

NOW READ THIS NOW READ THIS NOW  
**READ** THIS NOW READ THIS NOW **READ**  
THIS NOW RE NOW **READ** THIS NOW  
**READ** AD THIS NOW **READ**  
THIS READ THIS NOW  
**READ** IS NOW **READ**  
THIS **READ** THIS NOW  
**READ** AD THIS NOW **READ**  
THIS NOW **READ** THIS

**NOW  
READ  
THIS**

**OR LEARN TO READ IN TEN  
DIFFICULT LESSONS**

An idiosyncratic approach to  
English literacy

Printable version of the

**Tutor's Introduction**

[www.nowreadthis.com.au](http://www.nowreadthis.com.au)

**NOW READ THIS or Learn to Read in Ten Difficult Lessons.****ILLITERACY:**

This is another way of saying "missed opportunity", but it is not a lost one. Be assured most adult non-readers will know and use several thousand words, and fit them together as well as any reader. They know what they've seen and heard, the meaning associations and contexts, the words that describe it all, and acceptable ways of linking them together "properly". Conversation is not a problem--creating and using "hard copy" is. A parallel is the musician who "plays by ear"; can't read a note, but no-one knows--the missing skill remains tantalising in its possibilities. However, one who is proud of such a state simply redefines the word ignorance and does themself a great injustice. Wasn't it Tennessee Williams who said "satisfaction is death"?

**Historical Note:**

*Now Read This* was originally written in 1956. It was first tried out in a small country school in New South Wales, Australia. This was where a pupil first drew the characters that appear throughout the programme. They were nicknamed **Spingees** because of their shape, and have continued to illustrate the books of this programme ever since.

**THE GOALS OF NOW READ THIS: confidence and fluency.**

This programme has been re-designed for adults who have little or no confidence with written words, and those seeking fluency with a new language. But it will also work with older school students, university students both native and foreign.

Specialist and Primary teachers have easily adapted the programme for children with reading difficulties.

The exercises and progressions are simple; the "difficulty" is in the regimen needed: careful looking and listening, careful mimicry, careful self-evaluation, and of course, regular repetition with constant revision.

So the most important goal is to promote self-discipline and motivation, the acceptance of the value of work, and pride in achievement.

NRT aims to supply reading and speaking skills; efficient and confident comprehension, and the development of a personal handwriting that underlines the individuality of the learner.

**The LESSON PROGRAMME format:**

**Lessons 1 to 5:** deal with the five vowels and have the same format:

- a Core consisting of  
**Listening and Saying:**
  - **easy sounds** as a slide show,
  - **easy words** as a slide show and then
  - **easy words** in spoken lists.
  
- and More consisting of
  - **SPECIAL SOUNDS** and
  - the "**WRY**" family of soundsThese are presented as wordlists.
  
- **CARTOONS: easy words** in contextual cartoons.

**Lessons 6 to 10:** have a variety of formats that are appropriate for each of their particular topics. They have further explanations from the **Tutor** button, and additional reading pages under the **Reading** button.

On every page there are buttons or tabs that enable the tutor or learner to instantly jump to other pages with relevant information. This will make the answering of student questions very easy, especially in the area of **NEW SOUNDS**.

**The REFERENCE PROGRAMME format:**

Grammar, Syntax, Parts of Speech, Figures of Speech, Poetry, humour...plus more, are to be accessed by way of the **Grammar** tab on the main title page.

The **Write Now** tab accesses the chapter that helps a learner to write.

On each chapter heading and many unit pages there is a **TUTOR** tab that will lead to more helpful information for the tutor.

**THE STRUCTURE OF NRT: how the goals are to be achieved.****1. INTER-ACTIVITY**

The interactivity has been kept as minimal and as conventional as possible, and will lead the self-motivated student into some interesting territory beyond the "core" of the basic ten lessons, and into the "more"...into Grammar and formal structures.

**The tutor-teacher-trainer-coach must be thoroughly familiar with the programme contents and the graphic display controls before attempting to show the learner how to navigate.**

Preview the first five lessons at "core" level and see, listen, and interact as a learner would.

*Using the interactive buttons supplies the quickest grasp of the whole programme.*

*When tutoring, avoid a "one-at-a-time" approach: run the first five together, and detour to the specific problem lessons when the learner asks a specific question; that is, go where the learner leads you. Examine how you could adapt the interactivity to your circumstances. Turn off the sound and explain in your own way, I'm not perfect.*

**Note that nearly every "page" of NRT is very concentrated...so much so that they become teaching units...one idea, one focus, one point of interest per page. Keep this in mind. The buttons on each page take you further within the same or related idea or focus.**

## 2. THE COLOUR CODE:

A system of colour **HINTS** as **an aid to pronunciations....**

*In this programme, colour is used to represent different sounds.*

Wherever the **colour code** is used as a hint for correct pronunciation, a simple convention is used....**all** lettering is in **light yellow** if the phonic sound is soft (and it most often is) or is sounded as its alphabet or spelling name), and only the hard vowels, vowel + vowel digraphs and vowel + the W-R-Y digraphs and hard vowel equivalents are **colour-coded**.

In other words, everything coloured light yellow is following the phonic rules and is reliable. But the exceptions, the **NEW SOUNDS**, **SPECIAL SOUNDS** and **hard vowels**, need colour coding because they are not, and confuse learners trying to construct the sound phonically.

If a lesson or reading session needs to draw specific distinctions, then **pink** instead of light yellow is used to emphasise the point that a vowel is **soft**, and **turquoise blue** that a vowel is **hard**.

In other words, colour is used instead of phonetic marks.

## 2. THE COLOUR CODE: (continued)

**Softness is the rule, hardness the exception.**

Both tutor and learner must be aware of this...find it in Lesson One **Reading**, and look for it in every lesson page of the programme.

Throughout the whole programme there are two important colour codings:

- the soft u vowel sound "uh" that is **always** coloured a **dull orange**. 'Uh' is a very common sound in spoken idiomatic English, and has many spellings.
- silent or "mute" letters written into words are colourless...**white**.

### 3. THE SOUND TRACK:

**THE REAL WORLD: hearing words in context...being read to...listening.**

Reading does not stand alone but is supported by the whole of the person's experience in **listening** to stories, seeing stories, telling stories, creating stories, relating events, giving evidence, writing sentences, asking and answering questions, discussing all sorts of things. The tutor/teacher must mix them together as a continuing process, and a rich one at that. Remember not to get bogged down with pictures; children need pictures to name things, to make lists. The lists are surprisingly small.

Adults concern themselves with meaning; the words **between** the pictures. The joy of reading and studying is to form and understand your own within your self, and to be able to externalise the pictures as diagram, plan, and art. Look on "pictures" as "Navigational Aids", "Street Directories", or "Tourist Maps". A good visual aid to use to convey this concept is the work of the Aboriginal painters of the Western Deserts of Australia.

#### 4. VISUAL AIDS: Toons, Animations, Lists, Diagrams, Notes.

All visuals have a switchable and controllable sounded version.

##### Visual aids for training memory:

###### a) THE BLACK LINE MASTER PAGES.

Every unit in **Now Read This** has a corresponding printable page.

(Black line masters)

On every Tutor tab in the programme is a link to worksheets that are pertinent to the pages currently being viewed.

They are also available from the **Now Read This web site**.

These worksheets are black and white photocopiable versions of every fully coloured unit in the programme. Naturally, the colour-coding, and references to such on the pages, renders them straight-forward hint-free reading resources when printed in black only.

Using these pages with the students during the lesson, allows them to notate their progress. They can highlight, underline or circle any word that is of concern, needs more work, or is successfully learnt. To help them memorise the words they can colour them using highlighters or simply copy them. There is space on every page for additional notes.

These pages can also be used for revision or homework.

The printout pages are all A4 size.

**b) FLASH CARDS:**

There is a large variety of flash cards available with **NRT**. They are on the disc and also available from the web site.

They range from the simplest phonic sounds and single syllable words, to a wide variety of sight words.

You may also wish to make your own flash cards, tailoring the words to specific weaknesses.

The flash cards are approximately the size of playing cards. The learner can carry a personal pack for constant work and revision. As each card is learnt perfectly it is removed from the pack.

### Flash Card Games:

\* Print two sets of the same cards. Keep the sets very small, say just 5 words to start. Place them face down on a table in a random order. The learner turns one card, reads and memorises it, then turns it back down. Next, another card is turned, read, and memorised and placed back on the table facing down. The learner continues until a matching pair is found. These two are removed from the table. The game is finished when all the words are paired and removed.

A variation on this game can be matching words such as singular and plural case, past and present tense, or even adjectives and matching nouns.

*Obviously, the greater the number of flash cards, the more valuable the resource will be. But be aware that the more you have the more sorting and organisation is needed.*

\* Place ten of the flash cards on the floor one pace apart. The learner "walks" the cards, saying each word aloud as the foot is placed beside the card. If the student stops walking, it's back to the beginning. This is the sort of co-ordination exercise that can produce excellent results, and variations on the theme are many.

\* Spread the cards over a large surface and sort them into correct sentence structures...ask questions...find answers.

**c) INTERACTIVE CARTOONS: context awareness...getting the gist...getting the message.**

Cartoons occur throughout the programme for variety and revision purposes. They add interest and offer an opportunity for the learners to discuss the content of the written and drawn page.

- In the cartoons for lessons 1 to 5, sound can be activated by clicking the mouse once on the lettering.
- Where cartoon pages appear without any text, moving the cursor over the page will make reading passages visible.
- Double-clicking on the page will make all of the text visible, while the mouse-over will show the words or sentences more clearly.

c) **INTERACTIVE CARTOONS: context awareness...getting the gist...getting the message.**

(continued)

- Double-clicking the mouse on a cartoon page will most often reveal the same text in hand written cursive, sometimes with less colour reading hints.

*Mastering the reading of hand-written cursive is mastering the final degree of reading difficulty...the final test for a reader.*

- Double-clicking again will toggle between available versions of the same page.

*Some cartoons deal with a broad subject. These are very useful when the superimposed text and/or the sound track are switched off, and the class uses the visual as a talking/speaking prompt.*

5. "WRITE NOW": animated and inter-active writing reference.

"Hand Writing"

The 'Write Now' extension in 'Now Read This' presents a stroke-by-stroke animation of the formation of each letter, in both upper and lower case, using a printing style. These are preliminary lessons.

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF READING:****"THE METHODS"**

No matter how many methods are employed, there are but two sides to learning to read: **Phonic Analysis/ Synthesis** and **SIGHT WORDS**.

**1. Phonic analysis:**

Phonic analysis is the breaking-up of a word into its primitive sound parts. Phonic synthesis is the opposite ... the putting-together of these sounds to make words ... just as a CHILD learns to think and speak from "nowhere" by doing the human thing: listening carefully, mimicking, playing with sounds, finding words, delighting in rhyme and rhythm and in contradiction and irony; then using them all. Sound familiar? What's missing? ... Reading and Writing.

*(Phonics: "of" the human voice)*

## 2. "Sight"- words and the "look-say" method ...

...is where a learner recognises the "look" of such words as laugh, yacht, and so on - words that defy phonic analysis, and learns to attach the right sound to each of them. We readers learnt all these words "by heart", or "parrot-fashion", or "rote"; one at a time. There is no obvious pattern that can help us make even a guess at pronunciation. It's a clash with another time or another language.

Our ancestors observed that **Oral Histories** were inefficient and vulnerable, and realised that new and more permanent systems of record were necessary to increase the chances for cultural survival. And so organised codes of visual symbols linked to sound and meaning evolved. Call this "elemental look-say" -- that is, "this brand new mark means that word you've been using since the dawn of memory".

So, in reality, ALL things represented ("**re**"-presented) are "look-say" or "sight" words! A Phonic system comes later, and is an attempt to make things **easier for all** -- not just a select few. The principle is bound up in democratisation.

*The self-explanatory "look-say" method relies on "flash cards".*

**Look at Reading through the learner's eyes:**

How quickly can you read **Kriegsgefangenenlager** or **Kebangsawanan**?

Didn't you break them up into \*syllables? Did you not stumble or hesitate in recognising and pronouncing them? Do you stumble over reading "prisoner-of-war-camp", or "sociology"?

Identify, understand and appreciate difficulties that the student might have. Plan any reading lessons carefully, always with an eye to slow but sure progress. There is plenty of time. If some advance be made in each lesson, however small, the pupil is always achieving -- and that is what is necessary for success and self-confidence. Accentuate the positive.

*\*Syllables are the sound units of words. "Syll-a-ble" (syll-uh-bl) has three, and is therefore "multi-syllabic". Words with only one sound are termed "mono-syllabic".*

**For adults to become Easy Readers:**

**Self-Confidence:** *from defensive self-consciousness and guilt towards a free personal style and expression.*

Many adults stumble and stutter over word recognition even though their vocabulary may be considerable. In other words, they have found and know meaning by ear, but not by eye (in the sense of interpreting the same word using this conventional code of visual symbols we call the Alphabet). There is the big problem -- how to learn, know, and use those sound and symbol skills everyone else seems to have mastered so easily and so long ago --- how to use time more valuably, to study and to learn, to go on and achieve goals.

\* *Competent word-recognition comes only after the sounds and sight-words have been mastered.*

\* *Fluency, accuracy and expression in reading come only after word-recognition has been mastered.*

**Reading internally at speeds faster than speech is the next goal.**

Interestingly, this can only happen as more and more easily-read words become sight-words themselves. Consider sight-words as pictures or sculptures; if seen often enough, they become part of your world of meanings and associations. Can you look at the cover of your favourite novel and instantly feel its contents in your memory? One thing's certain, you've come a long way from phonic analysis and synthesis ... a book in a few milliseconds ... yet you can switch to analysis and involvement and "slow read" already known and revisited things ... recitation "by-heart" beyond drudgery or the duty-bound ... a question of need ... even reverence for the word.

The Play, the Poem, the "Classic" are all on this other side ... based in word-love, quote-ability, geometry, shape, sound, gesture, and the style. The Philosophers reside here, where new and old thoughts are born and re-born and the world continues to start anew. We seek to grasp them all as wholes ... to "grok" it all.

So a Speed-Reader has a considerably larger vocabulary of sight-words, even sight-phrases, -clauses, -sentences. But Speed is never mastered, it is comprehension and association bound. The fact is, the more you read, the faster you will read. Speed is not of the essence ... ease is.

**The final Goal: Creative Thinking and Writing: Fact and Fiction:**

letters, e-mails, diaries, notes, chronicles, poetry, stories and histories ... thoughts into "hard copy". Words to keep or share.

*The only considerations are:*

**Quality:** *sensitivity, clarity, brevity, "art",*

and

**Fulfillment:** *to learn, to understand, to be entertained and diverted, to grow and evolve (Catharsis), to experience The Epiphany and The Revelation, and to discover the joys of self-expression and the dedication of Teaching.*

The following Rules **MUST** apply in the implementation of the Core Lessons:

**Rule 1.**                      **Practise**

There must be practise at home and in the "classroom". Compare the procedure with learning to play the piano. The instruction is "Please practise, practise, practise - and make just as much noise as you would in learning to play the piano". That means looking and listening carefully, and reading out aloud.

Reading aloud demands an awareness of the function of capitals, commas and full-stops ... **these show how natural breathing and reading aloud are inextricably linked.**

There is a **Punctuation Aid** included as an extension of the **Preliminary lesson**. Don't become preoccupied with it, use it in an introductory manner, and return to it as questions arise. Always emphasise that the fewer the punctuation marks the better --unnecessary complexity or length always reduces clarity.

Select tutoring aids creatively: Books, Magazines and Newspapers with examples of good and poor usage.

Be aware that this programme cannot be current in the content of its comprehension tests - the Tutor's role is to make lessons topical and locally relevant.

**Rule 2.**        **DRILL method**

Learning to play any musical instrument confidently and easily has no short cuts. Learning to read and write a language is also a tough business - one of life's biggest obstacles for many people. Look at it that way. Daily practise is a basic requirement, and success in any session will be sufficient motivation for continuing. Time is no object.

**Rule 3.**        **Do not rush**

Each learner must learn at his/her own rate. As a tutor, always take your time, but don't waste any. Slow progress is better than none.

**Rule 4.**                      **The Alphabet Rules!**

Establish this policy from the first. **An Alphabet is a "rule"**, if not "*the*" rule. In learning to read, rules must outweigh the exceptions. Exceptions, when learned with the rules, are only confusing (even if exceptions may prove rules in retrospectivity). The teaching point is to emphasise one over the other until it is unnecessary to do so.

### Evaluating learner progress and testing:

As progress is made, explain the value of turning off the sound for any page, and then reading the page aloud.

As a tutor, select relevant reading material in hard copy. Use the programme to find words with which the student has difficulty. In that way, the student can practise the word and examine words that are in some way similar.

There are printable tests available for download from the **Now Read This** web site.

[Click here to go to the download page.](#)

## PRELIMINARY LESSON: LEARNING THE ALPHABET

The "**Write Now**" tag takes you to the "**Traffic Light System**" where the Alphabet is graphically constructed on screen with parallel instructions and pronunciations. The monologue allows for "self-instruction" if a tutor is not available.

The lettering "style" should be seen as offering the basic idea of each letter. It is not intended that it be made the ideal or a standard to emulate. This is about discrimination and recognition.

[Click on this text to see the title page of the "Write Now" section of Now Read This.](#)

**PRELIMINARY LESSON: LEARNING THE ALPHABET** (continued)

*There are template pages that are down-loadable from the **Now Read This**' web site. They are also on the disc that contains this programme. There are 'black-line-master' ruled pages for right and left handed letter-tracing.*

The method here is to copy or to trace each letter until they are known by sight, named by sight, and sounded by sight.

A distinction must be drawn: this is printing, or rather pre-handwriting. **The eventual goal is a cursive efficiency -- style.** In the context of this scheme, '**cursive**' equals '**running writing**', linked letters, *Italicisation*, writing sloped to the right, penmanship, script, Copperplate, Calligraphy... but never cold deliberate '**printing**'.

In '**Write Now**', there are also template pages showing how to write in the cursive style. To write in this style and to sign your own name is the ultimate goal of '**Write Now**'.

**"Hand Writing" - making your mark.**

As memory and co-ordination evolve towards automatic gesture, pride in personal style and a unique signature will emerge naturally as an on-going self set goal. The tutor needs only to make sure appropriate writing materials are always at hand, and that any work at the computer is paralleled with memory testing on paper.

The left-handed student must also practise this activity, there is no alternative. Suggestions for Left-handers are included in the Tutor Notes of '**Write Now**' ... it is essential for right-handed tutors to be thoroughly aware of the physical problems.

Dissuade left-handers and right-handers from writing '**backhand**' (sloping to the left).

## What comes NEXT...after the achievement of Literacy ?

Writing means more than making the appropriate and conventional marks; it means the whole process of organising and conveying meaning and intention...thoughts into words, words into writing, writing to be read and shared

One who writes is a writer, not a letterer, or a calligrapher, or a sign and ticket writer. Writing is the creative end of all communicative endeavours and stands most importantly as the evidence of individuality; it rounds off the Self by explaining the Self to others. It is the goal of all "**Wordists**", all Poets, all Writers, all children.

Writing includes the notation of musical thought ... but that's another course.

### **INITIAL LEARNER EVALUATION SESSION:**

The learner **must** have a good knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet.

The tutor's role is to determine where the beginning is for each individual learner, and to prepare them for Lesson One accordingly, using the visual aids supplied as **preliminary lessons** (introductions).

The tutor must identify and remedy any basic deficiencies the learner might have.

Use the following 10 questioning areas to assess the learner's reading and writing abilities before starting any teaching or tutoring.

Q1. Does the learner know that when we speak, we make words by adding sounds together one after another, and that when we save sounds as written marks, we do so from left to right and top to bottom ?

Does the learner know what the word **Alphabet** means ?

Does the learner know left from right ?

Does the learner know top from bottom ?

Q2. Does the learner know the names of the 26 letters of the Alphabet?

Can the learner recite the **Alphabet** from memory?

Can the learner read each letter in any order?

Click on this text to see and hear the whole alphabet. Use this **preliminary lesson** if the learner needs help to recite any part of the alphabet.

Q3. Does the learner know that each single letter has another sound as well as its name sound?

Does the learner know the sounds that each of the letters represent?

Click on this text to see and hear the phonic sounds of the 26 letters of the Alphabet.

*The letters on this linked page are written in lower case.*

Q4. Does the learner know the 5 vowels and their sounds?

Pre-requisite (must know):

a as in cat

e as in met

i as in bit

o as in not

u as in but

a as in late

e as in mete

i as in bite

o as in note

u as in cute

Does the learner know the difference between these sounds?

Can the learner imitate them?

Does the learner know what a vowel is?

Can the learner recite the vowels by heart?

Can the learner read each vowel in any order?

*The Vowels are the keys to the sound structures we use and identify as words, and must be treated so right from the beginning.*

Click on this text to see and hear the hard and soft sounds that are made by the 5 vowels.

**Q5. Does the learner know the sounds of the remaining 21 letters of the alphabet known as the consonants?**

*(The consonants ALSO have sound variety, but experience has shown that these "incidentals" are better left for later, after the student is familiar with the more usual sound of each letter. These "incidentals", or variations of sound, are all explained in the 10 lessons of **Now Read This**, and are typified as Exceptions to the "rules".)*

Check these for instant recognition and note weaknesses.

**Pre-requisite** (learner must know):

B	=	<b>buh</b> (as in <b>but</b> )
C	=	<b>kuh</b> (as in <b>Inca</b> )
D	=	<b>duh</b> (as in <b>dud</b> )
F	=	<b>fuh</b> (as in <b>fun</b> )
G	=	<b>guh</b> (as in <b>gun</b> )
H	=	<b>huh</b> (as in <b>hut</b> )
J	=	<b>juh</b> (as in <b>jut</b> )
K	=	<b>kuh</b> (as in <b>Inca</b> )
L	=	<b>luh</b> (as in <b>lug</b> )
M	=	<b>muh</b> (as in <b>mud</b> )
N	=	<b>nuh</b> (as in <b>nut</b> )
P	=	<b>puh</b> (as in <b>pup</b> )
Q	=	<b>kwuh</b> (as in <b>aqua</b> )
R	=	<b>ruh</b> (as in <b>run</b> )
S	=	<b>suh</b> (as in <b>sun</b> )
T	=	<b>tuh</b> (as in <b>tug</b> )
V	=	<b>vuh</b> (as in <b>diva</b> )
W	=	<b>wuh</b> (as in <b>Allawah</b> )
X	=	<b>eksuh</b> (as in <b>excellent</b> )
Y	=	<b>yuh</b> (as in <b>yum</b> )
Z	=	<b>zuh</b> (as in <b>Eliza</b> )

[Click on this text to see and hear the soft sounds of the 21 consonants and 5 vowels, and related tutor notes.](#)

Q6. Is the learner aware that the written Alphabet has two forms: as Capitals/Upper-case and as Lower-case?

Can the learner write his or her own name (using the English language system)?

Is the learner aware of the functions of Capital letters, (Sentence beginnings, EMPHASIS and Names) ?

Click on this text to **see and hear** the **hard sounds of the 21 consonants and 5 vowels**, and related tutor notes.

*These sounds are written in **CAPITALS** (upper-case letters).*

Q7. Is the learner aware that when we write words, we can control and organise them using a system of marks that are not letters?

Can the learner **name** the marks ?

Click on this text to **see** examples that can be used to introduce the learner to the marks used for **punctuation**.

*Use this **preliminary lesson** to show the variety of marks we use to make written English more readable...but don't spend too much time there...**Punctuation** can be learnt as it is needed and is straight- forward.*

*Capitalisation, commas, and full stops are the first elements the student should learn...then the speech-related marks for quotation, questioning, exclaiming. The simple convention to understand is that when **reading aloud**, the voice **drops** to a stop, and usually **rises** to a comma.*

Q8. Is the learner familiar with the system of phonetic marks (graphic hints) that tell us how to sound the variants of vowels, and vowel plus vowel digraphs?

*(Digraphs are sounds represented by two letters).*

Click on this text to **see** and **hear** the **hard and soft vowels**. Examine the **phonetic symbol** above a vowel that represents either a "hard" sound (straight line) or "soft" sound (curved line...a smile).

Q9. Is the learner familiar with the **graphic symbols** for:

<b>direction / progress:</b>	<b>arrows &gt;</b>
<b>sameness / "as in":</b>	the <b>equals sign =</b>
<b>emphasis / stress:</b>	the <u>underline</u> , <b>Bold text</b> and <i>Italics</i>
<b>yes / correct / right:</b>	the <b>tick ✓</b>
<b>no / incorrect / wrong:</b>	the <b>cross</b> or <b>X</b> letter
<b>alternatives:</b>	the <b>forward slash /</b>
<b>additional information:</b>	<b>brackets ( )</b>
<b>and:</b>	<b>ampersand &amp;</b>
<b>at:</b>	<b>@</b>

These 9 symbols are incidental to the acquisition of literacy skills and shouldn't be given undue importance at the early stages of learning to read. But the first 3, the arrow, equal sign and methods of emphasis are used consistently throughout the programme and should be explained as the learner questions their function.

**Q 10. English as a second language:**

Is the learner literate in their first language ?

Does their first language use a different notation than English?

Is the learner left or right handed ?

**RECORDING LEARNER PROGRESS:**

**“LOGGING-ON”:** registration of users, tracking, and report cards.

On every lesson title page in the programme is a button offering the option for the learner to register as a user .... to **‘log on’**.

The data for this registration is stored in an encrypted form in the programme folder. When the user first logs on to the programme they are required to register and create an exclusive password that must be used each time new sessions are begun. In a classroom situation, the tutor also has access to learner records...but no one else.

So the system allows a learner to have their progress recorded, and to carry on from where they left off, and it allows a tutor/supervisor to monitor the progress that each student has made.

**NOTE:** *Tutors can use this capability to track **their own use** of the programme...where they are up to in teaching a particular class or individual.*

**REPORT CARD:**

Under the **'log on'** button, there is an option to look at the **'report card'**. Clicking on this takes the user to a page that lists the units that they have spent more than 10 seconds viewing. It shows how long each unit has been viewed by the user and when it was last accessed. Tutors should monitor usage and progress.

**ON-GOING ASSESSMENT:****MEMORY: watching the indicators.**

Writing-up, and writing-down. In addition to having the learner reading aloud, further testing must include the writing-down of as many words as can be remembered from a tutorial session. Regular exercise in the transcription of a lesson will give true indication of the accuracy and efficiency of the pupil's recognition and comprehension. It abets the hand-writing and spelling co-ordination of the general literacy aim. All must come together.

**Oral Reading Memory:**

The tutor cannot be satisfied with a halting, jerky delivery in oral reading. **"Read it again, please"** should be the request repeated over and over until the fluency of reading equals that of the pupil's ordinary conversation.

**Keyboard / Typing Skills:**

Keyboard skills can be included with the same aims of fluency and efficiency.

The 21st century letter is quickly becoming e-mail, and the skill area is "touch-typing" (and "text-typing"). Another discipline sure enough, but a very small pain for a very great gain. Do not over-emphasise keyboard skills, let the keyboard explain itself, and let the learner discover for themselves (furtzing).

**NOW READ THIS** recommends:

**"MAVIS BEACON TEACHES TYPING"** a useful Touch-Typing programme. Visit [www.mavisbeacon.com](http://www.mavisbeacon.com)

At the time of writing, old versions of the programme were available for free from the web site. This programme can also track user progress.

**The Reading "Rules":**

- a) that the sound "uh" is the basis of all words. It is the simplest and easiest sound to make. Even a cow says "mmm**uh**" not "moo", and a sheep "baaa**uh**" not "baa".
- b) that our Alphabet is a set of symbols. That all the sounds we make can be attached to "**uh**" and be represented by just twenty-six simple marks; the beginnings of the system we call Writing and Reading.
- c) that the primitive sound "**ah**" is written using the letter "**a**" (**ay**), and so on through each of the remaining twenty-five letters.
- d) that each of the letters has a Name, and is arranged in a systematic order using that name ... Alphabetic Order. The names of the letters we use to **spell** our words.
- e) that each of these letters has a few variants.

**The Reading "Rules":** (continued)

- f) that within the Alphabet there are 5 very important letters: the **Vowels**; each having two main sounds: **soft** and **hard**. All useful combinations must be learnt. Vowels are very fertile letters that can't avoid breeding with the remaining twenty-one...the Consonants...and with some more than others.
- g) that within the Alphabet there are 21 other sounds called **Consonants**. "**Con-**" means with, "**-sonants**" means sounds. In the context of our efforts here, a consonant is a letter joined with a vowel to make a word part. Consonants do join with consonants to form new sounds as well, but not very often.
- h) that there are **exceptions** to the rules. They are few, but are the cause of poor reading and spelling. This is because the Vowels in-breed just a little, and the results are a confusing lot, those **exceptions**. But all the results are word parts, syllables, simple words, multi-syllabic words, sentences and paragraphs, Dictionaries, vocabularies, poems...and all to do with clarification of meaning...and its sharing.

**The Reading "Rules":** (continued)

- i) that Punctuation indicates the lengths of time and space between words and meaning; and that there is a set of symbols acting as hints for pronunciation, emphasis, breathing, and short-cuts.
- j) that words, difficult to read on their own or in a list, can be guessed when presented in a story. The **CONTEXT** is often important in working out how a written word sounds. A reading skill based in an expanded vocabulary...stage one in the 'speed reading' quest.

*"Con"- means with, "-text" means story or information ... the idea or subject of whatever is being 'talked' about.*

**Examples:**

Teach that the digraph ea sounds **AS IN** meet. We know how the digraph sounds in death and head, but let that case be explained as it arises. The percentages rule...the exceptions are fewer.

In "**She found a rag and bound it round his wound**" the context gives the clue, and focuses on the exception.

*("Di-" means two, "-graph" means mark).*

**Thinking, reading, and writing go together:**

*As the reader thinks, the reader speaks. As the reader reads and speaks, so the reader writes.*



**CONCLUSION:**

Look at it this way; if phonic analysis and synthesis worked globally, there would be no exceptions, no confusion - and far less difficulty in learning to read, to write, and to interact with equality.

This sounds ideal... a rationalists view of a human need... but negates all those necessary fertilisations that define the vibrancy of a living language. If the authorities legislated for a "metrification" of a language on the grounds that all would be better if the language was simpler.... then it would be ordering its extinction, or interfering with its natural evolution and its powerful diversity.

Phonics relate to the pure direct way we hear, and "phonic spellers" are doing the natural thing ... exactly what our language-changed brain **expects**. It's the unexpected that throws us into disarray and confusion... but this is not a bad thing.

**CONCLUSION:** (continued)

As a rule, vowels and consonants in nearly all arrangements are sounded one way more often than not. Thus learning to read quickly and efficiently becomes a matter of learning via the percentages. Notice the conventional phrase introducing this paragraph...why do we use this phrase so often and so generally? It's because we **expect** rules...we **need** them...why?

So, concentrate on teaching the dependable "core" and let the rest take care of itself.

The rest, strangely enough, is the **fringe area** where the written language still has to catch up to the sounded (if this is possible or desirable) ... where the sense and the sound of a word change in different contexts ... where spellings mutate ... where fashion and the foreign are played with (cool, kudos), become naturalised (camouflage, debris), and even evolve to contradict their original meaning (prestigious).

## The fringe

The fringe area mentioned is the word and meaning incubator and must always be a lively and youthful place devoted to answering needs.

An example of a need answered usefully is the elevation of some acronyms to word status simply because they comply with the rules of phonic analysis.

### **ACRONYMNS:**

"**Acro-**" means first or highest, "**-nyms**" means names. These are short-cut words formed wholly or partially of initials; i.e., NASA, E-mail, etc.

Short-cuts are not new in words, see how many **AFFIXES** bulk up the English Dictionary.

**EDITORIAL:**

**FALSE WORD-GODS & QUESTIONABLE ROLE MODELS:**

You'd expect the highly educated leaders of our society to be prime examples of literacy, having studied, being examined by an accreditation system bound by clarity and pertinence; and having gone out into the society to work for it actively and, hopefully, imbued by the idealism knowledge always offers to be great advocates for continuing the system.

Yet, the modern media world supplies us all with judges and lawyers, representatives, media and gender idols, salespersons, sportspersons and commentators, fifth-rate columnists, and educationalists and politicians, who have allowed slackness and ignorance to enter systems at the most formative moments and for ego reasons.

**Fashion in language:**

Ask if it is counterproductive to literacy and peace if ignorant fashion, or the expressive habits of authority or "cultural" figures remain unopposed by the more respectful? Of course it is. Linguistic evolution is one thing, but throwing out the baby with the bathwater is quite another. If any fashion makes it difficult to teach or learn a language, then it is worth opposing. Demanding that the eighth letter of the alphabet be pronounced "aich" in a phonic world where "haitch" is the currency and "huh" is the sound is ridiculous.

A language can only be defined as a living language if it answers the need for universal clarity and efficiency (and universal means cross-generational, not just the aggressive fashionable juvenilia and trivia of the time).

Presenters of anything are duty bound to aspire to the "Explainer of the Year Award". Sports journalists and commentators are, of course, excluded from such awards on species grounds. The "word" was invented to unite us, not to devolve into dialects and confusion, and finally conflict.

Some objectionable trends (ignorant, slack, illiterate, lazy, and the next best thing to being in the U.S. or back in "Mum's country"):

- "shock-acksorber" for "shock-absorber"
- "u-lection" for "election"
- "u-lusion" for "allusion"
- "U-lympics" for "olympics"
- "Noi" for "no"
- "hime" for "home"
- "Gay-lah" for "Gala"
- words such as "Druggist", Transportium
- "X-mas" rather than Christmas
- "R-out" for Route
- "kaysh" for cache
- The punctuation-defying Australian and British disease of the upwardly inflected sentence ending.
- Over use of the formal emphasis of "the" and "a" as "thee" and "ay" by those promoting their official self or a sale.
- "absolutely" for any degree of agreement
- "urbs" for herbs
- using "practise" where "practice" is meant
- substituting z for s in -ise but leaving "iz" as "is"
- taking the u out of favour, honour

## Colour or kuluh?

What do you think of the word "colour" in this context? Is it an aid to literacy to retain the "u"? Should we re-spell it "color" or "kukur"? Does it matter, when most words end up "sight-words" anyway? Is "correct" spelling just another one of those political requirements? ... just an incantation we don't dare vary for fear of who knows what?

But it does matter ... spellings should remain the same and we should all get on with reading and writing. "Spelling mistakes" are not punishable misdemeanors and they don't stay "mistakes" for very long. Likewise, spelling competitions are not a measure of literacy, only of competition. Literacy is about using words, learning new ones, and becoming more efficient in self expression.

## Index

1. Literacy: an Introduction
2. The Goals
3. Programme format
4. Reference Programme format
5. NRT Structure - achieving goals
  - 1: Interactivity
  - 2: The colour code
  - 3: The sound track
  - 4: Visual Aids:
    - a) Black Line Masters
    - b) Flash cards
    - Flash card games
    - c) Interactive Cartoons
  - 5: WRITE NOW
15. The Methods: 1. Phonic analysis
16. 2. Sight Words
17. Through the learner's eyes
18. Become easy readers - confidence
19. Reading speeds
20. Creative Thinking and Writing
21. Implementing the programme
  - Rule 1: Practise
  - Rule 2: Drill Method
  - Rule 3: Do Not Rush
  - Rule 4: The Alphabet Rules
24. Evaluating Learner Progress
25. Preliminary: Learning the Alphabet
27. Hand Writing: Making Your Mark
28. What comes next - after Literacy
29. Initial Learner Evaluation Session:
  30. Q1. Adding sounds / left to right
  31. Q2. The Alphabet
  32. Q3. Letters have names and sounds
  33. Q4. The 5 Vowels
  34. Q5. The 21 Consonants
  35. Q6. Upper and Lower Case Letters
  36. Q7. Punctuation
  37. Q8. Phonetic marks
  38. Q9. Graphic symbols
  39. Q10. Literate in first language
40. Recording Learning Progress - Logging on
41. - Report Card
42. On-going assessment
43. Keyboard Skills
44. The Rules of Reading: a summary
47. Thinking, Reading and Writing
48. Conclusion
50. The Fringe - Acronyms
51. Editorial - Questionable Language Use
  52. Fashion in Language
  53. Objectional Trends
  54. Colour or Kuluh

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