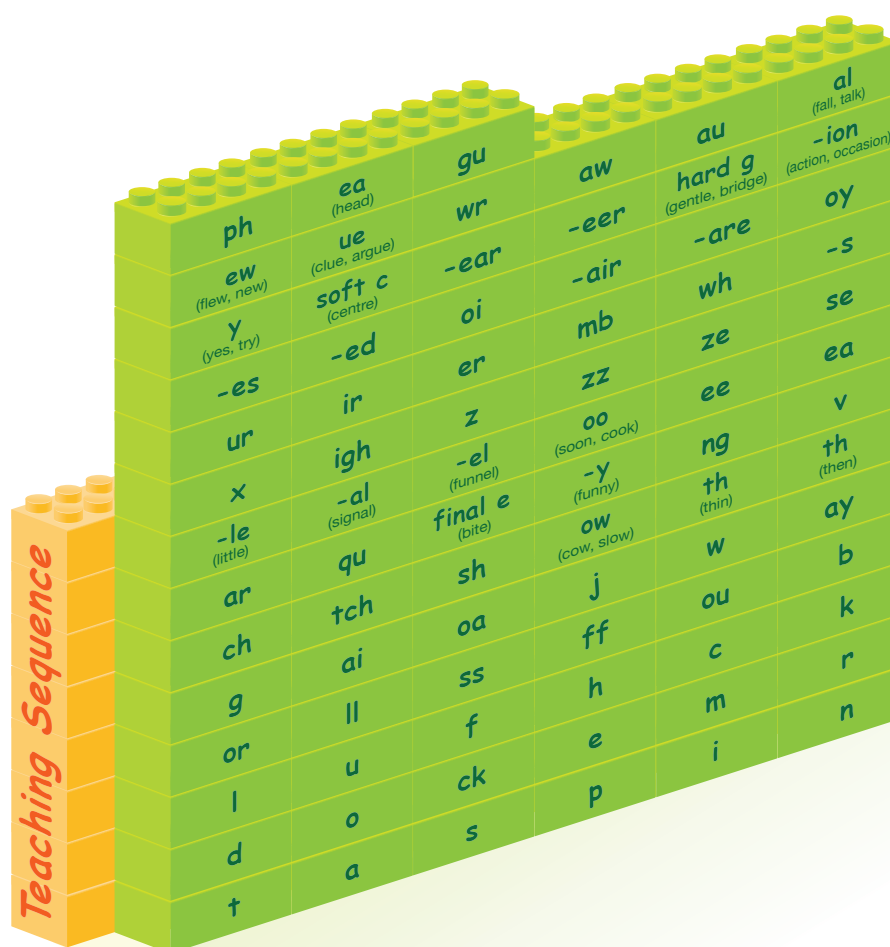


Overview of the Program

Understanding Words is a reading intervention program that aims to produce accurate, fluent readers who understand what they read.

The program includes 75 separate Lesson plans. Each Lesson introduces a new “letter-sound”. High-frequency irregular-words are introduced at a rate of 1-4/Lesson from Lesson 18.

A Placement Test “diagnoses” which phonics rules need teaching. The teacher uses only those Lessons that introduce unknown rules.



Each Lesson is scripted so the teacher knows exactly what to say and do. Each Lesson uses the same scripts so the teacher only has to learn fourteen separate scripts. Student work is presented on a whiteboard or in the Student Workbook.

The scripts are written in singular form (e.g., “*student*”). It is expected that parents operating as teachers and clinicians, such as speech pathologists and psychologists, will teach the program to individuals. However, most schools will teach in small groups. Controlled trials of previous editions of *Understanding Words* have used groups of 3-4 students.

How to use the program

Assessment Procedures

Three types of assessment should be used in *Understanding Words*.

1. The Placement Test determines the appropriate starting point for each student. The Irregular-word Reading Test is used to determine which of the irregular-words taught in the program are unknown to the student and to help measure growth throughout the intervention.
2. Mastery Checks are performed at the start of each Lesson to determine if the student has mastered the content taught in the previous Lesson.
3. Curriculum-based Tests of nonword reading and irregular-word reading should be used weekly to assess growth in the reading skills the students are being taught in the *Understanding Words* Lessons. See Appendix C for more detailed information on measuring student outcomes.

Placement Test

The Placement Test consists of 64 nonsense words. The words were chosen so that each letter-sound rule taught in *Understanding Words* is represented at least once.

The Placement Test along with detailed instructions for administering and scoring are included as Appendix A.

The Extended Placement List contains another 28 nonwords designed to be more sensitive to change. Use both the normal Placement Test and the Extended Placement Test if time permits.

Take a conservative approach to making decisions about which Lessons to teach. There are cases in which a student can guess or infer a nonword name; perhaps from the rime, without actually knowing the letter-sound rule. For example, the student may not know the “final e” rule but they infer the identity of POTE because they happen to know the word NOTE. In these cases, the rule should be taught regardless of the results of the Placement Test.

The Lessons should be taught in numerical order. Start with the first Lesson in the sequence and work upwards.

Irregular-word Reading Test

The Irregular-word Reading Test consists of 131 irregular-words. Irregular-words can't be sounded out using normal rules of sound-letter correspondence (e.g., COME). The Test is included as Appendix B.

Mastery Checks

Each Lesson begins with a Mastery Check that helps determine if the student has mastered the content taught in the previous Lesson.

The exact items to be used for the Mastery Checks are not prescribed. The teacher should select items from the Whiteboard Sounds, Sound Writing, 3-Step Spelling, Whiteboard Words, Irregular-word Reading and Sentence Reading activities. The goal is to determine if the student has “remembered” the new letter-sound taught in the previous Lesson and to ensure that they can use that new rule to read and spell unfamiliar words. From Lesson 18 onwards the teacher must also ensure that the student can read the new irregular-words taught in the previous Lesson.

Teaching Procedures

Required materials: a whiteboard preferably mounted to a wall, a mini-whiteboard for the student(s), whiteboard markers, lined paper for the student(s) and a pencil/s. All Lessons require the Teacher Booklet. Most also require the Student Workbook.

Using the Teacher Booklet

The scripts in the Teacher Booklet tell the teacher what to say and what to do to deliver the program content. Methods for correcting errors are contained in the following pages.

Letter-sound rules

Materials: *Whiteboard*

1. Next rule. **Some sounds are made by more than one letter.** Say that rule.
2. Write **ck** on the whiteboard.
Point to **ck**. **This letter group makes the sound /k/. What sound?**
3. Write **ck** on a different part of the whiteboard.
What sound?

Each Lesson contains a number of activities (varying between 5 -14). The following conventions are used.

- Each activity is headed by a name. The key materials required to teach the activity are shown below the heading.

- Text written in blue is what the teacher says aloud to the student(s).
- Black text represents actions to be performed by the teacher, extra information to help with teacher understanding or the expected student response.

Put more simply, you say what's in blue and you do what's in black.

To give an example, the script for the Whiteboard Words activity for Lesson 43 is:

Write **boat** on the whiteboard.

The text is written in black so it is directing the teacher to *do* something.

In contrast, the script for the Whiteboard Spelling activity for Lesson 43 is:

Write **spin** on your board.

- The text is written in blue so the teacher says the words aloud to direct the student who then has to write SPIN on their mini-whiteboard.
- Letters or letter groups inside forward slashes (e.g., /a/, /or/, /ch/) represent speech sounds. The phonetic alphabet is often confusing so its use has been kept to a minimum. Instead, the scripts use the letter or letter group that most often represents that speech sound. For example, CH can make /k/ as in SCHOOL but it usually makes /ch/ as in CHIP.

General teaching rules

The teacher scripts guide *Understanding Words*. The scripts ensure that new material and other activities are taught explicitly. The student/s should be in no doubt as to what the teacher expects.

Do not add to the scripts. The scripts have been pared down to avoid unnecessary language or directions. Every extra thing the teacher does or says adds to the processing demands of the task for the student.

The scripts can be shortened further once both teacher and student(s) are familiar with the program and the expectations for each activity. Take the Sound Writing and 3-step Spelling activities as examples. The scripts for both are:

Sound Writing

1. Say **nat**.
What's the first sound in nat? (/n/)
Write the letter that makes /n/.

3-step Spelling

1. Say **pick**.
Say it slowly.
Now write it.

Most students will very quickly learn the task demands (e.g., say the word, say the first sound, then write the letter that makes that sound).

The teacher should shorten the scripts once the student knows what to do. For example, Sound Writing can be shortened to:

1. Say **nat**.
First sound?
Nod or point to the student's whiteboard
(or paper) to indicate that they should
write the letter or letter group that makes
that sound.

3-Step Spelling can be shortened to:

3-step Spelling

1. Say **pick**.
Slowly.
Nod or point to the student's whiteboard
(or paper) to indicate that they should
write the word.

It may seem silly, but seconds count. If the student/s has to respond to 200 learning trials in a Lesson, saving 1-second/trial saves over 3-minutes. Seconds really do count when one is working with students who find the task hard and who often have limited attention span.

The best way to save teaching time is to minimise the interval between items within an activity (e.g., see notes in the Whiteboard Words section below) and the transition time from one activity to another. Both are helped by being physically prepared (e.g., having all the materials immediately available) and by being familiar with the scripts and teaching procedures.

Prompting to avoid errors

Prompts should be provided prior to a learning trial if it contains a stimulus not *absolutely certain* to be known to the student. For example, if the CK = /k/ rule has just been taught and the teacher believes the student might confuse /k/ with /ch/ they should prompt. Provide an inhibiting response: **Stop**. Followed by: **This letter group makes /k/. What sound?**

Do not cross one's fingers and hope. Hoping is not teaching. Hope leads to teaching errors, which retard student progress. If one allows the student to read PICK as /pitch/ the teaching error is responsible for helping set up an incorrect memory (CK = /ch/). That memory will have to be "undone" by further teaching. It also wastes time later in the Lesson because the teacher will have to spend more time prompting to ensure the incorrect CK = /ch/ memory is not activated.

Err on the side of prompting too much rather than too little.

Handwriting

Understanding Words is not a handwriting program. Letter formation errors should be corrected with specific handwriting lessons. This is particularly the case for young students and severe cases. Asking these students to remember to start their “a” at one-o’clock will affect their ability to remember that a = /a/ = a. On the other hand, a more capable student who clearly knows that d = /d/ = d but who makes d/b errors simply because of an incorrect pencil starting point can probably cope with being told to do “down up and around”. Once again, teacher discretion and sensitivity to the individual being taught is crucial.

Grouping and Scheduling Lessons

Understanding Words can be taught in a group or to individual students. The most effective groups consist of 3 students.

Lessons should occur 3-4 times a week at a minimum.

Lessons will take 15-45 minutes depending upon group size.

Teaching groups

A special problem associated with group work is that each student within the group has a unique working speed. Inevitably, one student will be more interested, motivated, paying more attention, or simply faster than their peers, and that student will respond first. The other students in the group almost always passively repeat the answer provided by the faster student. They therefore miss out on a learning opportunity.

The teacher should therefore provide an appropriate amount of “thinking time” after demanding a response from the students (e.g., [what’s the first sound in magic?](#)). They then give an auditory signal (e.g., a click of the fingers or tap on a desk) to prompt students to respond in unison.

The auditory signal becomes redundant after a short time, even in young students. If the students don’t need the direction, don’t use the signal.

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00GBKyGZAe4>

The Activities

Letter-sound rules

Materials: *Whiteboard*

1. **Next rule. Some sounds are made by more than one letter.** Say that rule.
2. Write **ck** on the whiteboard.
Point to **ck**. **This letter group makes the sound /k/. What sound?**
3. Write **ck** on a different part of the whiteboard.
What sound?

Student attention is obtained by saying: **Next rule.**

The script then directs the teacher to write **ck** on the whiteboard.

Next, the teacher explicitly teaches the sound represented by the letter/letter group. **This letter group makes the sound /k/.**

The teacher then prompts the student to repeat the rule by asking: **What sound?**

The process is repeated by writing the new letter sound on a different part of the whiteboard and again asking: **What sound?**

If the new rule involves a letter whose shape changes in the capital form (e.g., b/B) one should also teach the upper case letter-sound rule. The exceptions to this are a/A and i/I because the capital forms are too easily confused with the indefinite article and personal pronoun respectively.

Error correction

If the student/s makes a mistake in producing the letter-sound rule correct with: **This letter group makes /k/. What sound?**

Prompting to avoid errors

If the teacher thinks the student/s hasn't fully understood the letter-sound rule (and is therefore liable to make a mistake when asked to provide the rule) they should prompt the student/s before an error occurs. The prompt can often be unobtrusive. For example, pointing to CK and whispering /k/ before asking: **What sound?**

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEvwULEXIMw>

Whiteboard sounds

Materials: *Whiteboard*

1. Write **ck** on the whiteboard along with o, d, n, i, s, p, a, t, D, N, T.
2. Point to **ck**. *What sound?*
3. Point to a number of other “letter sounds” to distract the student before cycling back to **ck**.
4. Continue until 5-6 correct responses for **ck** have been obtained.

The first part of the script is written in black text so it is directing the teacher to *do* something. The script directs the teacher to write the new letter-sound rule on the whiteboard. They are also directed to write a number of other letters/letter groups, all of which are known to the student/s.

The teacher points to the new letter-sound asking: *What sound?*

Imagine that in doing so one is making the student consciously activate the link between the letter group **ck** and the speech sound /k/. We will refer to that activation as one *active learning trial*. Note that the sound /k/ is now active in short-term memory. If one then asks the student/s to look again at **ck** and respond with /k/ all they will do is repeat the /k/ sound from their short-term memory store. It is not an *active learning trial*. One could have the student/s say /k/ fifty times but it still constitutes only one *active learning trial*.

Remember, the other letter-sound rules are known to the student/s. Their only function is to “distract” the student/s.

Point to the new rule: *What sound?* That’s one *active learning trial*. Now distract the student/s by pointing to a number of other letter or letter-groups. Paying attention to those rules means they can no longer pay attention to the /k/ sound in short-term memory. It is essentially “deleted” from the short-term storage area. Now return to the new rule: *What sound?* That’s two *active learning trials*. Repeat until 5-6 active learning trials have been achieved.

Error correction

If the student/s makes a mistake in producing the letter-sound rule correct with: *This letter/letter group makes /k/. What sound?*

Prompting to avoid errors

If the teacher thinks the student/s hasn’t fully understood the letter-sound rule (and is therefore liable to make a mistake when asked to provide the rule) they should prompt the student/s before an error occurs. The prompt can often be unobtrusive. For example, pointing to CK and whispering /k/ before asking: *What sound?*

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M63B--gBjBA>

Sound writing

Materials: *Mini-whiteboard*

1. **Say nat.**
What's the first sound in nat? (/n/)
Write the letter that makes /n/.
2. Repeat for **nap, it, name, pop, north**
and **into**.

The teacher directs the student/s to say a word: **Say nat.**

The student is then directed to provide the first, middle or end sound in the word. For example: **What's the first sound in nat?**

Next, the student is directed to write the letter or letter group that represents that sound. For example: **Write the letter that makes /n/.**

Error correction

Student/s produce the wrong speech sound. Correct with: **The first sound in nat is /n/.**
What sound? Repeat until a firm /n/ is provided by the student/group.

Student/s know which speech sound they are trying to write but produce the wrong letter (e.g., they write M instead of N for the first sound in nat). Correct with: Write n on the whiteboard. **This letter makes /n/. What sound?** Repeat until a firm /n/ is provided by the student/group. **Write the letter that makes /n/.**

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihBnj8pikuM>

3-step spelling

Materials: *Mini-whiteboard*

Prompt the correct spelling choice when there is more than one plausible spelling choice (e.g., K/CK).

1. **Say pick.**
Say it slowly.
Now write it.
2. Repeat for **sack, spin, nick, sock** and **stack**.

This activity can be done on a little whiteboard. However, a piece of paper is sufficient.

The teacher directs the student/s to say a word: **Say pick.**

The student/s is then directed to say the word *slowly*. That is, they are to say the word one sound at a time. For example, PICK has three speech sounds: /p/i/k/. Note that consonant blends are separated. For example, STOP has four sounds: /s/t/o/p/. It is not said as /st/o/p/.

When student/s has successfully provided the correct speech sounds they are directed to write the word: **Now write it.**

Prompting to avoid errors

Multiple spelling choices are possible for some words (e.g., PICK could be spelt with a K or CK or CATCH could be spelt with CH or TCH). The teacher should provide a clear prompt where there may be confusion about spelling choice. For example: **you need CK for the /k/ sound**. Do not cross your fingers and leave it to chance.

Error correction

Student/s fail to repeat the word correctly. Correct by repeating.

Student/s fail to produce the correct speech sound in the “say it slowly” step. Correct with a clear direction to stop: **Stop**. Quickly work out how many speech sounds are in the word. Then say: **PICK has three sounds**. Use your hand to signal that the student should stop and wait. Provide a clear direction to listen: **Listen**. Hold up three fingers while saying: **/p/ /i/ /k/** (point to fingers while saying sounds). Point to your first finger to indicate that the student/s should start with the first sound. Say: **What sounds?** Point to successive fingers as the student/s “says it slowly”. Finally, direct the student/s to write the word.

Where the teacher fears the student might forget the speech sounds, perhaps due to the effort of deciding how to convert a sound to the correct letter/s, they should refresh the speech sounds as the student is writing.

Student makes an error in writing the word due to “forgetting” the speech sounds (e.g., writing TENT as TET). Correct with: **TENT has four sounds**. Use your hand to signal that the student should stop and wait. Provide a clear direction to listen: **Listen**. Hold up four fingers while saying: **/t/e/n/t/** (point to fingers while saying sounds). Point to your first finger to indicate that the student/s should start with the first sound. Say: **What sounds?** Point to successive fingers as the student/s “says it slowly”. Finally, direct the student/s to again write the word.

Student makes an error in writing the word due to a problem with sound-to-letter conversion (e.g., writing MAIN as MAN). Correct with: **Which letters make the /ae/ sound?** Direct the student/s to correct the writing error if they respond correctly with: **Now write MAIN**. If the student/s respond incorrectly: Write the correct rule on the whiteboard (e.g., AI). Say: **These letters make the /ae/ sound in main. What sound?** Direct the student/s to correct the writing error.

 **Video demonstration:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnDSMoH-_S0

Whiteboard spelling

Materials: *Mini-whiteboard*

1. **Write tip on your board.**
2. **Make tip into tick on your board.**
3. Repeat for **tick-nick-nid-nod-pod-pock-dock-dot-pot-pit-spit-spot-stot-stop-stock**.

This activity requires a whiteboard. It is preferable to use a mini-board that fits on the student's desk as many students find it hard to write on wall-mounted boards.

The first part of the script is written in blue text. The teacher directs the student/s by saying:
Write tip on your board.

The student/s should write the word TIP on their whiteboard. Prompt the student/s to leave gaps between the letters (cf. squeezing them together like so many students do) because some items require the addition of letters to the internal positions in words (e.g., changing MAN to MOAN).

The student/s is then directed to change TIP into TICK. They should not write TICK as a separate word. They should instead rub out the P and add CK to form TICK.

When teaching individuals it is often easier to ask the student to tell you which letter/s need to be rubbed out. Doing the rubbing out for the student makes the task quicker.

Error correction

Use the same correction procedures as for 3-Step Spelling.

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O2KO3DdDkE>

Nonword spelling

Materials: *Mini-whiteboard*

1. **Say tosp.** Repeat until firm.
Say it slowly. Repeat until firm.
Now write it.
2. Repeat for **snock, stap, dast** and **spack**.

Some students, particularly those in mid-primary grades, know how to spell many of the items in the Spelling activities “by sight”. The spelling activities are therefore not serving the purpose of providing practice in phonics skills. For these students, the teacher should substitute Nonword Spelling for the 3-Step Spelling activity.

Do not do Nonword Spelling with students who still spell most of the words in 3-Step Spelling and Whiteboard Spelling “by sound”.

The activity can be done on a little whiteboard. However, a piece of paper is sufficient.

The teaching procedures and error corrections are the same as for 3-Step Spelling.

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gf6JSf6KNc>

Whiteboard words

Materials: *Whiteboard*

1. **Now you are going to read some words.**
I have two rules for these words. If you
know a word, just say it. If you don't know
a word, look carefully, and sound it out.

2. Write **pit** on the whiteboard.
[What word?](#)
3. Change **pit** into **pick**. [What word?](#)
4. Repeat for **pick-pack-pat-pot-stop-top-tip-tick-sick-stick-pick-pack-pock-pon-pot-spot-spock-pick-pock-dock-Dad-did-dip-tip-tick-tock-stock-stack-tack-pack**.

The words used in the Whiteboard Words activity are spelt with the new letter-sound taught in that particular Lesson and previously taught/known letter-sounds. There are no tricks. The student/s should know all of the letter-sounds in each word.

The initial part of the script tells the student/s what is expected in terms of reading behaviours. First, if they know a word they should just say it. They should not be sounding out words they know by sight. Second, if they don't know a word they should look carefully and sound it out. They should not guess!

The second part of the script is a direction for the teacher to do something, hence it is written in black text. After PIT is written on the whiteboard the student is prompted with: [What word?](#)

The teacher then changes PIT into PICK. The student is again prompted with: [What word?](#)

There is no need to give the verbal prompt after the initial two items. Most students will be quickly conditioned to begin reading the word as soon as the teacher's hand retreats from the newly printed word.

Check to see if the student/s is paying attention before writing the initial word on the whiteboard. Thereafter do not look directly at the student/s. Initiating eye contact will draw their attention away from the crucial stimulus at which one wants them to look; the word. Teachers have been observed to charge the student/s with failing to look at the word on the board when in fact they have caused the problem by turning around to look at the student/s. Stay facing the board unless you have to.

The other problem with looking at the student/s is that it wastes time. The teacher should be holding their Lesson plan in the same eye line as they are writing the words. As soon as one has written the new word one's gaze should be returning to the Lesson plan to find the next word in the list. The teacher is then prepared to write the next word as soon as the student/s has responded. There should be no delay between student response and the formation of the next word in the list. Students who become distracted during this task are usually the victims of teaching error. That is, the teacher allows too great an interval between items.

Write the words so that the student can easily see them. However, don't form unnecessarily large letters, as they take longer to erase.

A right-handed teacher should stand to the left of the whiteboard. The Lesson plan should be in the left hand. Erase letters using a finger from the right hand while maintaining control of the whiteboard marker.

Prompting to avoid errors

Prompts should be provided prior to the reading of a word if it contains a letter-sound not *absolutely certain* to be known to the student. For example, if the CK = /k/ rule has just been taught and the teacher believes the student might confuse /k/ with /ch/ they should prompt. Provide an inhibiting response: [Stop](#). Followed by: [This letter group makes /k/. What sound?](#)

Do not cross one's fingers and hope. Hoping is not teaching. Hope leads to teaching errors, which retard student progress. If one allows the student to read PICK as /pitch/ the teaching error is responsible for helping set up an incorrect memory (CK = /ch/). That memory will have to be "undone" by further teaching. It also wastes time later in the Lesson because the teacher will have to spend more time prompting to ensure the incorrect CK = /ch/ memory is not activated.

Err on the side of prompting too much rather than too little.

Error correction

Experienced teachers will have established methods of correcting errors. They will be able to be flexible in their use of different strategies at different times. For example, in order to maintain rapport one might even choose not to correct an error if the Lesson is close to the end and the student has just made multiple errors. Other times one might choose to "take the mickey" out of a familiar student: [Aagh. You guessed that. Look again](#) (all with a big grin on one's face).

Less experienced teachers should begin by following a four-step process after the student/s has made an error.

1. The teacher should pretend they were not paying attention. For example: [Sorry. I missed that. Can you say that again for me?](#)

Students with reading problems are more likely than skilled peers to make "random" errors that are more due to control over attention than to lack of knowledge or skill. Remember, the task is hard for them. Given a bunch of learning trials we are all likely to "stuff up" a few items in a hard task.

By pretending inattention the teacher is (a) taking the student's error on as their own so as to protect the student's self-esteem and (b) giving them a chance to self-correct so that they can be praised for good reading. One wants to avoid telling the student they are wrong and providing corrective feedback if possible.

Praise and move on to the next word if the correct response is provided. It was a random error and one need do no more.

2. The teacher should again pretend in attention if the student makes the same (or a different error) following the first prompt. This time, the prompt should be directed specifically at the error. For example, if the student/s reads PICK and as the teacher should point at CK. Effect a puzzled look asking: [What sound?](#)

Praise and move on to the next word if the correct response is provided. It was a random error and one need do no more.

3. The teacher should immediately correct the letter-sound error if the student fails at the second prompt. For example, if the student/s read PICK and PITCH the teacher should point at CK and say: [This letter group makes /k/. What sound?](#)

The student is then directed to read the whole word (PICK) before moving on with the list.

If it gets to this point the teacher should be aware that the student has a problem in the letter-sound system. In this example, the letter-group CK is linked to both the /k/ sound and to /ch/. Think of the links from letters to speech sounds as like electrical connections in fluorescent lights. Turn off a fluorescent light and there will be an afterglow because it is still “warm”. Memories are the same. Recently activated memories stay warm for a period while inactivated memories stay “cold”. The student who has just said /pitch/ for PICK has “warmed up” the (incorrect) CK = /ch/ memory. The (correct) CK = /k/ memory is relatively colder. The student is likely to access the “warmest” memory (CK = /ch/) if the next word in the list also contains CK. To stop that from happening the teacher has to predict the error and provide an inhibiting response: **Stop**. Then the teacher should help the student by “warming up” the correct memory: **This letter group makes /k/. What sound?**

Subsequent CK words should also be preceded by a prompt. The prompt can gradually be faded until the point at which the teacher is sure that the incorrect memory has been inhibited (it is now “cold”) and the correct memory is “warm” and therefore certain to be selected.

4. The student should be provided with the whole word if they fail after the third prompt: **This word is PICK. What word?** Prompt subsequent words that include the problem letter-sound as per the third prompt above.

Do not be tempted to ask the student to try the word a fifth or sixth time. If they have failed after three prompts they will probably fail after fifty prompts. Give them the word and move on.

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DX0hVCgrd4>

Word-list reading

Materials: *Wordlist in Student Booklet*

1. **You are going to read some more words.**
If you know a word, just say it. If you don't know it, sound it out.

The Materials section refers to the “Wordlist in the Student Booklet”. Open the Student Booklet and find the activity labeled Wordlist for Lesson 8.

The words used in this activity are spelt with the new letter-sound taught in that particular Lesson and previously taught/known letter-sounds. There are no tricks. The student/s should know all of the letter-sounds in each word.

As per the Whiteboard Words activity (see above), the script tells the student/s what is expected in terms of reading behaviours. First, if they know a word they should just say it. They should not be sounding out words they know by sight. Second, if they don't know a word they should look carefully and sound it out. They should not guess!

Word-list Reading is in some respects a “double up” as it contains some of the same words and certainly the same letter-sound rules covered in Whiteboard Words. It actually serves two purposes. Many students are willing, happy even, to do Whiteboard Words because they see only one word at a time and it is “snappy”. In contrast, give them a bunch of words on a page and one can almost hear the bubble burst. The first purpose is therefore more *behavioural* training than *reading* training. One is conditioning the student/s to accept the fact that the same rules apply regardless of whether they are looking at single words or a larger

list. Stay calm and focus on each word. Say it if you know it or sound it out. Easy.

Second, the words in Word-list Reading are carefully chosen to include at least one example of the letter-sounds taught in previous Lessons. It therefore serves as an important review of previously taught material.

Prompting to avoid errors

Prompts should be provided prior to the reading of a word if it contains a letter-sound not *absolutely certain* to be known to the student. (See the Whiteboard Words activity above).

Error correction

Correct and prompt as for Whiteboard Words.

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=042egnYBoCo>

Nonword-reading

Materials: *Non-wordlist in Student Booklet*

1. **These are made up words. Look carefully and sound them out.**
2. **First word. Look at your book.**

The Materials section refers to the “Nonword list in the Student Booklet”. Open the Student Booklet and find the activity labeled: Nonword list for Lesson 8.

This activity is essentially the same as Word List Reading (see above) but with nonwords. The same teacher behaviours, prompts and corrective procedures apply.

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m65oXWefLI0>

Irregular-word reading

Materials: *Whiteboard, Irregular-words: want, please*

1. **Some words can't be sounded out. Say the rule.**
2. Write the words one at a time on the whiteboard.
3. To introduce each word: **This word is want. What word?**
4. Write a selection of previously mastered irregular-words on the whiteboard alongside the words being taught in this lesson.

5. Point to the words *in random order* while indicating for the student to name the word. Continue until the student has correctly named the new words 5-6 times.

Irregular-words are words that can't be sounded out using normal letter-to-sound conversion rules. Note that some of these words technically can be sounded out. For example, SAW and WHEN are taught as irregular-words because they were needed early in the program at a point where the student was not ready to learn that AW = /or/ and WH = /w/. When the program treats these letter groups as phonics rules (e.g., Lesson 53 teaches WH = /w/) words like WHEN are no longer treated as irregular.

The student/s is prompted with a new rule: **Some words can't be sounded out.**

It is important to teach this behavioural rule first because in previous Lessons the rule for unknown words has been: **look carefully and sound it out**, a rule that irregular-words like COME obviously violate.

Introduce each word by writing it on the whiteboard before saying: **This word is want. What word?**

The activity is taught in much the same way as Whiteboard Sounds (see above) except that the stimuli are whole words rather than individual letters or letter groups.

Be sure to write a number of known irregular-words on the whiteboard along with the new words being taught in the Lesson.

Direct the student/s to respond to one of the new words: **What word?**

Then "distract" the student/s by directing them to read a number of known words before coming back to the new word to obtain a second *active learning trial*. Remember that if the student/s is simply directed to repeatedly name the word all they will do is repeat the word name from their short-term memory store. One could have the student/s say the word fifty times but it will still constitute only one *active learning trial*.

Prompts should be provided prior to the reading of a word if the teacher is not *absolutely certain* the word will be named correctly. Remember, hoping is not teaching. A simple, whispered: **want** while pointing to the word avoids a mistake. Remember also that allowing a mistake leads to reinforcement of an incorrect memory. That memory will have to be "undone" by further teaching. Better to prompt first and avoid the mistake in the first place.

Expect that the student/s will sometimes have difficulty "remembering" all the irregular-words. Don't flog a dead horse. If they haven't remembered a word after 5-6 learning trials they won't remember it after 20.

Irregular-words are often abstract function words that lack the obvious meaning of other, more tangible parts of speech (e.g., nouns). That difference in tangible meaning is probably the source of the common parental complaint that the dyslexic child remembers "big" words but not "little" words. Big words; like ELEPHANT, may be "big" but they also have a tangible meaning that can help memory. "Little" words (e.g., WHAT) often lack that same tangible meaning. They also suffer from being easily confused with other "little" words that share at least some letter features (e.g., WHAT, WHEN, WHO, WHERE).

Learning abstract, irregular-words is helped by context. That is, the context of a sentence often helps activate a fuzzy memory or to differentiate between competing memories (is it WHAT or WHERE?).

Make a mental note of the problem if the student/s is having trouble remembering irregular-words. Be prepared to prompt difficult words when they are encountered in sentences

(see Sentence Reading activity below). But importantly, DO NOT hold the student back from progressing through the Lessons just because they have trouble naming the irregular-words in isolation.

Error correction

Correct with: This word is **want**. What word?

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXWEVQYGYgw>

Sentence reading

Materials: *Sentences in Student Booklet*

1. You are going to read some sentences.
The words that can't be sounded out are written in red.
2. First sentence. Remember: if you know the word, just say it. If you don't know it, look carefully and sound it out.

The Materials section refers to the "Sentences in the Student Booklet". Open the Student Booklet and find the activity labeled: Sentences for Lesson 39.

The sentences used in this activity are constructed with words that can be decoded using known letter-sound rules and known irregular-words.

The initial part of the script introduces a new rule: the words that can't be sounded out are written in red. The red font identifies words that follow our third reading rule: Some words can't be sounded out.

Error correction

Correct word reading errors as for the Whiteboard Words and Word List Reading activities (see above). Correct word reading errors for irregular (red) words as for the Irregular-word activities (see above).

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwc6PAu-ONQ>

Comprehension

Materials: *Comprehension passages in Student Booklet*

1. Direct the student to read the first item.
Then direct them to read each question *aloud* and answer it.
2. Repeat for remaining items if necessary.

The Materials section refers to the "Comprehension passages in Student Booklet". Open the Student Booklet and find the activity labeled: Comprehension for Lesson 39.

The student/s is directed to read the passage in the text box. They are then directed to read each question aloud and answer it verbally.

The purpose of these activities is to generate an understanding of the function of the different parts of speech within sentences such as verbs, nouns and adjectives. The student is not expected to be able to define these terms.

The questions that follow the sentences are not to be answered in sentence form. For example,

The black fox jumped over the log

What did the fox do?

should not be answered as: *The fox jumped over the log*. The word that signals what the fox did is the verb **jumped**. Teachers should make themselves familiar with the parts of speech referred to by the questions and direct the student to identify just those words in their answers.

In some cases it may be useful to point to or underline the relevant part of speech for the student/s as they are searching for the answer.

The grammatical sensitivity provided by these activities aids in comprehension. For example, the student reads the sentence

The sports carnival was cancelled because of the inclement weather.

The student doesn't know what INCLEMENT means. However, they know that it describes the WEATHER in the same way that BLACK describes the FOX. They can therefore infer that INCLEMENT means *bad*.

Error correction

Word reading errors should be corrected as for the Whiteboard Words and Word List Reading activities (see above). Errors for irregular (red) words should be corrected as for the Irregular-word activities (see above). Correct comprehension errors by pointing to the part of the sentence that answers the question (e.g., for JACK HAD TO SLOWLY INSPECT THE RUBBLE the answer to "How did Jack have to inspect?" is SLOWLY).

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5hzFHeSOck>

Story-reading

Materials: *Story in Student Booklet*

1. You are going to read a story now.
Remember, if you know a word, just say it. If you don't know a word, look carefully, and sound it out.

The Materials section refers to the "Story in Student Booklet". Open the Student Booklet and find the activity labeled: Story (for relevant Lesson).

Error correction

Word reading errors should be corrected as for the Whiteboard Words and Word List Reading activities (see above). Errors for irregular (red) words should be corrected as for the

Irregular-word activities (see above).

 **Video demonstration:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPeOWXrvN4g>