



A parent's guide to
'Read Write Inc'
and
Supporting Phonics
at home





Introduction

'**Read Write Inc**' is a 'synthetic phonics' programme; this is a method of teaching reading which first teaches the letter sounds and then builds up to blending (synthesising) these sounds together to read whole words.

Within a matter of days of starting the programme children can begin to blend sounds together to read words such as 'm-a-t' and 's-a-t'.



Who is Fred?

'**Fred Frog**' is a character that is used in the programme to help children learn how to blend the sounds together. Fred is very good at reading sounds, but unfortunately he can't read whole words! The children help Fred to read whole words by using '**Fred Talk**'. This means breaking a word into its individual sounds, then **blending** the sounds together to read the whole word.

The 'Read Write Inc' programme not only teaches children the skills they need to read but also teaches them how to write. Fred Frog plays an important part in helping children to learn to spell words independently in an activity known as '**Fred Fingers**'. The children say the sounds that they can hear in a word, e.g. 'd-o-g', to work out how many sounds it has. (This is known as '**segmenting**') The word 'dog' has three sounds so the children would show three fingers and then press each finger, saying the sounds in order to spell the word. Similarly the word 'shop' has three sounds, 'sh-o-p'

so children would show three fingers for this word, although to write it down they have to write four individual letters.

Stages of the Programme

At the beginning of the programme children learn Set 1 'Speed Sounds'. They are called '**Speed Sounds**' as the aim is to learn them as quickly as possible! We teach the children to say the sounds as 'pure sounds'; this means saying the sounds without an 'uh' on the end, hence 'm' rather than 'muh'. Lessons follow a similar format each day so the children know what to expect and feel secure in their learning. In each lesson children will:

- Hear the sound
- Say the sound
- See the sound
- Read the sound
- Learn how to write the sound
- Review all the sounds they have previously learned
- Use 'Fred Talk' to orally blend words containing the new sound

There are 31 Set 1 Speed Sounds to learn – the 26 letters of the alphabet plus sh, ch, th, ng and nk. These are taught in groups of approximately five. After each group of letters have been taught, children take part in a '**Word Time**' lesson where they use their **blending** skills to read '**Green Words**'. These are words that can be 'sounded out' and will only contain the letters that have already been taught. The children will also use their **segmenting** skills to spell these words independently.

Children then progress onto the '**Ditty Stage**'. Ditties are short pieces of text which were devised by the programme's creator, Ruth Miskin, to bridge the gap between reading single words or short phrases and being able to tackle simple story books. Most children only need to read a few of these before

progressing onto the '**Storybooks**'. At both of these stages children continue to develop their reading and writing skills through structured lessons which follow the same format, continually raising their confidence and achievements. As the children progress through the seven different storybook stages they will also learn **Set 2 Speed Sounds** and **Set 3 Speed Sounds**.

At the start of the year all children in Reception will be taught together as a whole class. However as children begin to make progress at different rates we usually create two phonics groups so that we can cater for their different abilities more effectively. As children move into Key Stage One they will be assessed and put into homogenous (similar ability) groups so that they can make the best possible progress.

Partner Work

One of the key elements of the programme which contributes to its success is the emphasis on '**Partner Work**'. From the earliest 'Word Time' lessons children work with a partner and take it in turns to be 'the teacher' or 'the pupil' in a range of activities. This ensures that all children are involved in all aspects of the lesson for the whole of the lesson. Similarly when teachers ask a question there is a 'no hands up' rule so that every member of the group is expected to have an answer ready to share. Children have lots of opportunities to talk to their partner and decide upon answers together which also helps to build confidence and self-esteem.

Developing Writing

There is a careful balance of reading and writing activities throughout each stage of the Read Write Inc programme. We spend a lot of time during our first term in Reception learning how to write each new letter correctly. Children are encouraged in all writing activities to put this new knowledge into practice

and it will help them greatly if they are also supported in the same way when writing at home. Although it takes a little longer, the results will be better in the long run and the children will find it much easier to develop a joined writing style in years to come.

As the children learn how to write each letter they learn and recite a short phrase or 'mnemonic' which helps them to remember the correct formation.

Set 1 Speed Sounds		
Letter	Picture	Mnemonic
m	Maisie, standing next to two mountains	Maisie, mountain, mountain
a	apple	Round the apple and down the leaf
s	snake	Slither down the snake
d	dinosaur	Round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet
t	tower	Down the tower, across the tower
i	insect	Down the body and dot for the head
n	Nobby standing next to a net	Down Nobby and over his net
p	pirate	Down the plait and over/around the pirate's face
g	girl	Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl
o	orange	All around the orange
c	caterpillar	Curl around the caterpillar
k	kangaroo	Down the kangaroo's body, back up and round to his tail and down his leg
u	umbrella	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle
b	boot	Down the laces to the heel, back up and round the toe

f	flower	Down the stem and draw the leaves
e	egg	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg
l	leg	Down the long leg
h	horse	Down the head to the hooves and over his back
sh	a snake and a horse	The snake hisses behind the horse and the horse tells the snake to 'sh'
r	robot	Down his back, then curl over his arm
j	jack-in-the-box	Down his body, curl and dot
v	vulture	Down a wing, up a wing
y	yak	Down a horn, up a horn and under his head
w	worm	Down, up, down, up
th	a tower and a horse	Down the tower, across the tower, then down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back
z	zip	Zig-zag-zig
ch	a caterpillar and a horse	The caterpillar's hairs make the horse sneeze ch,ch,ch
q	queen	Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair (say she always takes her umbrella with her)
x	a girl exercising	Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side
ng	a thing on a string	a thing on a string
nk	I think I stink	I think I stink

Set 2 Speed Sounds

Letter/ Sound	Mnemonic	Examples of words to spell
ay	May I play?	play, day, may, way, spray, say
ee	What can you see?	see, three, been, seen, green, sleep
igh	Fly high	high, night, sight, light, might, bright, fright
ow	Blow the snow	blow, snow, low, show, know, flow
oo	Poo at the zoo	zoo, too, food, pool, moon, spoon
oo	Look at a book	look, took, book, cook, foot, shook
ar	Start the car	car, star, part, start, hard, sharp
or	Shut the door	sort, short, sport, horse
air	That's not fair	air, fair, lair, hair, chair, stair
ir	Whirl and twirl	girl, bird, third, whirl, twirl, dirt
ou	Shout it out	out, loud, shout, round, found, mouth
oy	Toy for a boy	boy, toy, joy, enjoy

When the children are confident with Set 2 sounds they are ready to discover that in the English language there are also alternative ways to represent some of the sounds they have already learned. This is where the teaching of Set 3 sounds fit into the program.

When the children first learn Set 3 sounds they will only learn them for reading, not spelling. Once they have learned each new sound for reading they will re-visit all of the Set 3 sounds and begin to learn how to spell words with these sounds and start to apply them in their writing.

Set 3 Speed Sounds

Letter/ Sound	Mnemonic	Examples of words to read/spell
ea	Cup of tea	clean, dream, seat, scream, real
oi	Spoil the boy	join, voice, coin
a-e	Make a cake	make, cake, name, same, late, date
i-e	Nice smile	smile, white, nice, like, time, hide
o-e	Phone home	home, hope, spoke, note, broke, phone
u-e	Huge brute	tune, rude, huge, brute, use, June
aw	Yawn at dawn	saw, law, dawn, crawl, paw, yawn
are	Care and share	share, dare, scare, square, bare
ur	Nurse with a purse	burn, turn, spurt, nurse, purse, hurt
er	A better letter	never, better, weather, after, proper, corner
ow	Brown cow	how, down, brown, cow, town, now
ai	Snail in the rain	snail, paid, tail, train, paint, rain
oa	Goat in a boat	goat, boat, road, throat, toast, coat
ew	Chew the stew	chew, new, blew, flew, drew, grew
ire	Fire fire!	fire, hire, wire, bonfire, inspire, conspire
ear	Hear with your ear	hear, dear, fear, near, year, ear
ure	Sure it's pure?	pure, sure, cure, picture, mixture, future

For more information you may like to visit the [Ruth Miskin Training](#) videos on YouTube and have a look at www.oxfordowl.co.uk

This document was created by R.Russell for Castlecroft Primary School