

TEACH READING

with **Orton-
Gillingham**



**72 Classroom-Ready
Lessons** to Help Struggling
Readers and Students
with Dyslexia Learn to
Love Reading

**Heather MacLeod-Vidal
& Kristina Smith**

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Educator,

We created this fun and easy-to-follow Orton-Gillingham-based text with the goal of helping your students improve their literacy and learn to enjoy reading and writing. As former classroom teachers, we saw the need for a phonics-based curriculum that met the needs of our students with dyslexia and other learning differences. We both experienced situations with our students (ranging in age from pre-K through 6th grade) that were difficult to remedy with the typical reading and writing workshops available through our schools.

We became trained in the Orton-Gillingham approach and began utilizing the approach with our students in small groups and private tutoring sessions after school. After seeing the results, we set out to make a bigger impact on students with dyslexia. Heather Vidal started a local tutoring business, Treetops Educational Interventions, and Kristina Smith began working for Treetops shortly after it opened. We both left teaching full-time and began working with students in a one-on-one setting using an Orton-Gillingham approach that is easy to follow and does not require weeks of training.

From our experiences in the classroom, trainings, research, and thousands of private tutoring sessions, we have crafted this 72-lesson teacher's resource guide. Each lesson is designed to explicitly teach a phonetic skill, and each lesson thereafter builds upon the skills of previous lessons so your students will be constantly using and reviewing all they have learned.

Before diving in, it's important to recognize that this book is for students who struggle with literacy, including reading fluency, phonics, and spelling. In the next few pages, we will provide a brief overview of what dyslexia is, how it's diagnosed, and the effective teaching methods for working with those who are diagnosed. It is important to note that while this is a resource designed for students with dyslexia, this method of teaching has proven effective for many children who struggle with phonics and fluency. Again, teachers who have students that struggle with reading, especially those new to reading, will find that this resource provides a foundation and reinforces already-learned phonetic concepts to help create fluent readers.

Sincerely,

Heather and Kristina

What Is Dyslexia?

People often think that dyslexia is strictly the confusion of similarly written letters, such as *b* and *d*, but it really encompasses much more. Dyslexia is a learning disorder that impacts one's ability to not only read, but to speak, spell, and write. Specifically, people with dyslexia may have difficulty with decoding, or identifying speech sounds, and learning how they relate to letters and words.¹ These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language. This, in turn, can lead to problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.² These deficits have no impact on one's overall intelligence, for those with dyslexia often tend to be very fast and creative thinkers.³ Typically, dyslexia is apparent in reading and language arts courses; however, students can struggle in any subject that contains any degree of reading. For example, they can have trouble reading and understanding math word problems. Dyslexia is considered to be the most common learning disability, affecting an estimated 17 percent of the population.⁴ Of those who have a learning disability, dyslexia is found in 80 to 90 percent of the cases.³ With prevalence rates this high, there is a very good chance that one of your students may be impacted by some degree of dyslexia.

Signs of Dyslexia⁵

Noted below are some signs of dyslexia to watch for at various school ages.

Preschool

- Late talking
- Learning new words slowly
- Trouble learning nursery rhymes or playing games that require recognizing rhyming patterns like hot, cot, and pot
- Difficulty learning the names of letters and letter sounds
- Problems forming words correctly—student may reverse sounds in words or confuse words that sound alike

Elementary School

- Shows difficulty understanding and processing what they hear
- Demonstrates difficulty remembering the sequence of things
- Reads below grade level
- Labors over sounding out simple words, like dog or cat, and/or cannot sound out or pronounce an unfamiliar word
- Struggles with coming up with the right word or forming the right answer to a question
- Labors over seeing (and occasionally hearing) similarities and differences in letter sounds and words (such as rhyming words or ones that begin with the same letter)
- Struggles with spelling; may not associate letters with sounds, like the letter *f* with the /f/ sound, as in fox
- Takes an unusually long time reading or writing, slowly acquires reading skill, or avoids activities that involve reading altogether

Diagnosing Dyslexia⁶

No single test can diagnose dyslexia, and a lot of factors may impact your student's ability to read that may not include dyslexia. The Mayo Clinic suggests the use of one or more of the tools listed below to help determine if a child is dyslexic. Only a professional can accurately diagnose your student.

- Vision, hearing, and brain (neurological) tests to help rule out any other potential disorders affecting your student's reading ability.
- A home life assessment to ensure the home setting is conducive to a proper learning environment.
- A developmental and medical history to assess the student's physical history and whether or not any medical conditions or learning disabilities related to the student's education may run in the family.
- Psychological testing to assess the student's mental health and to help determine if any mental health issues are contributing to the student's struggle with reading. Issues like depression and anxiety can play a significant role.
- Questionnaires taken by the student, family, and teacher to help pinpoint specific difficulties the student is struggling with.
- Reading assessments with the results analyzed by a reading expert.

⁶ "Dyslexia," Mayo Clinic, last modified July 22, 2017, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353557>.

Helping Students with Dyslexia

Effective Methods for Teaching Students with Dyslexia

Early literacy studies suggest that high-quality instruction consists of core literacy skills that target multiple areas of instruction, such as phonological awareness and word, syllable, and phonemic levels.⁷ The most significant characteristic of high-quality intervention is that there is an explicit approach to teaching the sounds of letters in isolation, which are then blended to form words.⁷ For example, an explicit approach to teaching spends multiple lessons reviewing the individual sounds for the letters *d*, *o*, *g*, and then in future lessons, demonstrates the blending of those letter sounds to form the word *dog*. This method helps the struggling reader decode words and then apply the same method to future and unfamiliar words.

Some methods of teaching literacy involve an implicit approach in which the instruction focuses on the identification of letter sounds within the context of the whole word.⁷ For example, showing the word *dog* along with a picture of a dog to serve as a clue to the word. While this method is effective for some, it is not the most beneficial for struggling readers.

Dyslexia can't be cured, but with the right support and instruction, reading can be made easier—and fun! *Teach Reading with Orton-Gillingham* is based on the aforementioned explicit approach to teaching using the Orton-Gillingham (OG) method to create a multisensory model of instruction.

Brief History of Orton-Gillingham

The principles of Orton-Gillingham were established by Samuel T. Orton, a neuropsychiatrist and pathologist, and Anna Gillingham, an educator and psychologist, in the 1930s and 1940s.⁸

7 E. J. Daly, S. Neugebauer, S. Chafouleas, and C. H. Skinner, *Interventions for Reading Problems: Designing and Evaluating Effective Strategies*, 2nd ed., (New York: Guilford Publications, 2015).

8 K. L. Sayeski, G. A. Earle, R. Davis, and J. Calamari, "Orton Gillingham: Who, What, and How," *TEACHING Exceptional Children* 51, no. 3 (December 2018): 240–249, doi: 10.1177/0040059918816996.

They created an approach to reading that (a) explicitly taught students the elements of language such as phonology, syllabification, and morphology, and (b) facilitated students' automaticity in applying this knowledge to the decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) of language.

The Orton-Gillingham Approach to Teaching

Essentially, the OG approach to reading instruction is based on breaking down language into individual and overlapping skills. The educator then creates instructional activities designed to promote mastery and automaticity of those skills.⁸

Sayeski et al. state several distinguishing features of the OG teaching approach:

1. Direct, systematic, incremental, and cumulative lessons, including oral reading, spelling, and new concept instruction.
2. Cognitive explanations, such as teaching phonics rules.
3. Diagnostic and prescriptive methods, such as planning lessons based on how the student performs in the current lesson.
4. Linguistics-based instruction, such as lessons that address topics like word families, blending, and handwriting.
5. Multisensory engagement, such as teaching and repeating a letter sound, visualizing and writing the letter, and forming the letter with a tactile material such as dough.

Why Use This Book

Research shows that the explicit approach to teaching literacy is the most effective technique to use with struggling readers. The Orton-Gillingham method combines that approach along with a multisensory model to teach and reinforce literacy skills. Using OG as its foundation, *Teach Reading with Orton-Gillingham* contains lessons, activities, and assessments to provide teachers with a clear and easy-to-use resource to improve their students' literacy while making it fun!

How to Use This Book

Getting Started

Necessary Materials

This book includes the foundation necessary to get started with an Orton-Gillingham approach. In order to make the lessons multisensory, it is helpful to have the following materials:

- Pencils
- Index cards
- “Bumpy” board (a plastic weaving sheet that can be purchased at a craft store)
- Plastic tray for tactile writing
- Tactile material for the tray, such as sand, shaving cream, or plastic water beads
- Counters, such as pennies, to model sounds

Supplemental Materials

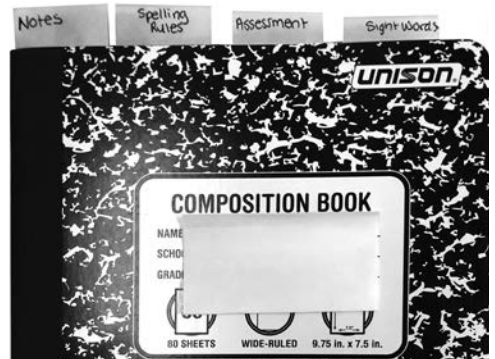
These materials are not necessary, but our students love them:

- Supplemental worksheets found at www.treetopseducation.com
- Buddha Board (a water-painting board)
- Magnetic doodle board
- Sidewalk chalk
- Letter magnets
- Play-Doh
- Pointer or fly swatter
- Surfaces with interesting textures, such as sandpaper, carpet squares, or fabric

Notebook Organization

In order to stay organized, it is important for students to keep a notebook dedicated to their work in the Orton-Gillingham system. A composition notebook divided into the following sections is best:

1. Notes
2. Spelling Rules
3. Assessment
4. Sight Words



Suggested notebook

Suggested Lesson Breakdown

We recommend taking at least a week or three sessions for each lesson. Some lessons may take longer based on their complexity. Here is our suggested time breakdown based on three 30-minute lessons per week.

Day 1

- Review previous concept(s)
- Introduce new concept
 - Mouth movement (Unit 1)
 - Letter formation (Unit 1)
 - Elkonin boxes
 - Syllabication (Units 3–9)
 - Teacher modeling

Day 2

- Review previous concept(s), review current concept
- Concept-Picture Connection (index cards). See page 14 for an example.
- Multisensory Connection

Day 3

- Review previous concept(s), review current concept
- Sight Word practice
- Decodable reading
- Assessment (if applicable)

Comprehension

Orton-Gillingham is a phonics program, but it is essential that reading lessons include comprehension instruction as well. We recommend 30 minutes of phonics instruction with an additional 15–30 minutes of comprehension instruction. Phonics is essential to improving students' fluency (and therefore enjoyment of reading). It is likely that reading comprehension will improve with time using this program.⁹ Reading comprehension can be taught through

⁹ V. Connelly, R. S. Johnston, and G. B. Thompson, "The Effects of Phonics Instruction on the Reading Comprehension of Beginning Readers," *Reading and Writing* 14, no. 5 (September 2001): 423–457, doi:10.1023/A:1011114724881.

read-alouds, book clubs, and guided reading. Research has shown that reading instruction is most effective when utilizing authentic novels, stories, and articles as opposed to textbooks. To make your comprehension lesson as effective as possible, include instruction on comprehension skills within a variety of texts. Be sure to utilize a variety of genres, including poetry, fantasy, and nonfiction.

Be sure to include instruction in one of these skills in each reading lesson:

- Making connections
- Visualizing
- Retelling
- Wondering
- Making inferences
- Determining important ideas
- Text features
- Text structure
- Author's purpose
- Synthesizing information across multiple sources

Review

Review is a crucial part of any Orton-Gillingham lesson. Students with dyslexia and other reading differences depend on the explicit nature of the Orton-Gillingham approach. A consistent routine with a review at its forefront helps students build the necessary phonetic skills needed in order to build connections.

We recommend devoting 10 minutes at the beginning of each lesson to review previous concepts, spelling rules, and sight words. A multisensory review is preferred. These are the activities and methods that we recommend using.

THE DOS AND DON'TS OF REVIEW

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Switch up your review activities often.• Review both concepts and sight words.• Keep it fun and brief.• Rotate between concepts that you know your student(s) are strong in and ones that they need more work on.• Use the information you glean from review as an informal assessment.• Keep notes on concepts your student(s) miss during the review. If you notice a pattern of struggle, go back and reteach the lesson(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't use the same activity every time.• Don't stick to reviewing just the previous lesson. You should be revisiting all concepts that your student has trouble with (even things that they have previously mastered).• Don't rely on pen and paper review activities. Multisensory instruction is a crucial part of the review, and of the Orton-Gillingham approach as a whole.

Orton-Gillingham is often used as an individualized approach, but many teachers implement these strategies with a group. Many of the ideas in this text can be modified for use in an individual or group setting.

Ideas for Review

List It!: Students turn and talk or independently come up with as many words as possible that showcase a previous skill. They can list these in a notebook, complete the exercise orally, or take turns listing them on the board in a word relay.

Identify It!: Show students a few pictures and ask which ones start with or contain the letter pattern that you request. To make it more fun, have students use pointers or fly swatters to smack the words.

Mold It!: Use a material like clay, Play-Doh, or wax sticks to mold letters and words.

Assess It!: Give students a mini spelling assessment. This should only be used after several skills have been covered.

Painting: Have students practice letter writing through painting. This can involve finger painting, painting with a brush, or even using a canvas board with water, such as a Buddha Board.

Tactile Reinforcement: Using a tactile material (sand, small beads, shaving cream, hair gel, sandpaper, rug squares, etc.), call out sounds or words for students to write. Circulate while they work, and always demonstrate the correct sound to ensure that students are able to self-correct as needed.

Hopscotch: Write previous skills in hopscotch squares. Have students hop from concept to concept while making the associated sounds. We also use this for sight words.

Red Light, Green Light: Hold up the index cards made during each lesson. Instruct students to name the letter, associated picture, and the letter's sound (for the card *p*, they would say, *p*, pig, and then make the /p/ sound). If they get it correct, they can take a jump forward. If they get it wrong, they stay in place. The goal is to reach the instructor by jumping forward with each correct answer.



Listing and molding words to review a previous skill.



Tactile reinforcement of sounds.

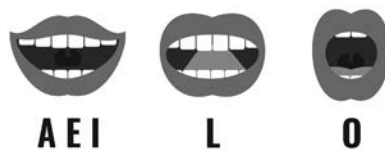
Introduction of a New Concept

When introducing a new concept, it is necessary to provide explicit, direct instruction. Oftentimes, lessons must be broken down into small, manageable parts. The Orton-Gillingham approach demands that students are taught to encode (write and spell) words prior to learning to decode (read).

Specific tips are presented before each unit in this book, and all lessons include letter-sound connections and teacher-modeling ideas.

Mouth Movement

Unit 1: Consonants, Consonant Digraphs, and Short Vowels, includes specific instructions for mouth movement. The explicit nature of teaching mouth movements is helpful for young children who are having difficulty connecting graphemes (letters) to sounds. The mouth chart can be used to offer students a visual representation as to how their mouth should look when articulating each letter sound. If you would like more detailed instruction on the proper mouth movements, please visit our website: www.treetopseducation.com.



Letter Formation

It is vital to establish proper habits for handwriting. The correct print formation will carry over into cursive.

Experiment with different size letters to determine if the student has an easier time with larger or smaller sizes. This information can be used to drive instruction and help students achieve success.



Multisensory Activities to Improve Handwriting

- Use a wet sponge to write the letter on the pavement.
- Practice “sky-writing” by writing the letter in the air.
- Use a wet paintbrush to form the letter either in the air or on a surface.



Using a wet paintbrush (top) and Play-Doh (bottom) as a tool to improve handwriting.

- Give students Play-Doh rolled into snakes. Ask them to lay down the Play-Doh into the correct letter formation using the same directional cues they would use to write the letter. After students form the letter, have them trace it with their finger using correct directional cues.
- Trace the letter using their index finger on a tactile material, such as sandpaper, a plastic weaving board, or a carpet square.

Teacher Modeling

When modeling a new concept, teachers must use several methodologies. Visual representations paired with auditory instruction help students with a variety of learning preferences. In this section, teachers model tapping, building words, and blending words. During this segment of the lesson, we recommend teaching students to copy down the words used to start the lesson. This is typically a list of four to eight words. This list should be written in the Notes section of their OG notebooks. When teaching a spelling rule, ask the students to copy the rule(s) in the Spelling Rules portion of their notebook.

Finger Tapping

Finger tapping is a must when using the Orton-Gillingham method. Tapping helps build the idea that sounds and graphemes are connected. This multisensory method is easy to implement and essential within the OG approach.

Students need to understand that letters have their own sounds, but they slide into the next sound without pause. Teach students to tap on the hand they do not write with so they can practice tapping as they write.

To be clear, finger tapping is more about associating sounds with letters, so tapping will not include silent letters. For words with more than five sounds, students can start again from their first finger.

Finger-Tapping Rules:

1. Tap once for each sound.
2. Digraphs get one tap only (*th, sh, wh, ch*, etc.).
3. Vowel teams get one tap only (*ea, ee, oa, ai, igh*, etc.).
4. Glued sounds are tapped once with as many fingers as there are letters in the sound (for example, *-ild* is tapped once with three fingers together).
5. Silent letters are not tapped, just sounds that are heard.

Elkonin Boxes

Elkonin boxes are a useful way to connect correct spelling with finger tapping. The boxes teach students to segment words into their phonological parts. Each box represents a sound, but boxes can contain more than one letter if a consonant digraph, vowel team, or glued sound is in the word. Specific examples of Elkonin boxes are used in some lessons, and the Tips, Tricks, and Things to Know section at the start of each unit shows more specific details about using Elkonin boxes within said skill(s). When creating Elkonin boxes for students, many teachers choose to design the boxes in a way that gives the student a hint about the length of the word, the height of letters, etc.

ELKONIN BOXES

t	o	p	
c	all		
th	inks	s	
s	l	a	te
c	r	ou	ch
qu	ai	l	

- One sound goes in each box.
- Consonant digraphs go in one box (*th, sh, ch, wh, -ck*).
- Vowel teams and diphthongs go in one box (*ea, oa, oi, ou, ay, etc.*)
- Glued sounds go in one box (*all, am, ink, etc.*)
- Silent *e* goes in the box with the letter before it.

Syllabication

We begin teaching syllabication in Unit 3: Closed Syllables. Each unit includes specific tips for syllabication; however, there are some important rules and patterns to know prior to starting instruction on how to break words into syllables.

TYPES OF SYLLABLES*

	Single Syllable	Multisyllabic
Closed	pan, snack, shrimp	cat/nip, in/dex, rab/bit
Silent e	cake, time, stone	pine/ cone , sun/shine
Vowel Team/Diphthong	beach, boat, tree, trout, spoil, taught	rai/sin, pea /nut, with/ out , Au/gust
Open	why, be	bo/nus, mu/sic, ba /by
r-influenced	fern, hurt, bird	spi/ der , twirl/ing
Consonant -le	None	a/ ble , trem/ ble

**Bolded letters model the taught skill.*

Rules

1. All syllables have one vowel sound.
2. Compound words should be divided between the two base words.
3. If two consonants appear in between two vowels, divide them in half.
4. If three consonants appear between two vowels, determine which two belong together. Blends and digraphs should not be separated.
5. When one consonant is in-between two vowels, first try dividing after the consonant to keep the vowel “closed in.” If that doesn’t sound right, try dividing before the consonant to keep the vowel open.
6. Never divide a vowel team or diphthong in half.
7. If there are two vowels in the middle of a multisyllabic word that do not work as a team, divide them in half.
8. The syllable type consonant *-le* pattern is its own syllable and should be divided as one.

Syllabication Activity Ideas

Ideas with Index Cards

- Use Play-Doh to “scoop” syllables.
- Have students cut syllables in half. Then play concentration with the separated pieces.
- Use straws to separate syllables.

Ideas with Movement

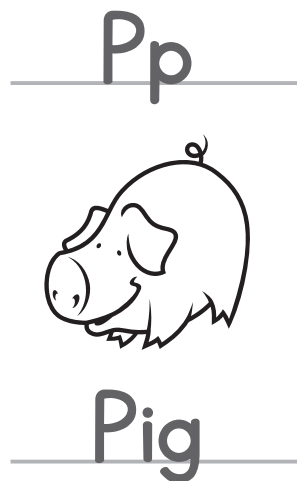
- Teach students to “pound” out syllables with their fists on a table. This can be combined with finger tapping to practice both spelling and breaking words into syllables.
- Play Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes. Have students start by touching their head then working downward (and back up if needed) to tap each syllable out.
- March out syllables by having students march in place and jump after the entire word.



Syllabication ideas with index cards

Concept-Picture Connection

During this segment of the lesson, students review previous index cards and create new index cards as seen in the example to the right. The cards include the letter along with its associated “guide word.” This guide word is used in the introduction of the concept. Go to page 286 for a complete list of guide words. To review previous cards, hold the cards facing your student as you would a flashcard. Tell your students to say the letter on the card, followed by the guide word, followed by the sound. For example, for the letter *p*, the student will say, *p*, pig, /p/. It is not necessary to review every card every time, especially if your student has mastered the skill with nearly 100 percent accuracy; however, you must review any new or tricky concepts on a regular basis. To keep your cards organized, we recommend keeping them on a ring.



Multisensory Connections

The Orton-Gillingham approach works because it solidifies concepts for students via multisensory connections. While it is sometimes tempting to skip these “messy” materials, they are truly essential to building those connections among students who struggle with reading. This is the point in the lesson in which students begin to apply the spelling concept to more independent tasks. The teacher reads a word or a segment of a word from an earlier lesson. The student then writes the word using a tactile material, such as sand, shaving cream, water beads, or hair gel. We recommend changing materials often to keep this part of the lesson fun and engaging.

For example, the teacher will say, “blot,” the students should then say, “blot,” begin writing and spelling out loud at the same time “b-l-o-t,” and then repeat “blot” after spelling. If there are more than a few students, whispering may be preferred. This should be modeled many times as a procedure.

Use the list of words provided in each lesson to guide instruction. Depending on the students’ needs, you may need to dictate each sound in the word.

When you begin teaching syllabication, it is helpful to have students write the word on a tactile tray and then put a slash between the syllables.

Words with Multiple Spelling Options

As students get further into the program, they will begin to notice that there are many spelling patterns that make the same sound. For example, the long *a* pattern can be represented with a silent

e, *ai*, *ay*, and *igh*. It is important to acknowledge how positive it is that the student remembers the different patterns. At the same time, it is important to correct misspellings when they happen and point out any clues that might help students determine which pattern is the most likely in a selected word. Oftentimes, there are specific instances that dictate when to use each pattern, but when there is not, teach students to try the most likely option first, followed by the next most likely option if the first is not correct. For example, when teaching the *r*-influenced vowel sounds *er*, *ir*, and *ur*, it is helpful for students to know that *er* is the most common pattern, followed by *ur* and then *ir*. Tips like these are included in each unit's Tips, Tricks, and Things to Know section. These rules should be copied into the Spelling Rules portion of students' notebooks.

Homophones, Homonyms, and Homographs

Observant students will begin to notice that there are many words with the same spelling, sound, or both! Orton-Gillingham instructors should teach the concept of homophones, homonyms, and homographs early in the program. To make this concept fun for students, keep a running homophone and homograph wall. When a student discovers a word that falls under one of these categories, they can create an index card with the alternate words.

Homonyms	Homophones	Homographs
<p>Words that are pronounced the same but may be spelled the same or differently. Their meanings are different. These refer to both homophones or homographs.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beet-beat • bear-bare • letter-letter 	<p>Words that are pronounced the same, but spelled differently. Their meanings are different.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pair-pear • hear-here • fare-fair 	<p>Words that are spelled the same but are pronounced differently and have different meanings.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bow(hair)-bow(ship) • minute(tiny)-minute(time) • rebel (noun)-rebel (verb)

Sight Words

Sight words are an important part of teaching reading. Sight words are high-frequency words, which are sometimes non-phonetic, that should be memorized. To be clear, there are very few words that do not follow the conventional rules of English. With that being said, students often do not possess the necessary reading skills early enough in their reading journey to read many high-frequency words. Because of this, it is essential to incorporate sight word instruction into your lessons. Students may realize later in their lessons that some of the words they learned as sight words are actually phonetic! If you are working within a classroom that has a word wall, you may choose to remove words from the word wall once they become phonetic.

There are suggested sight words in each lesson, but if your students have already mastered the suggested sight words, choose a word that you notice them misspelling in their writing. You may also reference the list of sight words in the Appendix on page 280.

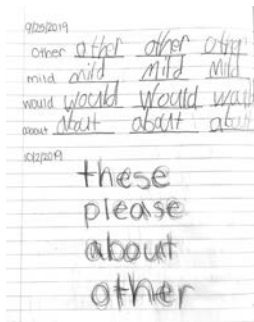
Procedure to Introduce New Sight Words

1. First, introduce the word by writing it in pencil on a blank index card. Write the word slowly to model correct letter formation. Place the index card in front of the students.
2. Now, model arm tapping.
 - Stand up and hold out your nondominant arm.
 - Say the selected sight word. For example, “very.”
 - Using your dominant hand, start at the top of your arm to tap out the selected sight word. Tap one time for each letter as you spell out the word. For example, to tap out the sight word “very,” tap four times starting from the shoulder and moving down to the wrist as you say “v-e-r-y.” Using a singsong voice or rhythm helps students retain the word.
 - Once you finish tapping the word, slide your dominant hand from the shoulder to the wrist as you say the sight word again.
 - Have students follow this procedure three times, or until they can spell the word without looking at the index card.
3. Next, place the index card with the word written in pencil over a bumpy board.
4. Ask students to trace the word on an index card with a crayon. By tracing the word with a crayon over the bumpy board, the word will become bumpy, which is essential for the next step.
5. Tell students to use the index finger from their dominant hand to trace the word as they say the letters.
6. After completing the procedure for the week’s sight words, place the sight words on a ring for easy practice. When your students are consistently reading and spelling the words correctly, you may choose to “retire the words from practice.
7. To complete the Sight Words portion of the lesson, tell students to write sentences using each of the week’s sight words in the Sight Words section of their notebook.

Important note: Students should never arm-tap sounds, only letters. It is important to differentiate arm tapping (letters) from finger tapping (sounds).

Additional Practice

If you notice that students are misspelling sight words that have already been covered, have them continue to practice using the words by writing the missed words in the Sight Words section of their OG notebook. You may choose to have them write the word three times each, use rainbow writing, or use word ladders to reinforce correct spelling.



Decodable Reading

To truly teach and assess a student's progress using the Orton-Gillingham approach, it is essential that the passages they are expected to read include only the phonetic concepts and sight words that they have learned up to that point in the program. The words, sentences, and passages in this text include only the skills that students have learned, so they are an accurate representation of a student's proficiency. One may notice that while students are able to master the words and sentences in this text, they may still flounder on grade-level texts outside of the program. This is normal, especially within the first units of this book, since students have not yet mastered all of the skills necessary to experience success in a text that may include many more concepts. Rest assured that a clear carryover of skills will occur once students have mastered more phonetic patterns and concepts.

Nonsense Words

Many of the lessons in this text include nonsense words. The purpose of teaching and assessing using nonsense words is to ensure that students have truly mastered the phonetic skills. In a 2016 study, researchers found that "forcing learners to attend to phonetic details during perceptual training resulted in significant improvement in pronunciation."¹⁰ Students are required to connect the graphemes with phonemes rather than relying on memory alone. As previously stated, children with dyslexia are often exceptionally bright. Because of this, they have often memorized many words. This may make them appear to be proficient readers at first, but with a closer examination, teachers will discover that they do not possess knowledge of the common spelling patterns necessary to decode more challenging or unfamiliar words.

¹⁰ R. Thomson and T. Derwing, "Is Phonemic Training Using Nonsense or Real Words More Effective?" *Proceedings of the 7th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference* (2016): 88–97.

Assessment

Assessments should be done in a one-on-one setting to determine a student's strengths and weaknesses. Directions should always be read to students to ensure they are only tested on the specific phonetic skills from the unit.

Where to Start

This book includes an assessment (see the Appendix on page 280) to determine where to start your student. This assessment can also be used each year to confirm mastery of covered skills. The assessment includes sections to assess both reading and spelling and a sight word section to drive instruction.

Unit Tests

Each unit includes a pretest and a post-test. Use these tests to assess progress and to determine if it is necessary to reteach any previous concepts. We also encourage you to conduct informal assessments during each lesson. This may mean marking down incorrect answers on the decodable reading section or identifying errors during multisensory practice. Each unit includes periodic mini assessments to assess progress and determine if your student is ready to move on. To keep track of assessment scores, you may choose to glue students' assessments into the Assessment portion of their notebooks.

Moving On

A student is considered proficient and ready to move on if they can correctly read and spell 85 percent of the words within the lesson. Some lessons may take more time than others. Scaffold your instruction to the needs of your students.

Additional Practice

This text includes a large list of words and sentences. With that being said, your students may require additional practice for some lessons. For more words, sentences, decodable stories, flip books, and games, visit our website: www.treetopseducation.com.

Unit 1: Consonants, Consonant Digraphs, and Short Vowels

Tips, Tricks, and Things to Know

In this unit, students learn how to read and spell words with consonants, consonant digraphs, and short vowels. Three spelling rules, *c* versus *k*, *-k*, *-ck*, or *-c*, the doubling rule, and the plural spelling rule, are also reviewed.

Mouth Movements

This unit includes specific instructions for mouth movements to form letters. The explicit teaching of mouth movements is helpful for students who struggle with making the connection between letters and sounds. The chart below provides a visual for your students to reference; or, they can visit our website at www.treetopseducation.com for more detailed videos.



A E I



L



O



C D G K N
S T X Y Z



F V



Q W



B M P



U



E e



R



Th



Ch J Sh

To make the mouth movements and sounds more concrete, encourage students to practice while looking in a mirror or camera.

This chapter also introduces the concept of voiced and unvoiced letters. To make an unvoiced letter, you release air, while a voiced letter releases sound from the throat. Many of the letters in this lesson are taught as voiced and unvoiced pairs. This means that the letters are formed with the same mouth movement, but one is voiced and the other is unvoiced.

Letter Sound Connections

Each lesson includes a list of letter sound connections. Students should listen to the list of words in each lesson. After each one, encourage them to give you a thumbs up or a thumbs down if they hear the sound of the letter you are practicing.

Letter Formation

Encourage students to practice correct posture and grip to establish healthy handwriting habits. Some handwriting practice is provided, but if you need additional ideas, feel free to visit our website at www.treetopseducation.com.

Multisensory Connections

In several of the lessons in this unit, students will be asked to only write the initial letter sound on the list of words using the day's multisensory material (see page 10 for ideas and more detailed instructions for using multisensory material). Once they learn vowel sounds, they will begin attempting to write full words, both real and nonsense.

Finger Tapping

When finger tapping, each letter should be tapped so long as it makes its own sound. It is important to point out that consonant digraphs (*ck*, *ch*, *sh*, *th*, and *wh*) all make one sound. In addition, sounds such as *ss*, *ff*, *ll*, and *zz* are all one tap as well because they make one sound.

Here are some examples:

fig	3 taps	f-i-g
luck	3 taps	l-u-ck
mess	3 taps	m-e-ss
cash	3 taps	c-a-sh
it	2 taps	i-t