

**A Linguistic Analysis of**

Cheryl Hill's

***R Is For Reading Books***

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## *Preface*

For this *Linguistic Analysis*, we will be using the pronunciation symbols in the *American Heritage Dictionary (AHD)*, considering the *AHD* pronunciation our standard. The sounds will be enclosed in parenthesis, following the practice in the *AHD*.

I will include the children's book titles that Mrs. Hill uses to illustrate the sounds. This is a valuable feature of the book since it help the children to develop an interest in good children literature and a desire to read for themselves The sound will be enclosed in parenthesis, following the practice in the *AHD*.

Before we begin, it is important to understand that *R is for Reading* is NOT intended to be a complete reading system and should not be judged as such. It is designed to introduce children to the major spelling patterns of English in a fun and engaging manner. It is a **read aloud book** that parents and teachers are to read repeatedly to children.

The children's books mentioned should also be read to the children. This will help build children's literary appreciation, knowledge of text structure (phrase, sentence, paragraph, and larger elements), sensitivity to the speech sounds (phonemic awareness), and awareness of spelling patterns (phonics).

I basically went straight through the program page by page listing the sounds and spelling patterns (orthographic structures) presented.

The conclusion that we can draw from this detailed analysis is that Mrs. Hill has been very successful in presenting all the English speech sounds and their major spelling patterns in a delightfully child friendly manner.

From this detailed analysis, based on the highly respected *AHD*, we can see that one Amazon review that offhandedly criticized Mrs. Hill's linguistic knowledge was both unkind and unjust.

The abbreviation *WRTR* refers to Romalda Spalding's *Writing Road to Reading*. Spalding's program was an adaptation - for the regular classroom - of Dr. Samuel Ortin's highly successful, multi-sensory dyslexia program. First published in 1957, *WRTR* has been considered a highly successful phonics reading program.

Mr. Potter last edited this document on 9/28/13.

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## ***R is for Reading – Linguistic Scope & Sequence***

a<sup>1</sup> (ä) apples

a<sup>2</sup> (ā) Tales from Acorn Woods Two vowels: tale, came, play, their, they, mail, rain  
Note: Dictionaries vary on “their.” ADH gives long (ā) sounds, Webster has (ě)

a<sup>3</sup> (ä) all, father, want [This is based on Romalda Spalding’s successful three-sound approach . I generally prefer to distinguish the a of all and the a of want, considering the latter as a short ö or ũ].

b (b) bear, Blueberries for Sal

c<sup>1</sup> (k) c + o, a, u = (k), Corduroy

c<sup>2</sup> (s) c = e, i, y = (s) Cinderella

d (d) duck, Jemima Paddle-Duck

e<sup>1</sup> (ë) Elves and the Shoemaker

e<sup>2</sup> (ē) be, me, Play with Me. Two-letters: here, each, peach, see, bee, honey, money  
Memory words: ai, said; ea, bread, thread – sound like (ë) in Elves.

Silent Letter e: 5 Jobs (After Romalda Spalding *WRTR*)

1. VCE (vowel-consonant-e), long ABC name: cake, bake.

2. To keep words from ending in v or u: have, blue.

3. Silent e makes g say (j) in large & barge; c says (s) in prance & dance.

4. -le Each syllable has to have a vowel. Little Train

5. To make short words longer: ar > are.

e says (ûr) in Her first nurse Matilda comes to work eary.

f / (f) Bread and Jam for Francis

ph (f) alphabet, elephant, telephone, Christopher, Phillip

gh (f) laugh, enough, cough, rough, tough.

g<sup>1</sup> (g) when followed by a, o, u Goodnight Moon

g<sup>2</sup> (j) when followed by e, i, or y Gingerbread Baby (Note: this admits exceptions)

h (h) Harold of the Purple Crayon

i<sup>1</sup> (i) Inch by Inch any, many

i<sup>2</sup> (i) Ira Sleeps Over

i followed by two consonants: child, wild; find, kind

2 letters: bike, like; pie, tie

3 letters: fight, light, night

i<sup>3</sup> (ē) Radio Rescue. Indian, furious, million, curious

j (j) Jingle Bells

k<sup>1</sup> /k/ Kite Flying ch: school, Christmas

k<sup>2</sup> Silent: Knots on a Counting Rope

l (l) Leo the Late Bloomer

m (m) *Martin's Big Words*

n (n) *Miss Nelson is Missing* Mrs. Nelson had naughty students who would not listen  
gn (n) gnat, gnaw, sign

o<sup>1</sup> (ö) odd *Gray Rabbit's Odd One Out*

o<sup>2</sup> (ō) *The Open Road* Followed by 2 consonants: cold, gold  
two letters: hole, mole, pole, boat, coat; blow, slow, low  
ou in about, out. ou in you [Placement o<sup>2</sup> does not mean 2<sup>nd</sup> sound. The author  
sometimes followed the grapheme instead of the sound in working a spelling-  
pattern into her program. This confused me at first. It is an example of her  
procedure, and not an error.]

o<sup>3</sup> (oo) *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day*. Too, good, mood  
[Following Spalding, the author assumes that the long sound for oo is  
sufficient for the students to identify both short and long oo. I prefer to separate  
these sounds, but my experience confirms that children have no problem here.]  
Inside: four, soul, door – o's name long ō. ou of country like ũ of umbrella. [These  
are alternate sounds and spelling patterns, following the author's custom of packing  
as much information into a letter group as possible.]

p (p) (technically a voiceless aspirated bilabial stop) *Peter Rabbit*

q (kw) *Quack!*

r (r) *The Relatives Came*

s (s) (z) Susie. song, *Buzzing Bee*

t (t) *Tucker's-Four Carrot School Day*

u<sup>1</sup> (ü) Uncle Jed's Barbershop

u<sup>2</sup> (yoo) *The Midnight Unicorn*

u<sup>3</sup> (oo) put Uncle's book the *Midnight Unicorn* is put under his bed.

Inside: few, new, mew, blew, grew [In my original analysis, I thought Mrs. Hill  
considered ew as u<sup>3</sup> because of the placement, but she assures me that the ew has  
the u<sup>2</sup> sound, in agreement with the AHD.]

v (v) The *Very Hungry Caterpillar*. very, violin, violet, vest, vulture

w (w) *Where the Wild Things Are*

x (ks) *Hello Red Fox*

x says its voiced sound (gz) [AHD simply gives (z)] x in xylophone, exit. x says z in  
Zerox

y has four sounds: (y) (ē) (ī) (ï) – Yolanda's bunny sat by the gym bag. *Yellow Elephant*  
and *Play with Me* Analysis: Consonant y Yolanda & yellow. *Yellow Elephant*  
bunny as in *Play with Me*, by as in *Ira Sleeps Over* gym as in *Inch by Inch*

z (z) *Z was Zapped*. zip, zing, zap, zoom.