

To the Parent or Instructor

1. This **physical book** contains the *complete* reading program, however, to augment the program there is a web-app with teaching tools and phonics activities available.
2. For tutors and teachers who **instruct remotely or to groups**, there are lesson slides available, as a web-app, at our website, www.blastofftolearning.com.
3. The success of this program is dependent on the **consistency of instruction**, student focus level, and student memory.
 - a) **Consistency of instruction:** It is recommended that this program be done five days a week, two days a week at a minimum. Studies have shown that the faster an intensive reading program is implemented, the more effective it is.
 - b) **Student focus level and memory:** Since this program requires understanding and memorizing, if the student has a poor working memory or has ADD/ADHD, the program may take longer. For some, with severe focus problems, this program may not be the correct fit.
4. For **independent reading** (after Lesson 19), we recommend our chapter books, which have interesting stories, for older students, with a lower reading level (approximately a second-grade level).
5. The book is **not intended to teach English Language Arts (ELA)**; however, some ELA topics are introduced for decoding purposes. These include homophones, contractions, and apostrophes for ownership. More work in this area may need to be done, for which there are many other materials available.
6. Throughout the workbook there will be **messages for the instructor**. These messages are indicated by the image below.



7. Since this book is meant for a wide range of ages, some words may not be familiar to some students. Try to have the child read these words, and, if receptive, explain the meanings.

Reading Program Instructions

The Web-App

This reading program is complete on its own, however, it is recommended to use the web-app, as it provides many teaching tools and activities that would be beneficial in implementing the program. Note that the web-app requires the internet and can run on any device that supports a browser.



The web-app contains flash cards (as slides), letter tiles, and many fun games that are created to be challenging and fun for students in this age group. Also included are the audio dictations, for your student to do the dictations as independent work.

To purchase the web-app, please go to <https://www.blastofftolearning.com/getBlastOffApp> or use the QR code below.



If you are using the web-app for this program, the lessons will indicate which games should be played. This is done at the end of the lesson (if applicable).

There are two games that can be played with any lesson (except for Lesson 1). They are the *Blast Off Matching Game*, where two players take turns finding matching cards while reading the words on the cards, and the *Save the Earth Reading Game*, which is a fun way to read words (with fun games to play upon completion). These games must be played with another player who is a proficient reader.



Implementing the Program

Work **2 to 5 days a week** with your student(s), for 30 to 45 minutes. This program is best done one-on-one; however, it can also be used in small groups. If working one-on-one, sit on the **same side** of the table as your student (not across from him/her). If you're right-handed, sit to the right of the child, otherwise sit on the left side.

A typical lesson is as follows:

1. Using the web-app, review the flash cards.
2. Using the web-app's Letter Tiles, do some warm-ups with sounds already taught.
3. Review the dictations.
4. Give the lesson and have the student do the exercises with you present. Offer help as needed.
5. Assign the dictations for the next meeting.
6. Have your student do the online activities (the lessons will tell you what activities to do).
7. If you're past lesson 19 (long vowels), have your student read to you from a chosen book for ten minutes. Use our side-by-side reading technique.

Flash Cards & Phonics Reference Chart

Most lessons introduce new sounds or rules which require review. This repetition is done using flash cards as well as the phonics reference chart (on the back cover of this book). For the flash cards, you can either make your own, purchase them from our site, or use the online version that is included in the web-app for this program.

Review the cards before each lesson. Once a sound or rule is completely mastered, the associated card can be skipped. The phonics reference chart can be used for a quick review, or to reference when your student needs help in identifying a sound.

Dictations

Most lessons have a dictation portion which will require your student to spell words and write sentences.

You can either read the words and sentences to your student or your student can independently use the audio from the dictation activity on the web-app. You can elect to have your student write the words/sentences in a notebook, or type in the text box fields

in the dictation activity on the web-app. Note that if they type the words in the fields, you will be able to remotely view the answers from your dashboard.

Do not let your student study and memorize the words (unless otherwise noted on the dictations lists). He/she should use the sounds and rules learned to spell the words. When done, correct the work with your student. Have him/her **read the words to you from what they wrote. Then have them make the corrections.** There is no need to write the misspelled word over many times.

VERY IMPORTANT

*Have your student say the letter **sounds** out loud, as he or she writes. They should **never** say the letter **names**.*

If your main objective in using this program is for reading (not spelling), the dictations become optional at Lesson 37 (this point is indicated in the word lists).

Note that dictations are often very difficult for most students, and a low accuracy rate is expected. It is up to your discretion whether to have your student repeat the dictations for the lesson at hand. Once your student has completed this program, they should read many books to become fluent. As they read, their spelling will improve. At this point, you may want to revisit the dictations as a spelling exercise.

The Workbook Lesson

This workbook contains 50 lessons with a review section after every 10 lessons. Each lesson usually contains a new sound or rule, a review (lists of words and/or sentences) and then exercises.

When you come upon letters inside of slashes, you should say the actual *sound* of the letter(s). Anything in single quotes is meant for you to spell.

Example: If you see /ar/ (in slashes), you should read it as the sound “ar” (as in “jar”).
If you see ‘ar’ (in single quotes), you should read it as the letters “a”, “r”.

A lesson is not meant to be done in one sitting, although that can happen. Don’t rush your student; let him/her do this program at his/her own pace. Each child will be different. The first few lessons may seem very easy for the student, but **do not skip them**; they are extremely important for providing a good foundation for phonemic awareness.

Important Tips

- Since many letter names are different from their actual sounds (such as ‘w’ – ‘double-u’), instruct your student to say (out loud) the letter **sounds** as he or she writes (not the letter names). If *you* are decoding a word to the student, don’t say the actual letter names, only say the sounds. Letter names should only be used

when introducing a new sound which is comprised of two or more letters, such as the /th/ sound. However, once the sound is introduced, when you see those letters in a word, you should only say the actual *sound*.

- When a student has trouble reading a word, cover it up with your finger and slowly reveal the letters. If the letter needs another letter to make a sound (such as 'th') reveal both letters at one time.
- If you see your student becoming frustrated, slow down and review something else. You don't want to give too much information at one time.

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For the Younger Student

For students that are 7 to 8 years old, some concepts taught will exceed what is expected of them at their age. It will be to your discretion how this is to be handled. If your student is receptive and eager, then continue as instructed. However, if you're losing your student, or he/she becomes noncompliant, you may want to stop and review concepts, as well as have him/her read material that is at his/her level, for reinforcement.

Side-by-Side Reading

Once Lesson 19 (long vowels) is complete, it is recommended that the student read books of interest with a proficient reader (PR). To do this, we use The Side-by-Side Reading (or “partnered” reading) method. The importance of this cannot be understated. This is what bridges what was taught in this program to real life application and leads to fluency.

The child and proficient reader (PR) should sit next to each other (facing the same direction). If the PR is right-handed, he/she should sit to the right of the child. The PR should use his/her index finger to point to each word, helping the student track and stay focused. When the student struggles with a word, the PR should give some time for the child to work it out. After a few seconds, the PR should ask if the child needs help. Often children want very much to decode the word and worry that the instructor is going to read it for them. On the other hand, many children want to be given the answer so that they don't have to work. If the child needs help, block the sounds in the word, revealing sounds that were taught. If there is a sound in the word that wasn't taught, encourage the student to try to decode it based on context of the sentence and the sounds (s)he can recognize. If your student becomes frustrated, or this takes too long, simply read these words to him or her.

For example, if the word is “strangers”, show “ange”, “str” and “er”. You don't need to do this in order. Sometimes, first showing sounds that are at the end of the word helps. For example: “adventure” – first block out all letters except for ‘ture’ (which = /chur/).

If the student is reading along, but reads a word incorrectly, the PR should double tap his/her finger. This non-verbal cue doesn't break the flow, and the student will quickly learn what it means.

Often dyslexic students will take “the wild guess”. This is when he or she quickly guesses, incorrectly, the word without decoding based on context. When this is done, the PR should double tap, forcing the student to try again.

If reading is slow and labored, the PR and student should take turns reading paragraphs.

Eventually, the student will read without the finger guidance, and then, in time, he or she will be able to read independently.