

Decodable Texts

For Beginning Readers

When children are first learning to read, they need exposure to texts that will help them to practise and consolidate their developing knowledge of sounds. Decodable texts are the 'training wheels of reading'.

What is decoding?

Decoding approach

a strategy that focuses on sound/letters correspondences in words

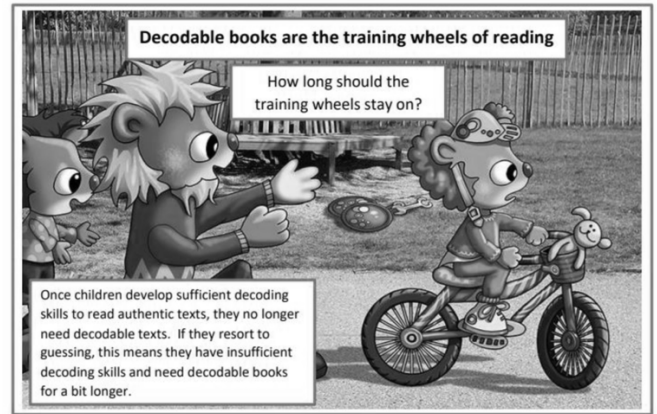


Read the word
1. Sound out the letters and blend the sounds into a word.
/m/ /aɪ/ /l/ → 'mail'.

Pip has mail in his hand.
"I must get the mail to my pals," he says.

Decodable texts carefully incorporate words that are consistent with the letter arrangements (graphemes) and corresponding sounds (phonemes) that have been taught in class. The books are intended to allow children to use their phonic knowledge to decode new words as opposed to using other strategies derived from context. Children should have practice reading books that contain sounds they know (review) and sounds they are currently learning.

Why are decodable texts best for beginning readers?



Decodable books are the training wheels of reading

How long should the training wheels stay on?

Once children develop sufficient decoding skills to read authentic texts, they no longer need decodable texts. If they resort to guessing, this means they have insufficient decoding skills and need decodable books for a bit longer.

How do I assist my child to read using a decodable text?

PAUSE

Provide the student with the opportunity to self-correct when they make an error by pausing for up to five seconds or waiting until the end of the sentence.

PROMPT

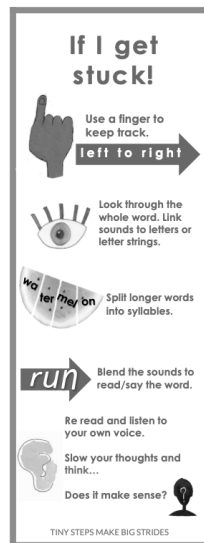
If the student does not self-correct after pausing, offer a general phonic prompt: "Have a look at the letters in that word again."

- If the general phonic prompt is unsuccessful, offer a second specific phonic prompt: "Look at the letters 'igh', what sound do they make?" or "You have the first and the last sounds correct, look at the middle sound."
- If the student is still unsuccessful after two prompts: Tell the student the unknown word and read on.

PRAISE

Praise frequently and explicitly, stating exactly what they are doing correctly
Praise when:

- Your student reads a word correctly
- Your student makes an error but then self-corrects
- Your student reads a word correctly after you have prompted them



When sufficient decoding skills are developed and comprehension is not compromised, then what?

Children are encouraged to read books of interest that are at an *appropriate reading level* for *him/her*. A good way to gauge if the book is suitable, is to use the 'Five-finger Rule':

- ✓ Choose a book
- ✓ Encourage your child to read the second page
- ✓ Hold up a finger for each word your child is not sure of or does not know
- ✓ If there are five or more unknown words on that page, an easier book should be chosen. Use the five-finger rule on two more pages if you still think the book is *not too difficult*.

Please contact your child's Teacher should you have further questions regarding Decodable Readers.

Images via:
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