PHONICS

Sadlier® School
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

10 Common Causes of Phonics Instruction Failure

Wiley Blevins, EdD

Sadlier® School
www.SadlierSchool.com/FPR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Inadequate or Non-Existant Review and Repetition Cycle 4

Lack of Application to Real Reading and Writing Experiences. 5

Inappropriate Reading Materials to Practice Skills. 6

Ineffective Use of the Gradual Release Model 7

Too Much Time Lost During Transitions 8

Limited Teacher Knowledge of Research-Based
Phonics Routines and Linguistics 9

Inappropriate Pacing of Lessons 10

No Comprehensive or Cumulative Mastery Assessment Tools 11

Transitioning to Multisyllabic Words too Late 12

Overdoing It (Especially Isolated Skill Work) 13

About the Author. 14

References 14

Related Sadlier Program . . . . . Back Cover

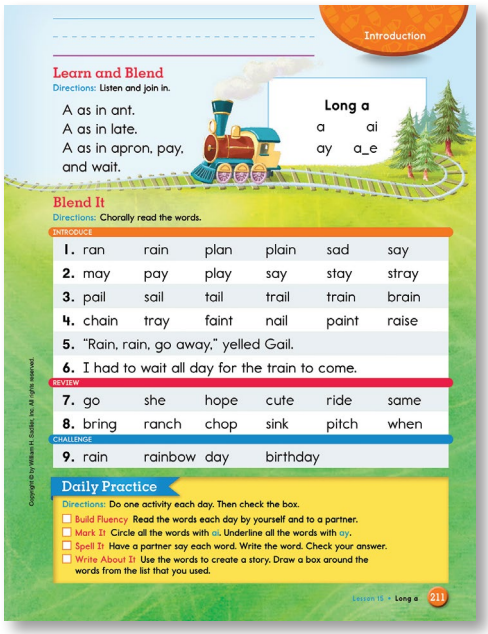
® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

Once phonics instructional materials and assessments are in place, the hard work begins. Too often, the implementation of these materials and resources fails due to common issues or obstacles, such as those listed below (Blevins, 2017, 2011, 2006, 2001). Great care was taken to avoid these common obstacles in the creation of the Sadlier ***From Phonics to Reading***™ program.

and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

1 INADEQUATE OR NON-EXISTENT **REVIEW AND REPETITION CYCLE**



Introduction

Learn and Blend

Directions: Listen and join in.

A as in ant.
A as in late.
A as in apron, pay, and wait.

Long a

a ai
ay a_e

Blend It

Directions: Chorally read the words.

INTRODUCE

1.	ran	rain	plan	plain	sad	say
2.	may	pay	play	say	stay	stray
3.	pail	sail	tail	trail	train	brain
4.	chain	tray	faint	nail	paint	raise
5.	"Rain, rain, go away," yelled Gail.					
6.	I had to wait all day for the train to come.					

REVIEW

7.	go	she	hope	cute	ride	same
8.	bring	ranch	chop	sink	pitch	when

CHALLENGE

9.	rain	rainbow	day	birthday

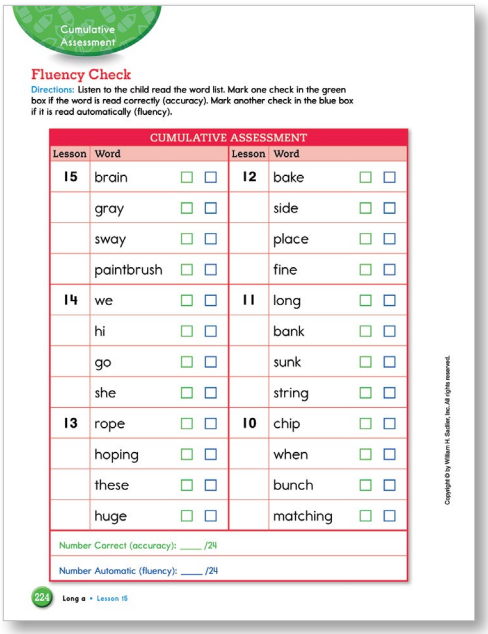
Daily Practice

Directions: Do one activity each day. Then check the box.

- Build Fluency Read the words each day by yourself and to a partner.
- Mark It Circle all the words with ai. Underline all the words with ay.
- Spell It Have a partner say each word. Write the word. Check your answer.
- Write About It Use the words to create a story. Draw a box around the words from the list that you used.

Lesson 15 • Long a 211

Copyright © by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.



Cumulative Assessment

Fluency Check

Directions: Listen to the child read the word list. Mark one check in the green box if the word is read correctly (accuracy). Mark another check in the blue box if it is read automatically (fluency).

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

Lesson	Word			Lesson	Word		
15	brain	☐	☐	12	bake	☐	☐
	gray	☐	☐		side	☐	☐
	sway	☐	☐		place	☐	☐
	paintbrush	☐	☐		fine	☐	☐
14	we	☐	☐	11	long	☐	☐
	hi	☐	☐		bank	☐	☐
	go	☐	☐		sunk	☐	☐
	she	☐	☐		string	☐	☐
13	rope	☐	☐	10	chip	☐	☐
	hoping	☐	☐		when	☐	☐
	these	☐	☐		bunch	☐	☐
	huge	☐	☐		matching	☐	☐

Number Correct (accuracy): ____ /24

Number Automatic (fluency): ____ /24

224 Long a • Lesson 15

Copyright © by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Student Edition

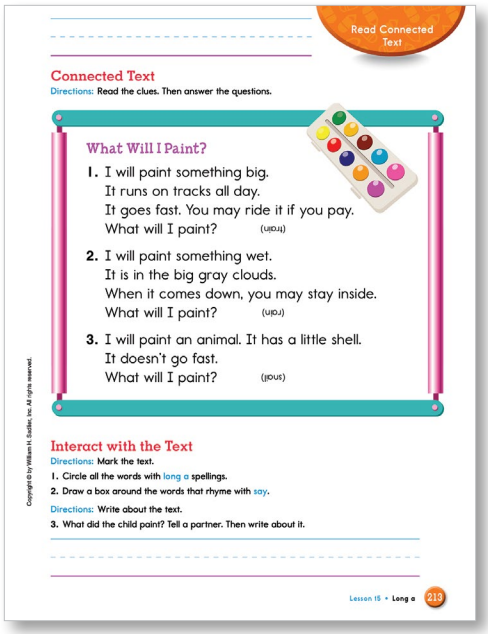
We underestimate the amount of time it takes young learners to master phonics skills. When a new skill is introduced it should be systematically and purposefully reviewed for the next four to six weeks. The goal must be to teach to mastery rather than just exposure. Only then can students transfer these skills to new reading situations. With the fast pacing of most curricula, a more substantial review and repetition cycle must be added.

Increasing opportunities to practice through additional words in blending lines, dictation, and repeated readings of previously-read decodable stories is essential and is a key part of the *From Phonics to Reading* materials.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

2 LACK OF APPLICATION TO **REAL READING AND WRITING EXPERIENCES**

Students progress at a much faster rate in phonics when the bulk of instructional time is spent on applying the skills to authentic reading and writing experiences, rather than isolated skill-and-drill work. The majority of the lesson time in the *From Phonics to Reading* program is devoted to application exercises. Students are reading and writing daily.


Read Connected Text

Connected Text

Directions: Read the clues. Then answer the questions.

What Will I Paint?

1. I will paint something big.
It runs on tracks all day.
It goes fast. You may ride it if you pay.
What will I paint? (train)

2. I will paint something wet.
It is in the big gray clouds.
When it comes down, you may stay inside.
What will I paint? (rain)

3. I will paint an animal. It has a little shell.
It doesn't go fast.
What will I paint? (snail)

Interact with the Text

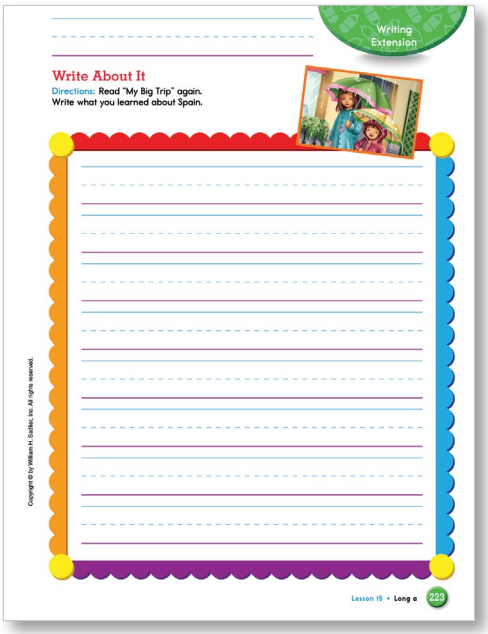
Directions: Mark the text.

1. Circle all the words with long a spellings.
2. Draw a box around the words that rhyme with say.

Directions: Write about the text.

3. What did the child paint? Tell a partner. Then write about it.

Lesson 15 • Long a 213


Writing Extension

Write About It

Directions: Read "My Big Trip" again.
Write what you learned about Spain.

Lesson 15 • Long a 223

From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Student Edition

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

3 INAPPROPRIATE READING MATERIALS TO PRACTICE SKILLS

From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Student Edition

The connection between what we teach and what we have young learners read has a powerful effect on their word-reading strategies (Juel and Roper-Schneider, 1985) and their phonics and spelling skills (Blevins, 2000). It also affects their motivation to read. Examine a few pages from the books you give your students to read in K–1 during phonics lessons. They should be able to sound out over fifty percent of these words based on the phonics skills you have taught them up to that point. If not, more controlled accountable text will be needed until they get more phonics skills under their belts and develop a sense of comfort and control in their reading abilities. You can usually transition to more challenging text in the second half of Grade 1.

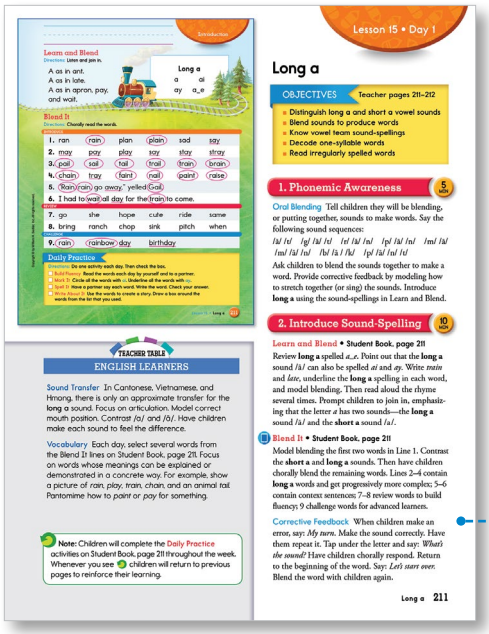
Ample accountable text (containing words that can be sounded out, high-frequency words taught, and story words to create comprehensible and natural-sounding text) is included in the *From Phonics to Reading* materials.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

4 INEFFECTIVE USE OF **THE GRADUAL RELEASE MO W DEL**

Teachers of struggling readers often spend too much of the instructional time doing the "heavy lifting," such as over-modeling and having students simply repeat.

Whoever does the thinking in a lesson, does the learning. Students might struggle, but you are there to provide corrective feedback and support. Limit "parrot" activities to a minimum when implementing the phonics lessons.


Lesson 15 • Day 1

Long a

OBJECTIVES Teacher pages 211–212

- Distinguish long a and short a vowel sounds
- Blend sounds to produce words
- Know vowel team sound-spellings
- Decode one-syllable words
- Read irregularly spelled words

1. Phonemic Awareness 5 MIN

Oral Blending Tell children they will be blending, or putting together, sounds to make words. Say the following sound sequences:

/ā/ /t/ /g/ /ā/ /t/ /t/ /ā/ /n/ /p/ /ā/ /n/ /m/ /ā/ /m/ /ā/ /n/ /b/ /ā/ /k/ /p/ /ā/ /n/ /t/

Ask children to blend the sounds together to make a word. Provide corrective feedback by modeling how to stretch together (or sing) the sounds. Introduce **long a** using the sound-spellings in Learn and Blend.

2. Introduce Sound-Spelling 10 MIN

Learn and Blend • Student Book, page 211

Review **long a** spelled *a_e*. Point out that the **long a** sound /ā/ can also be spelled *ai* and *ay*. Write *main* and *lake*, underline the **long a** spelling in each word, and model blending. Then read aloud the rhyme several times. Prompt children to join in, emphasizing that the letter *a* has two sounds—the **long a** sound /ā/ and the **short a** sound /a/.

Blend It • Student Book, page 211

Model blending the first two words in Line 1. Contrast the **short a** and **long a** sounds. Then have children chorally blend the remaining words. Lines 2–4 contain **long a** words and get progressively more complex; 5–6 contain context sentences; 7–8 review words to build fluency; 9 challenge words for advanced learners.

Corrective Feedback When children make an error, say: *My turn.* Make the sound correctly. Have them repeat it. Tap under the letter and say: *What's the sound?* Have children chorally respond. Return to the beginning of the word. Say: *Let's start over.* Blend the word with children again.

Long a 211

TEACHER TABLE

ENGLISH LEARNERS

Sound Transfer In Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Hmong, there is only an approximate transfer for the **long a** sound. Focus on articulation. Model correct mouth position. Contrast /a/ and /ā/. Have children make each sound to feel the difference.

Vocabulary Each day, select several words from the Blend It lines on Student Book, page 211. Focus on words whose meanings can be explained or demonstrated in a concrete way. For example, show a picture of *rain, play, train, chain,* and an animal *tail.* Pantomime how to *paint* or *pay* for something.

Note: Children will complete the Daily Practice activities on Student Book, page 211 throughout the week. Whenever you see children will return to previous pages to reinforce their learning.

From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Teacher's Edition

Corrective Feedback When children make an error, say: *My turn.* Make the sound correctly. Have them repeat it. Tap under the letter and say: *What's the sound?* Have children chorally respond. Return to the beginning of the word. Say: *Let's start over.* Blend the word with children again.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

5 TOO MUCH TIME LOST DURING **TRANSITION**

Phonics lessons often require a lot of manipulatives and materials. Transitional times when materials are distributed or collected should be viewed as valuable instructional moments in which review skills can be addressed (e.g., sing the ABC song, do a phonemic awareness task, review sound-letter action rhymes, spell aloud high-frequency words to focus students' attention on an instructional goal). Plan these transitions at the beginning of the week (e.g., select three to four great transitions per week) to better utilize your phonics instructional minutes.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

6 LIMITED TEACHER KNOWLEDGE OF **RESEARCHED-BASED PHONICS ROUTINES AND LINGUISTICS**

Day 5

1. Phonemic Awareness 5 MIN

Children engage in one of the power phonemic awareness skills: oral segmentation.

2. Review Sound-Spelling/ 5 MIN

Children review the lesson's target skill and the blending lines—interacting with them in a new way. This includes a cumulative review of previous sound-spellings. Children also review the lesson's word study skill.

3. High-Frequency Words 5 MIN

Children review the lesson's high-frequency words using the cumulative sentence and word practice page in the Student Book.

4. Word Building 10 MIN

Children build words using the lesson's target skill to complete the word ladder activity. This activity combines word building and vocabulary.

5. Writing Extension 10 MIN

Children revisit the lesson's Take-Home Book and complete the writing extension.

6. Cumulative Assessment 5 MIN

Teacher uses the Build Fluency page to assess the mastery of cumulative lessons' target skills. A small group of children are assessed each week so that all children are assessed monthly. Children not assessed on a given week will work with partners to read the cumulative word list and take it home to practice.

xxii *From Phonics to Reading*

From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Teacher's Edition

Teachers with a background in phonics or linguistics are better equipped to make meaningful instructional decisions, analyze student errors, and improve the language and delivery of instruction.

Also, teacher attitudes toward phonics instructional materials (e.g., decodable text) and routines (e.g., sorts, word building, blending) matter. These need to be explored within grade-level teams. Use the professional development resources in the *From Phonics to Reading* program to build foundational skill teaching capacity.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

7 INAPPROPRIATE **PACING OF LESSONS**

Day 3

1. Phonemic Awareness 5 MIN

Children engage in one of the other phonemic awareness skills such as: alliteration, recognize and produce rhyme, phonemic manipulation, categorize sounds.

2. Sound-Spelling/Blending 5 MIN

Children review the lesson's target skill and the blending lines—interacting with them in a new way. This includes a cumulative review of previous sound-spellings.

3. High-Frequency Words 5 MIN

Children review the lesson's four high-frequency words using the Read-Spell-Write-Extend routine, and then complete the Use in Context section of the corresponding Student Book page to apply the lesson's four high-frequency words to a writing exercise.

4. Read Connected Text 10 MIN

Children read the lesson's decodable story—also called the lesson's Take-Home Book—and focus on comprehension.

5. Print Concepts 5 MIN

Children review foundational skills that are embedded in the lesson's Take-Home Book.

6. Word Study 5 MIN

Children learn the lesson's word study skill, and then complete the corresponding Student Book page.

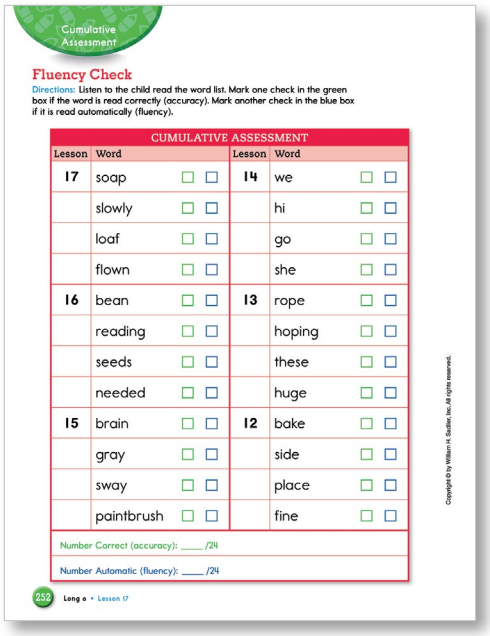
xviii *From Phonics to Reading*

From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Teacher's Edition

Teachers often spend too much time on activities they enjoy or are easier for students and less on the more challenging or "meaty" activities that increase learning. Keep lessons fast-paced and rigorous. Use the suggested times as a guideline and work towards increasing the pace of activities that might take longer. Phonics should be fun, with students active and engaged during the entire lesson—thinking and talking about how words work. The bulk of time should be devoted to "real reading and writing" experiences.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

8 NO COMPREHENSIVE OR CUMULATIVE **MASTERY ASSESSMENT TOOLS**



Cumulative Assessment

Fluency Check

Directions: Listen to the child read the word list. Mark one check in the green box if the word is read correctly (accuracy). Mark another check in the blue box if it is read automatically (fluency).

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

Lesson	Word			Lesson	Word		
17	soap	☐	☐	14	we	☐	☐
	slowly	☐	☐		hi	☐	☐
	loaf	☐	☐		go	☐	☐
	flown	☐	☐		she	☐	☐
16	bean	☐	☐	13	rope	☐	☐
	reading	☐	☐		hoping	☐	☐
	seeds	☐	☐		these	☐	☐
	needed	☐	☐		huge	☐	☐
15	brain	☐	☐	12	bake	☐	☐
	gray	☐	☐		side	☐	☐
	sway	☐	☐		place	☐	☐
	paintbrush	☐	☐		fine	☐	☐

Number Correct (accuracy): ____ /24

Number Automatic (fluency): ____ /24

252 Long o • Lesson 17

From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Student Edition

Assessment of phonics skills must be done over an extended period of time to ensure mastery. Weekly assessments focusing on one skill often give "false positives." That is, they show movement toward learning, but not mastery. If the skill isn't worked on for subsequent weeks, learning can decay. Cumulative assessments, like those provided in the *From Phonics to Reading* materials, help you determine which skills have truly been mastered. Make course corrections and adjust small group differentiated support based on your findings.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

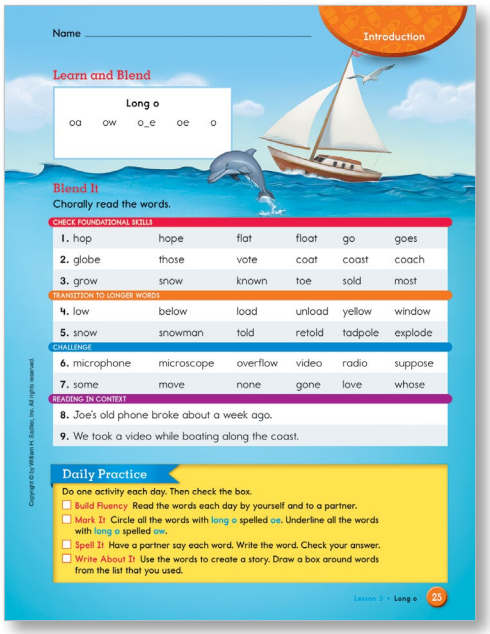
9 TRANSITIONING TO MULTISYLLABIC WORDS TOO LATE

TEACHER TABLE

INTERVENTION

Address Learning Gaps Based on your weekly cumulative assessments, meet each day with children who have not mastered previously taught skills. Repeat the blending, dictation, and connected text reading pages. Focus on application of the skills to authentic reading and writing experiences, rather than skill-and-drill exercises. Application activities will accelerate learning.

Most curricula focus on one-syllable words in Grade 2, yet the stories students read at that grade are filled with more challenging, multisyllabic words. More emphasis needs to be given to transitioning to longer words at this grade (e.g., going from known to new words like can/candle and teaching the six major syllable types). The *From Phonics to Reading* materials provide a smoother, easier, and more focused transition to multisyllabic words for these early readers.



Name _____ Introduction

Learn and Blend

Long o				
oa	ow	o_e	oe	o

Blend It

Chorally read the words.

CHECK FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS						
1. hop	hope	flat	float	go	goes
2. globe	those	vote	coat	coast	coach
3. grow	snow	known	toe	sold	most
TRANSITION TO LONGER WORDS					
4. low	below	load	unload	yellow	window
5. snow	snowman	told	retold	tadpole	explode
CHALLENGE					
6. microphone	microscope	overflow	video	radio	suppose
7. some	move	none	gone	love	whose
READING IN CONTEXT					
8. Joe's old phone broke about a week ago.					
9. We took a video while boating along the coast.					

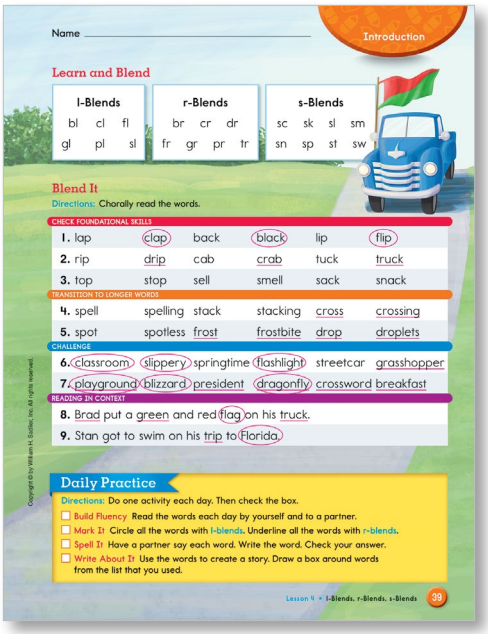
Daily Practice

Do one activity each day. Then check the box.

- ☐ Build Fluency Read the words each day by yourself and to a partner.
- ☐ Mark It Circle all the words with long o spelled oe. Underline all the words with long o spelled ow.
- ☐ Spell It Have a partner say each word. Write the word. Check your answer.
- ☐ Write About It Use the words to create a story. Draw a box around words from the list that you used.

Lesson 3 • Long o 25

From Phonics to Reading
Level B, Student Edition



Name _____ Introduction

Learn and Blend

l-Blends			r-Blends			s-Blends			
bl	cl	fl	br	cr	dr	sc	sk	sl	sm
gl	pl	sl	fr	gr	pr	tr	sn	sp	st	sw

Blend It

Directions: Chorally read the words.

CHECK FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS					
1. lap	clap	back	black	lip	flip
2. rip	drip	cab	crab	tuck	truck
3. top	stop	sell	smell	sack	snack
TRANSITION TO LONGER WORDS					
4. spell	spelling	stack	stacking	cross	crossing
5. spot	spotless	frost	frostbite	drop	droplets
CHALLENGE					
6. classroom	slippery	springtime	flashlight	streetcar	grasshopper
7. playground	blizzard	president	dragonfly	crossword	breakfast
READING IN CONTEXT					
8. Brad put a green and red flag on his truck.					
9. Stan got to swim on his trip to Florida.					

Daily Practice

Directions: Do one activity each day. Then check the box.

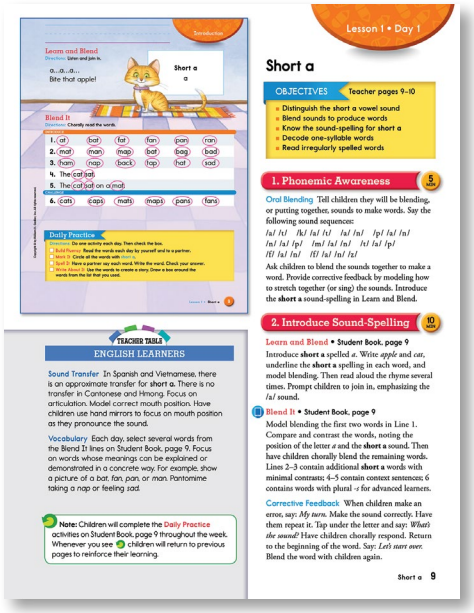
- ☐ Build Fluency Read the words each day by yourself and to a partner.
- ☐ Mark It Circle all the words with l-blends. Underline all the words with r-blends.
- ☐ Spell It Have a partner say each word. Write the word. Check your answer.
- ☐ Write About It Use the words to create a story. Draw a box around words from the list that you used.

Lesson 4 • l-Blends, r-Blends, s-Blends 39

From Phonics to Reading
Level C, Student Edition

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

10 OVERDOING IT (ESPECIALLY ISOLATED SKILL WORK)



From Phonics to Reading
Level A, Teacher's Edition

Some curricula over-emphasize phonics (especially the isolated skill type of work), while ignoring other key aspects of early reading needs (e.g., vocabulary and background knowledge building) that are essential to long-term reading progress. These skills plant the seeds for comprehension as students encounter increasingly more complex texts with words not commonly used in speaking and topics that require more extensive background knowledge.

Modify your reading time to provide better balance. Increase read aloud time each day (e.g., two read-alouds per day—one literary and one informational) to feed students with words and ideas. This will have greater long-term benefits.

® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wiley Blevins studied at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Bowling Green State University and has his doctorate in Education. He is an author, educational consultant, and researcher and has taught both in the United States and South America.

Wiley has written over 17 books for teachers, including *A Fresh Look at Phonics, Phonics From A to Z*, and *Choosing and Using Decodable Texts*, and he has authored several phonics and reading programs including Sadlier's ***From Phonics to Reading***. He also wrote the phonics brief by the International Literacy Association, ***Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction*** and has penned over 100 children's books. Wiley's current focus is on adaptive technology, differentiated professional development, and children's literature. He is SVP and Associate Publisher at Reycraft Books, a new imprint focused on publishing books by authors and illustrators from under-represented groups.

From Phonics to Reading for Grades K–3, authored by Wiley, is a Tier 1 program that aligns with the Science of Reading research and was recognized as a high-quality foundational skills program by EdReports. See complete review **here.** Embedded professional development in the program, along with a critical review and repetition cycle, make early reading mastery possible for every student. Wiley has three complementary *From Phonics to Reading* programs: the **Interactive Practice Bundle** for practicing and applying newly taught skills; the ***Fluency Booster Practice Book***, which provides a variety of practice for building fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills; and ***Interactive Assessments***, offering diagnostic, formative (Lesson), and summative (Unit) assessments in an interactive format online. His newest program is ***Building Reading Success with Wiley Blevins***, a Tier 2 & Tier 3 intervention program for Grades K–5. Grounded in the latest science of reading research, it offers a systematic and explicit approach to literacy and seamlessly integrates into any classroom setting.

Click to learn more from Wiley Blevins:

***7 Key Characteristics of Strong Phonics Instruction* eBook**

***10 Common Causes of Phonics Instruction Failure* eBook**

Research Basis for *From Phonics to Reading:* A Research Study on the Effects of Using Decodable Texts with Systematic Phonics Instruction

***Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction,* ILA Leadership Brief**

***Influential Reading Group Makes It Clear: Students Need Systematic, Explicit Phonics,* EdWeek**

REFERENCES

Blevins, W. (2017). *A fresh look at phonics: Common causes of failure and 7 ingredients for success.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Blevins, W. (2011a). *Teaching the alphabet: A flexible, systematic approach to building early phonics skills.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

Blevins, W. (2011b). *Teaching phonics: A flexible, systematic approach to building early reading skills.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

Blevins, W. (2011c). *Week-by-week phonics and word study activities for the intermediate grades.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

Blevins, W. (2006). *Phonics from A to Z: A practical guide.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

Blevins, W. (2001). *Teaching phonics and word study in the intermediate grades.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ and Building Reading Success™ are trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.

You might also be interested in:

***From Phonics to Reading*, authored by Wiley Blevins, is a research-based foundational skills program aligned with the Science of Reading.**

Visit www.SadlierSchool.com/WileyPrograms to see more programs that are aligned with the Science of Reading to use together or as stand-alone supplements.

Sadlier School
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

A Publication of
Sadlier School
www.SadlierSchool.com

SJ® and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. From Phonics to Reading™ is a trademark of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright ©2019 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved.