: -ff, -ll, -ss, -tt, -gg, -nn, -zz, -dd (38 words)

Lesson 27: 205-pass, 206-mass, 207-lass, 208-mess, 209-less, 210-fuss, 211-Bill, 212-fill, 213-bill, 214-fell, 215-Jill, 216-ill, 217-will, 218-till, 219-tell, 220-well 221-sell, 222-yell, 223-jell, 224-bell, 225-dull, 226-moss, 227-boss, 228-toss, 229-loss, 230-kiss, 231-muss, 232-muff, 233-off, 234-puff, 235-huff, 236-cuff, 237-mutt, 238-jazz, 239-buzz, 240-fuzz, 241-Ann, 242-add

Shortcut to Manuscript

By Donald L. Potter

January 30, 2013

Students need to be able to form all the letters of the alphabet automatically without stress or hesitation. The writing process is directed by the mind, which directs the pencil to perform accurately. The mind, the child's **voice** in saying quietly aloud (at first) for each letter the detailed steps necessary to write it, and the hand holding the pencil **only** to write (the other hand does **all** the holding and moving of the paper) the only parts of the body actively engaged.

I have worked with hundred of students who found handwriting and spelling difficult. Their common characteristic was their excessive tensing of the muscles in hands and arms and also in their legs.

Small errors prevent children from learning to write easily, legibly and neatly. They require careful and **continued** teaching of all the techniques. Children from the beginning need to be taught to follow directions. Success in these writing skills gives children great pride and interest in learning each day's lesson. Each skill builds self-confidence.

Start by teaching letter formation and the letter name. I am aware that many phonics programs discourage teaching letter names. In the long run, I feel that it is much better to establish a strong association between the letter formation and letter name, especially if we expect the students to develop strong oral spelling skills.

Many teachers and parents fail to realize the importance of teaching correct **formation** of the letters from the very start of teaching written language. Unless children write correctly, to do not see the correct symbols for the sounds, and motor patterns once formed are difficult to correct. Children need much patient supervision at this beginning stage. The beginner at any age needs to be taught **all the writing techniques**, which help any child acquire the correct motor patterns. Do not skip any of the techniques.

All parents should be taught this handwriting method so they can enjoy with their children what they are learning in school. In writing the brain directs the hand. This cannot be done correctly unless there is a thorough knowledge of how each letter and number is made.

The child who has no difficulty in learning to write needs to be taught at first, but need not be held for drill. The children who need help should be given the specific directions over and over until they can direct their hands in writing and no longer make errors in direction or orientation. This is where drill is an essential part of teaching, if children are to learn. **The teacher has done no teaching unless and until the student learns.**

In our method the letters are taught in ABC order. Learners will practice writing the letters in ABC order **daily** until they can do so from memory rapidly (40 LPM for kindergarten) and error free. They will learn to identify the letters by letter name at sight, and write the letters from the dictation of the letter name in random order without hesitation or error.

Position and Techniques

1. Clear the desk of books and materials not needed.
2. **Sit** with hips against the back of the chair, **feet flat** on the floor and **back** straight, with **head** tall.
3. The straight spinal column **supports** the head.
3. Keep two inches between the body and the desk. Lean forward just enough to see the paper clearly, but keep the **head high**.
4. Let the chair carry the weight of the body.
5. Do not let the **head** fall forward because its heavy weight then it would be carried by the neck and back muscle.
6. Place both **forearms** on the desk with the **elbows** just off the front edge and comfortably close to the body.
7. Think of the hands as two separates parts needed for writing. One part holds and moves the paper and the other writes the letters.
8. The **paper holding hand** is the one which does *not* hold the pencil. It is placed across the top edge of the paper and moves the paper back and fourth, up and down, and holds it **steadily**. The paper weighs so little that little pressure from the paper holding hand is required to hold and move it.
9. The **writing hand** holds the **pencil** and writes. Keep the **side edge** of the **paper parallel** to the arm of the hand that holds the pencil (like the two rails of a railroad track).
10. The left-handed child needs special attention to be sure his paper is parallel to his writing (left) arm.
11. The writing hand and arm for **all** children should be below the **base line** on which they write.

How to Hold the Pencil

The middle finger and thumb form a vise for holding the pencil. Mrs. Romalda Spalding recommended the use of a six-sided, common wooden pencil for every age. Fountain pens are also very good for young students.

The **pointing** finger rounds, and the end of the nail sits on the pencil where the paint ends, about an inch from the point. (I have noted that many students hold the pencil too close to the tip, which blocks their view of what they are writing and forces them to bend their head sideways too close to the paper. Often just correcting the grip solves the problem with poor posture.)

The hinge (elbow) on the on the arm of the **paper holding hand** should be stationary. The **writing hand** moves the paper enough so that the pencil points remain in as small area just forward of the center of the body.

Have each child hold a pencil across the palm of the hand and make him or her see that it weighs next to nothing. Train the student to consciously write with no real pressure in the arm or fingers. The arm should feel as light and soft as the leg and paw of a friendly kitten. Hold the child's elbow in one of your hands and his in the other and have him feel no weight in his arm and hand. **Write** with the point of the **pencil**. The pencil should stand forward of the main knuckle.

All **knuckles** including the thumb should be bent and the fingers and thumb rounded to the same degree (liken this to the way a cat's claws are rounded).

Leave the space of one flat side between the pointing finger and the thumb. Run a finger between the thumb and pointing finger to make sure this is so.

Never use the writing hand to hold the paper. Make the other hand do that. The two hands have completely separate functions.

Paper for Writing

For beginners through second grade, use paper with lines 5/8-inch apart. Wider spacing forces children to draw letters instead of writing. For third grade and above, use paper with standard 3/8-inch spacing between letters.

Forget Me Not

"In writing the brain directs the hand. This cannot be done correctly unless there is a thorough knowledge of how each letter and number is made." (Spalding WRTR 81). Spalding is absolutely correct, contra the Whole Language movement deeply misguided contention that children would pick up correct writing without direct instruction.

Why Include Handwriting with *The Blend Phonics Pre-Primer*

About ten years ago, Dr. Bob Rose explained to me the importance for beginning readers to know how to write all the letters of the alphabet fluently. Kindergarten students who can write all the letters fluently (40 letters per minute minimum) in alphabetical order can ALWAYS identify them fluently and make FAR better progress in reading than those who do not. I have included detailed instructions on the method I personally use to teach fluent handwriting. This is an important part of the *Blend Phonics Pre-Primer* method. The letters can be taught in ABC order or the order they are introduced in the program.

To calculate letter writing fluency, time the students writing the alphabet from *a* to *z* from memory and divided the 1560 by the time in seconds. Writing the alphabet daily is all it takes to achieve fluency.

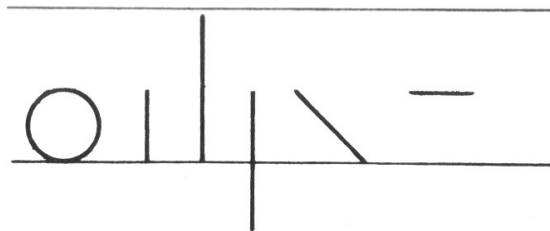
Instruction for Teaching the Lowercase Manuscript Letters

General Rules:

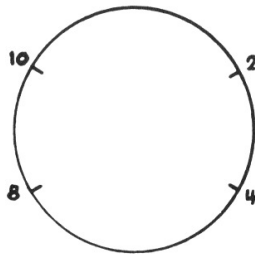
All letters set on the base line.

Letters or parts of letters are of two sizes. They are either *tall* or *short*. Tall letters or tall parts reach to the line above but do not touch it. Short letters or short parts are half as high as tall letters.

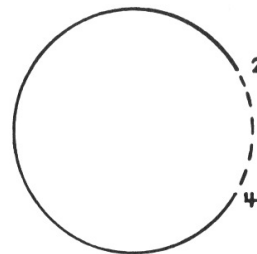
Manuscript letters are made from the clock face or parts of it, and straight lines.



The Clock Face



These are the four points we use most often



This shows how we use the clock to write c (from 2 to 4)

Formation of the Lowercase Letters

Presented in Alphabetical Order

For Fluency Development



Teacher says, “The letter *a* is a *short* letter. Short letters fill the space halfway up to the line above. Start far enough in from the edge of the paper to make a clock face. Start at 2, *go up* around the clock to 2 and, without lifting the pencil, pull a line straight down to the baseline.”



“The letter *b* is a *tall* letter with a *short* part. It starts at the top with a line. Start just below the line above and pull the pencil down to the baseline and, without lifting the pencil, go back up almost half way to the line above and, going in the direction in which we write, make the short part starting from 10 and rounding to 8 on the clock. Note that the lips make a line when saying the /b/ sound.”

Special note regarding all letters starting with a line: Letters which start with a line *sit close* to the preceding letter. No part of a letter should ever be put before this beginning line. All beginning vertical or slanted letters start *at the top*. These are two important rules. Do not take the pencil off the page to complete any of the lowercase letters except in making the second part of *k*, to put the crosses on *f*, *t*, and *x* and to put the dots on *i* and *j*. Horizontal lines are always drawn in the direction of writing. Do not use the words left or right. Instead establish very firmly from the start the *direction in which we write* (and read). Many remedial children, both left- and right-handed, learned to go make this line correctly, but before lifting the pencil they retrace it backwards. Make certain that *no* child does this, for it causes him or her to see the letters backwards, reversing the habit will help the student learn to write and read correctly.



“The Letter *c* is a *short* letter. It starts just far enough from the edge of the paper to make a clock face. Began at 2, *go up* and around the clock and stop at 4. It has two sounds /k/ and /s/.”



“The letter *d* is a *short* letter with a *tall* part. Start at 2 to make the short part, *go up* and around the clock to 2, *go straight up* to the line above but do not touch it, and pull a line straight down to the base line. This is all done without lifting the pencil. Tall parts are twice the height of short parts. Note that the lips form a circle when you make the /d/ sound.



“The letter *e* is a *short* letter. It starts with a straight line drawn from 9 to 3 through the clock. (Put 9 and 3 on the clock face to show this). Without lifting the pencil, continue *up* around the clock from 3 and stop at 4. Note that *e* is the *only* letter for which a line is made in reference to the clock face.



“The letter *f* is a *tall* letter. It starts below the line above, at 2. Go *up* around the top to 10 without touching the top line, pull straight down to the base line. Lift the pencil to put on a *tiny* cross in *the direction in which we write*. The cross is placed just above the middle.”

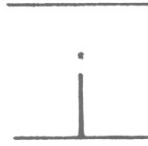
The left-handed child’s normal direction in using his or her hand is away from the body (to the left). Explain this to the child. Then teach the child from the start that writing English requires that he or she makes all horizontal lines go *in the direction in which we write*. This training can save the student from developing dyslexic tendencies.



“The letter *g* is a *short* letter. It starts at 2. Go *up* and around the clock to 2 and make a line down below the baseline so this part is the same size as the part above the line. Round it from 4 to 8. A short letter should be able to set beneath it without touching it.



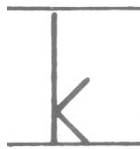
“The letter *h* is a *tall* letter with a *short* part. It starts *at the top* with a line. Start just below the line above and pull a line down to the baseline and without lifting the pencil, go back up almost halfway to the line above, and going *in the direction we write*, make the short round part start from 10 to 2 and finish with a line down to the base.”



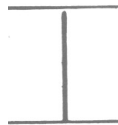
“The letter *i* is a *short* letter. It starts *at the top*. The dot is made last by setting the pencil above the letter and taking it off.”



“The letter *j* is a *short* letter. It goes below the baseline. Since it begins with a line it starts *at the top*. It goes down the same distance below the line as the short part goes above. The bottom part is rounded from 4 to 8. The dot is put on last.”



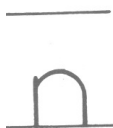
“The letter *k* is a tall letter and starts *at the top*. The second part is separate. It starts *at the top*, going in and out the same distance.



“The letter *l* is a *tall* line. It starts at the top and sits on the baseline.”



“The letter *m* is a *short* letter. It begins with a line. It starts at the top and is drawn straight down to the baseline. Retrace from the top and round it on the clock from 10 to 2, continue by making a straight line to the baseline, retrace to the top of the line, round again from 10 to 2 on the clock and finish with a straight line which ends at the baseline.”



“The letter *n* is a *short* letter.” Repeat the directions for making the first part of the *m*.



“The letter *o* is a *short* letter. It starts at 2 on the clock, and goes *up* and around and closes at the 2. Make it sit on the line.”



“The letter *p* is a *short* letter. It starts with a line and therefore *sits close* to the letter in front of it. The line starts at the top and goes the same distance below the baseline as the short part goes above it. Retrace from this line to the top and round the second part from 10 to 8 on the clock.”



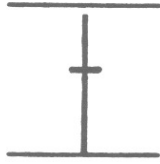
“The letter *q* is a *short* letter. It starts at 2 and goes *up* and around to 2. Without lifting the pencil make a straight line go below the baseline the same distance as the round part went above the line. Make a tiny flag *in the direction we write*.”



“The letter *r* is a *short* letter. It starts at the top. Make the short line go to the baseline, retrace to the top and round it from 10 to 2 on the clock.”



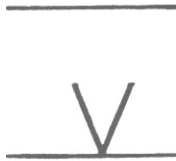
“The letter *s* is a *short* letter. It starts at 2 on the clock, goes *up* around to 10, slides across to 4 (which is below 2) and back around to 8 (which is below 10).”



“The letter *t* is a *tall* letter. It begins at the top. The cross is small and drawn just above the center, *in the direction we write*.” Make sure they do not retrace backwards!



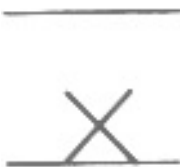
“The letter *u* is a *short* letter. It starts with a line at the top. Bring the line almost to the baseline and round it from 8 to 4, continue up with a straight line, and retrace with a line to the baseline.”



“The letter *v* is a *short* letter. It starts with a line and therefore it is started at the top and sits close to the letter in front. The first line slants *in the direction in which we write*. Finish without lifting the pencil.”



“The letter *w* is a *short* letter. The instructions are the same as for *v*, except repeated for the second half of the letter.”

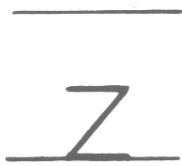


“The letter *x* is a *short* letter. It starts with a line, which starts *at the top*, sits close to the letter in front and slants *in the direction in which we write*. Its cross starts *at the top* and goes through the middle of the letter.”

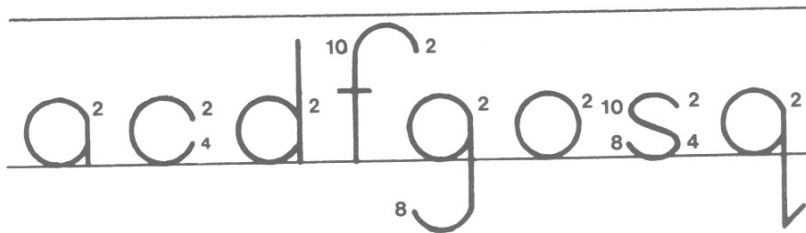
Note: Make sure all the children write each of the letters *f*, *t* and *x* *before* putting on their crosses.



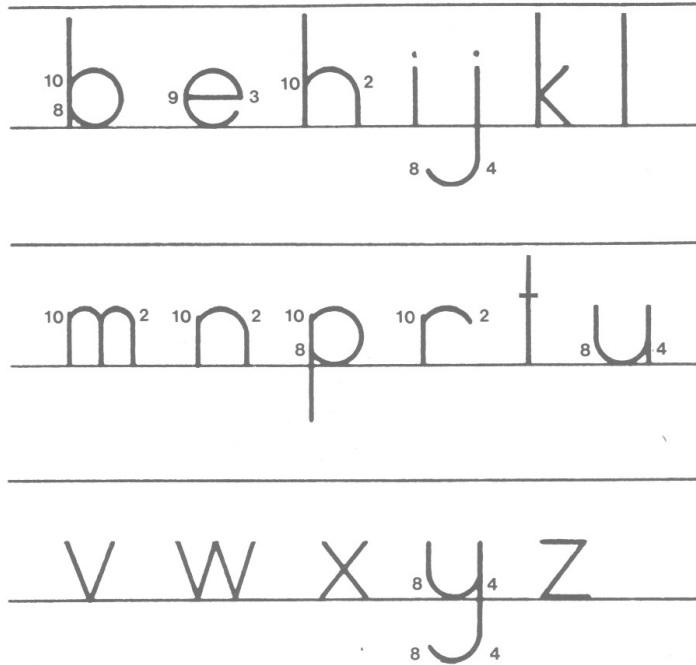
The letter *y* is a *short* letter. Start it at the top with a straight line, then round the bottom from 8 to 4, go up with a straight line and straight down the same distance below the base line as the short part when above. The bottom part is rounded from 4 to 8 on the clock.” This form for the lowercase *y* is in taught anticipation for teaching cursive, instead of the two-line form.



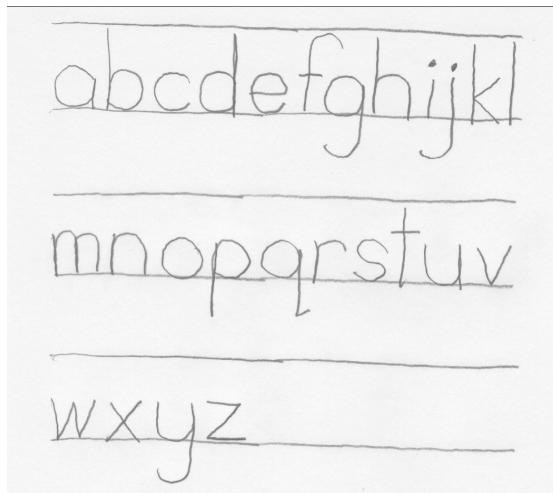
“The letter *z* is a *short* letter. It starts with a line. Therefore it sits close to the preceding letter and the top line is made in the *direction in which we write*. Without taking the pencil off the paper make a slant to the base line at the point under the beginning of the top line, and finish with a line drawn *in the direction in which we write*.” The top and bottom lines should be parallel.



The teacher’s explanation of how to use the numbers on the clock is indicated above. These letters start at 2 on the clock and *go up*. They start *just far enough* out to make the circle.



These are the letters that begin with a line. The teacher is to explain how the clock is used for the round parts.



This is how the alphabet should look when the students write all the letters from a to z in lower case letters.

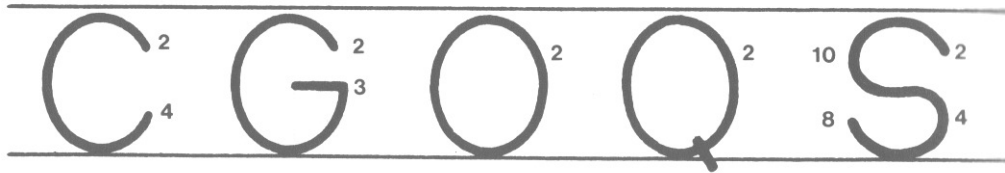
Romalda Spalding was correct when she wrote, “I have gone into great detail in what to say to children who are learning to write because it is necessary to be specific if handwriting is to become a correct and facile tool for learning. (Cursive or connected writing is easily learned from *correct* manuscript writing). If letters are made incorrectly, they are mentally pictured incorrectly also. This is a serious cause of failure in both reading and written spelling. It develops dyslexia or perceptual handicap.”

Spalding continues, “Have the letters written across the page to teach the spacing of both kinds of letters (Letters starting at 2 and with a line). Letters that begin with 2 on the clock start *just far enough* from the preceding letter to form the clock. Letters that begin with a line sit *very close* to the preceding letter.” I have the child say the letter name when practicing writing the alphabet for fluency.

Techniques for Teaching the Manuscript Uppercase Letters

All capital letters are *tall*. They almost fill the space between the baseline and the line above.

The rules for *round* lowercase letters also apply to the uppercase letters: C, G, O, Q, and S. Each starts at 2 on the clock and *goes up*. Since these are tall letters the round parts are somewhat elongated vertically. Have the students say the letter names as they write the letters to establish a strong associative link between letter shape, motor movement, and letter name. The cross on the Q starts at the top and slants in the direction we write.



In writing uppercase (capital) letters beginning with lines make the vertical line first, starting at the *top*. The horizontal lines of A, E, F, H, I, T are made *in the direction in which we write*. Where there is more than one horizontal line, make the top one first (E, F, I). The pencil is lifted before making the second line of A, B, D, E, F, H, I, K, M, N, P, R, T, and they also begin the *top*.



The uppercase letters V, W, and X are made just like the lowercase letters. First make the line which slants in the direction in which we write, starting at the *top*. V and W are made without lifting the pencil. The second line of X starts at the *top*. Y is the only uppercase letter that is finished below the baseline. Z is formed the same as its lowercase letter. The top line is drawn in the direction in which we write and it is finished without taking the pencil off the paper.



Blend Phonics Pre-Primer

Decoding Fluency Cards

SAMPLE FLASHCARDS

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Note from Internet Publisher: Donald L. Potter

April 14, 2016

Permission is hereby granted for non-commercial reproduction for educational purposes. Just cut out the cards on cardstock. You can laminate them for hard classroom use.

These flashcards have the **opposite** goal from sight-word flashcards. We are interested in fast decoding, but not instant whole-word identification that can lead to the development of the dreaded guessing habit. Sight words such as Dolch or Fry are designed to teach instant word identification with reference to the shape of the word and not the individual letters. Our cards are designed to teach students to look at every letter and sound out the words with lightning speed. It may appear that the children are recognizing the words at sight without reference to the letters, but this is a deceptive illusion due to the brain modular design, which allows it to do parallel distributed processing.

Blend Phonics Pre-Primer Decoding Fluency Cards

<u>Steps</u>	<u>Phonics Skills</u>	<u>Lessons</u>	<u>Cards</u>
1	Short-ă m n r f s	1-6	1-8
2	Short-ĕ t l g c k ck b	7-13	9-45
3	Short-ĭ h d p	14-17	46-114
4	Short-ŏ j w	18-20	115-151
5	Short-ŭ z x v qu y	21-26	152-204
6	Double Letter Endings	27	205-242

The Steps can be used to group the cards in a card file. They should first be taught in order, but then practiced out of order as the students gain accuracy and speed. This discrimination practices is vital for the development of automatic. The cards can be used to play many fun games.

am