

**Standards & reading research base  
of the**

***HELP ME 2 LEARN SUPER STAR  
PHONICS 3a PROGRAM***

**Advanced Level  
Grades 3-8**

**September 2006**



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## INTRODUCTION

The educational content of the Help Me 2 Learn *Super Star Series* of interactive electronic *Phonics* programs is based on the recommendations of the following:

**National Reading Panel** (under the auspices of the National Institute for Literacy and the National Institute of Child Health and Development)

- *Report of the National Reading Panel*

**National Research Council**

- *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*

**California Department of Education**

- *Teaching Reading: A Balanced, Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Reading in Pre-kindergarten Through Grade Three*

**Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement**

- *Teaching Every Child to Read: Frequently Asked Questions*

**National Institute of Child Health and Development**

- *A Synthesis of Research on Reading*

**National Institute for Literacy**

- *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*

## INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

All these recommendations are in turn based on comprehensive surveys of over 30 years of large-scale scientific reading research. This research has amassed overwhelming evidence showing that, as stated by the National Reading Panel:

*Teaching children to manipulate the sounds in language (phonemes) helps them learn to read. This remains true under a variety of teaching conditions and with a variety of learners across a range of grade and age levels. The National Reading Panel concluded that teaching phonemic awareness to children significantly improves their reading when compared to instruction without any attention to phonemic awareness. Specifically, the results of experimental studies led the Panel to conclude that phonemic awareness training led to improvement in students' phonemic awareness, reading, and spelling.*

The National Reading Panel goes on to explain that:

*Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of speech sounds, or phonemes.”*

This is why the Help Me 2 Learn series of phonics programs is driven throughout by the principles of **phonemic awareness**.

There follows a table of the activities in the Phonics 3a program correlated with the reading research upon which they are based.

# Word Families and Patterns

## Coach Time - Learn the Words - Long Jump Game

Patterns and Word Families		
<b>-tion</b> action station motion	<b>-ion</b> million billion onion	<b>-ure</b> picture fracture injure
<b>-ous</b> famous delicious curious	<b>-ought</b> bought ought	<b>-ause</b> cause because pause
	<b>-aught</b> caught taught	

Word Patterns

**-tion**

station

sta - tion →

I will pick you up at the bus station.

Time: 29 Running Speed:

Click on the word that has the pattern that the Coach said.

brain	stack	onion
curious	ought	picture

## STANDARDS

California Department of Education:

Strand: Reading

Grade 3. Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

1.1 Know and use complex word families when reading (e.g., -ight) to decode unfamiliar words.

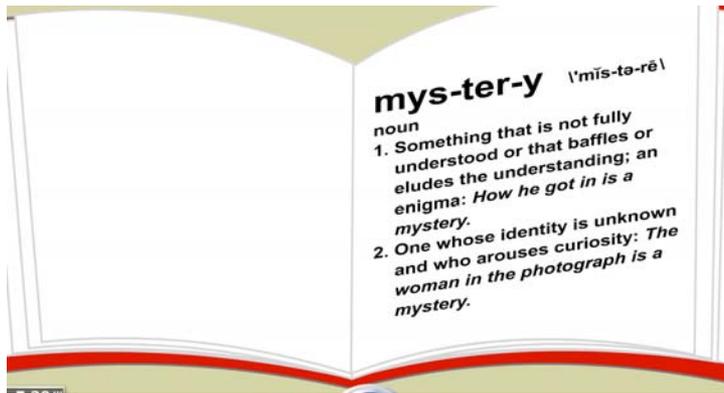
## READING RESEARCH BASE

Stahl, S.A. (1992). *Saying the "p" word: Nine guidelines for exemplary phonics instruction*. *The ReadingTeacher*, 45(8), 618-626.

In exemplary phonics instruction...guideline five brings to the forefront the importance of instruction focusing on reading words and not just learning rules. Efficient readers notice words by patterns not by categorizing them by rules.

# Syllables

## Coach Time - Learn the Words - Board Breaking Game



# STANDARDS

California Department of Education:

**Grade 2, Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.2 Apply knowledge of basic syllabication rules when reading (e.g., vowel-consonant-vowel = su/per; vowel-consonant / consonant-vowel = sup/per).

**Grade 3, Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.2 Decode regular multisyllabic words.

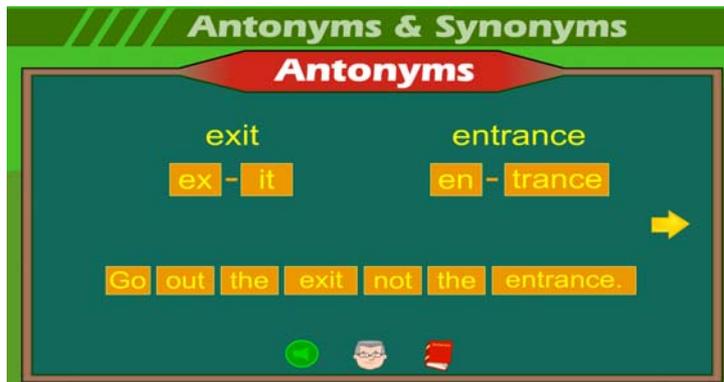
# READING RESEARCH BASE

Countless research studies have been conducted on phonics instruction. Much of this research has focused on the usefulness of phonics instruction and the best ways to teach children about sound-spelling relationships. Below is one of the research findings regarding syllabication.

For many children, reading long words is an arduous task. Explicit instruction in the six common spelling patterns, the most common syllable types (e.g., VCe, VCCV, ), prefixes, suffixes, roots, and word origins helps students recognize larger word chunks that makes decoding easier and aids in figuring out a word's meaning. For example, it may be efficient for a student to decode text containing simple CVC words such as *cat* and *ran* sound by sound, it is not efficient to decode text containing words such as *transportation* and *unhappy* sound by sound. Rather, it is more efficient to recognize common word parts such as *trans*, *port*, *tion*, *un*, and *happy* and blend these larger chunks to sound out the word.

# Antonyms and Synonyms

## Coach Time - Learn the Words - Down Hill Ski Game



## STANDARDS

*California Department of Education:*

**Grade 2, Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.2 Apply knowledge of basic syllabication rules when reading (e.g., vowel-consonant-vowel = su/per; vowel-consonant / consonant-vowel = sup/per).

**Grade 3, Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.4 Use knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine the meanings of words.

**Grade 5, Strand: Reading Substrand 1.0: Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.3 Understand and explain frequently used synonyms, antonyms, and homographs.

## READING RESEARCH BASE

*National Reading Panel*

Students learn vocabulary during direct instruction, direct practice and repetitive reading of rich text. Practice activities help students learn vocabulary through categorization and use of antonyms and

synonyms...

# Homophones and Homographs

## Coach Time - Learn the Words - Tricky Word Tennis Game



## STANDARDS

*California Department of Education:*

**Grade 3, Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.4 Use knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine the meanings of words..

**Grade 5, Strand: Reading Substrand 1.0: Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.3 Understand and explain frequently used synonyms, antonyms, and homographs.

## READING RESEARCH BASE

*Georgia Department of Education*

The student acquires and uses grade-level words to communicate effectively... Reads a variety of texts and uses new words in oral and written language... Recognizes grade appropriate words with multiple meanings... Recognizes and applies the appropriate usage of homophones, homographs, antonyms, and synonyms.

# Classifying and Sorting

## Coach Time - Learn the Words - Slam Dunk Basketball Game



# STANDARDS

*California Department of Education:*

**Grade 3, Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of levels of specificity among grade-appropriate words and explain the importance of these relations (e.g., dog/mammal/animal/living things).

# READING RESEARCH BASE

*National Reading Panel*

Foundation skills of reading and language arts: identifying, sorting, classifying, synonyms, antonyms, and other.

# Prefixes, Root Words and Suffixes

## Coach Time - Learn the Words - Long Jump Game

**Prefixes**

**midnight**

**mid** can mean in the **middle** of

**midnight** = **middle of night**

**Prefixes, Suffixes & Root Words**

**prefix**

**un**

**Definition**  
a prefix that can mean not or non

**Time: 0:10** **Running Speed:**

Prefix

**u n s a f e**

Click on the letter for the part of the word the coach says.

## STANDARDS

*California Department of Education:*

**Grade 3, Substrand: 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

1.8 Use knowledge of prefixes (e.g., un-, re-, pre-, bi-, mis-, dis-) and suffixes (e.g., -er, -est, -ful) to determine the meaning of words.

**Grade 4, Strand: Written and Oral English Language Conventions**

1.7 Spell correctly roots, inflections, suffixes and prefixes, and syllable constructions.

**Grade 5, Strand: Written and Oral English Language Conventions**

1.5 Spell roots, suffixes, prefixes, contractions, and syllable constructions correctly.

**Grade 7, Strand: Written and Oral English Language Conventions**

1.7 Spell derivatives correctly by applying the spellings of bases and affixes.

## READING RESEARCH BASE

*National Institute for Literacy*

Knowing some common prefixes and suffixes (affixes), base words, and root words can help students learn the meanings of many new words. For example, if students learn just the four most common prefixes in English (un-, re-, in-, dis-), they will have important clues about the meaning of about two thirds of all English words that have prefixes...

# Reading Comprehension Strategies

## Coach Time - Learn the Words - Kayaking Adventure Game



### Reading Comprehension

many

man - y

There are many fish in the Kern River.

#### Story 1

I there are many different reasons why people enjoy kayaking. My dad likes to kayak to take a break from his busy life. He enjoys paddling down the river on the weekends. My mom sees kayaking as a good chance to get some exercise. She paddles up stream on the Eel River. The only reason my little sister likes to kayak is because she likes to see all of the wildlife along the river. She goes out on the river early in the morning with a pair of binoculars so she can watch the deer drinking from the edge of the river. My grandpa fishes from his kayak. He uses live bait to catch rainbow trout. I enjoy kayaking because I think it is exciting. I like paddling through white water and sliding down small waterfalls. As you can see, there are lots of different reasons people like to kayak.

THE END

#### Question 1: What does the author's mother do to get exercise?

- 1) she paddles down the river early in the morning
- 2) she goes fishing
- 3) she paddles up stream
- 4) she kayaks down small waterfalls

## STANDARDS

*California Department of Education:*

### **Grade 3, Substrand: 2.0 Reading Comprehension**

- 2.2 Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text
- 2.3 Demonstrate comprehension by identifying answers in the text.

### **Grade 4, Substrand 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

- 1.3 Use knowledge of root words to determine the meaning of unknown words within a passage.

### **Grade 4, Substrand 2.0 Reading Comprehension**

- 2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).

## READING RESEARCH BASE

### *National Reading Panel*

The Direct Explanation approach focuses on the teacher's ability to explain explicitly the reasoning and mental processes involved in successful reading comprehension. Rather than teach specific strategies, teachers help students (1) to view reading as a problem solving task that necessitates the use of strategic thinking, and (2) to learn to think strategically about solving comprehension problems. For example, teachers are taught that they could teach students the skill of finding the main idea by casting it as a problem solving task and reasoning about it strategically.

## Use in the Classroom

The CD-ROMs in the Help Me 2 Learn *Phonics Super Star Reading System*, along with their accompanying user guides and lesson plans, are designed to be used as a supplement to the existing classroom reading program.

The CD-ROMs can be used as follows:

1) By the teacher as a presentation to the entire class displayed on a single computer. Guided by the lesson plans, the teacher can control the CD in leading the class through discussion of the lesson concepts, relating this to any existing class materials.

- When leading the class through an activity, the teacher can either let the class as a whole vote on the correct answer or have an individual student respond to the question.

- The teacher can also copy the black-line masters or print out pages either as extra work or as a test of the students' comprehension of the lesson.

2) By the students working at their own computers, either in a computer lab or in the classroom. The CD-ROMs are designed for self-paced study, notably in the "Learn the Words" segments. The *Super Star Tracking System* (see below) allows the teacher to see which activities each student has completed and mastered, thereby enabling the teacher to help individual students with any specific activities that may be causing them a problem.

For most effective use of the material, we recommend that the teacher follow the lesson plans in presenting individual lessons to the class, and then let the students work on the CD-ROMs on their own, with the teacher assisting them as and when necessary.

When it is not feasible to let the students work through the CD-ROMs in the lab or classroom, we suggest that the teacher recommend the CD-ROMs to the parents or for use in after-school programs.

## Effectiveness

The Phonics Super Star Reading System can certainly be used very effectively as supplemental material in the classroom. However, its use by individual students can be equally effective, since the students' progress and detailed results are readily tracked within the program.

We call this built-in student tracking our "*Super Star System*". It has two components:

1) *Super Star Buttons*. These are located in the center at the bottom of the program interface. They consist of a correct answer box, a wrong answer box and the Super Star. The Super Star button displays a purple "no star" state, a Silver Star or a Gold Star. Clicking on the Super Star button takes you to the Super Star Page.

## Effectiveness (cont'd)

2) *Super Star Page*. This displays all 25 Super Stars and indicates which stars the student has earned in each of the songs or activities.

The “Super Star System is at once deceptively simple and highly effective. As the student plays an instructional song, he or she will earn a Silver Star at about 75% of the way through the song. By listening to the song all the way through, the student earns a Gold Star.

- These songs contain much of the instructional material of the program. As the California Department of Education report on reading states, for very young children *“language arts skills and understandings are developed primarily through a variety of interactive activities, such as painting, drawing, building with blocks, singing, dancing, and dramatic play.”*

- The CD-ROMs contain many other instructional components besides the songs. Students can also earn Gold Stars by watching these presentations or by clicking on all of the letters.

- Children may earn further Silver and Gold Stars on the CD-ROMs through a comprehensive array of interactions and games, which are designed to reinforce and test their comprehension and mastery of the letters, sounds, words and concepts that were

As stated earlier, the effectiveness of this “multi-mode” approach to teaching early readers has been extensively documented by the National Research Council: *“play with songs and poems that emphasize rhyming, jokes, and games that depend on switching sounds within words... can facilitate learning to read”*

- All of the various activities and games in the CD-ROMs are based on the rigorously field-tested principles of instructional design, which are underpinned by over 40 years’ research in behavioral and cognitive psychology, human factors engineering and programmed learning.

The instructional design core of the CD-ROMs consists of continual motivational feedback and positive reinforcement – both intrinsic and extrinsic – every step of the student’s journey through the material.

## The Super Star System

The “Super Star System” illustrates this reinforcer-based “performance management” approach with particular clarity. When a student completes an activity or game error-free, he or she immediately earns a Gold Star. However, even if the student does make a mistake, the act of completing the activity or game automatically earns him or her a Silver Star.

Once a student completes an activity, he or she can repeat the activity as many times as desired. If the student earned a Gold Star on his or her first run through the activity, the student cannot lose this Gold Star by repeating the activity, even if he or she makes a mistake in these subsequent iterations of the activity. That is to say, there is no penalty – or “punishment” to use operant conditioning terminology – for repeating an activity. Instead, the child experiences nothing but positive reinforcement throughout the learning exercise.

This schedule of positive reinforcers is highly motivating, with a gratifyingly cumulative effect. Once students have garnered their first few Silver or Gold Stars, they will want to earn more and more stars, and will not be satisfied until they have earned a Gold Star for every single one of the songs, presentations, activities or games on the CD-ROMs. In other words, they will not rest until they have worked through all the material without making a single error.

### **ccountability and Student Tracking**

Once a student has completed the entire CD with a Gold Star on every “Super Star” page, he or she can print out a personalized Certificate of Completion, providing proof of that student’s mastery of all the letters, sounds, words and concepts taught in the CD.

performing to the “Silver Star” level, they constitute a systematic feedback and tracking system for the teacher or parent who can see immediately where the child is having difficulty.

In this way, both accountability and student tracking are built into the CD-ROMs themselves.

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