

A Parents Guide to Understanding



Reading

Dear Parents,

After teaching for many years, I was always faced with the same questions at the beginning of the year. What is Pathways to Reading? How can I help my child learn to read? What is a name bus and sound bus? All of which are excellent questions to anyone that is unfamiliar with the Pathways to Reading Program.

I have tried to answer many of the questions and put them in this booklet. I hope you find it very informative in learning about our reading program. I think you will be surprised how similar it is to what you learned growing up and you might even learn some things yourself 😊

What is Pathways to Reading?

Pathways to Reading is a comprehensive reading program that Clinton County RIII School District uses to teach your child how to read.

Pathways to Reading uses both the phonemic awareness and phonics approach in teaching your children how to read. You may have heard the terms phonemic awareness and phonics before, but may not know the difference.

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to notice that spoken words contain a sublevel of smaller sounds (phonemes). This awareness allows one to segment, blend and manipulate the sounds in words. Phonemic awareness focuses on individual SOUNDS.

Phonics is the study of the letters/spellings that are assigned to phonemes. Phonics focuses on LETTERS/SPELLINGS.

Naturally, it is difficult to teach children how to read only by using sounds or only by using letters. Pathways to Reading used both phonemic awareness and phonics instruction to teach your children how to become efficient readers.

There are 2 major types of sounds that we use in the English language to be good readers and writers: CONSONANTS AND VOWELS!!

Consonant Sounds

1. Consonants can be identified as individual sounds:

cat b c d f g h i j k l m n
p q r s t v w x y z

2. Consonants can also be identified as blends:

Beginning Blends:

student bl__ cl__ fl__
br__ cr__ dr__ fr__
sc__ sk__ sl__ sm__
gl__ pl__ sl__
gr__ pr__ tr__ thr__
sn__ sp__ st__ sw__

Ending Blends

cold __ld __lf __lk __lp __lt
__ft __pt __mp
__ll __ss __ff __ff __zz
__nd __ng __nk __nt
__sk __sp __st

3. Consonants can also be put together to form diagraphs:

Beginning Diagraphs

shark ch__ sh__ th__ wh__ ph__

Ending Diagraphs

teach __ch __sh __th __nch __tch __ph __ck

Vowel Sounds

1. Vowel sounds can be used independently as 1 letter sounds. You may have learned this as **short vowels**. The Pathways to Reading program refers to these as “**sound vowels**.” These vowels say their sound.

cat a e i o u

2. Vowel sounds can be used in combinations with a “what’s your name E”. You may have learned these as **long vowels**. The Pathways to Reading program refers to these sounds as “**name sounds**”. These vowels say their name.

bike a_e ee i_e o_e u_e

3. Vowel sounds can be formed by using more than 1 letter. You may have learned these sounds as **vowel diagraphs**. The Pathways to Reading program refers to these vowels as “**buddy sounds**”. These sounds have partners that either look the same or sound the same, so they are buddies.

ou – ow

oo – oo

oi – oy

au – aw

Some other vowel diagraphs and diphthongs that we learn are:

ai

ay

oa

ow

ea

ew

y

4. These vowels may look familiar... **Bossy R’s**.

er

ir

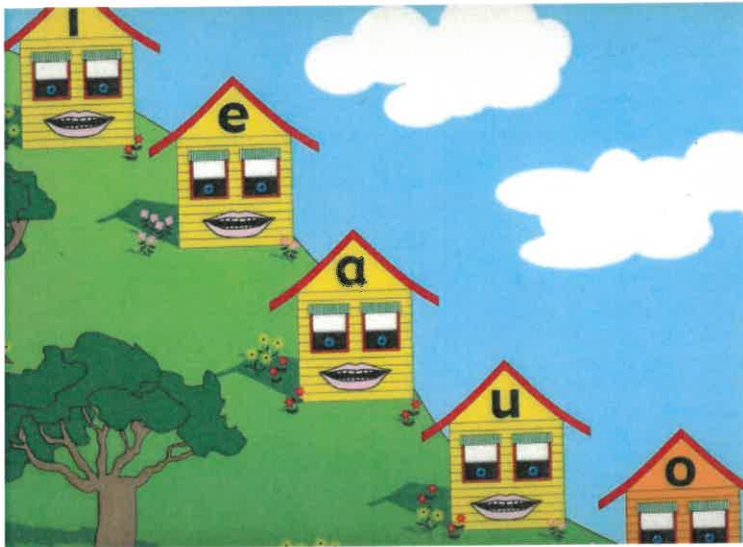
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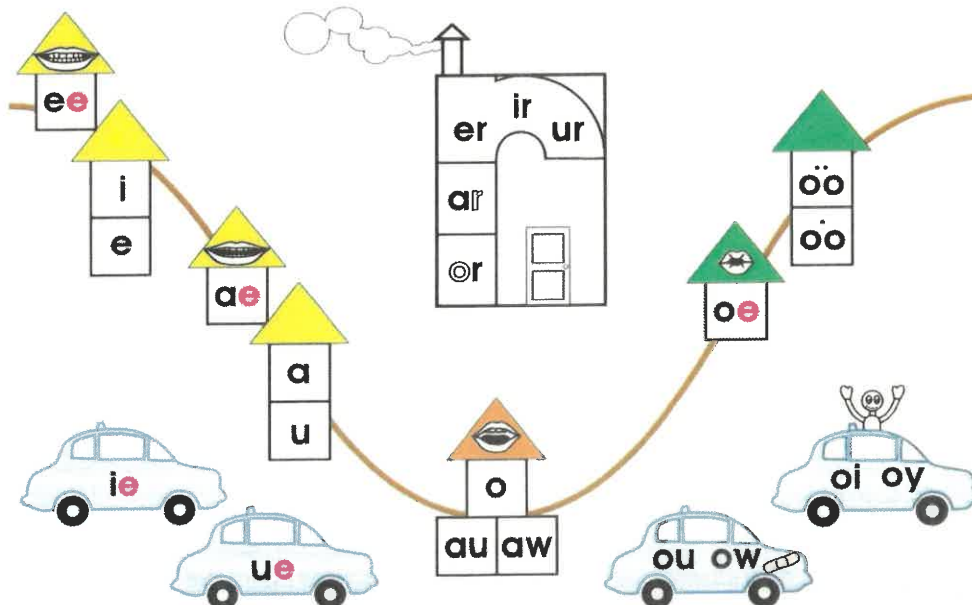
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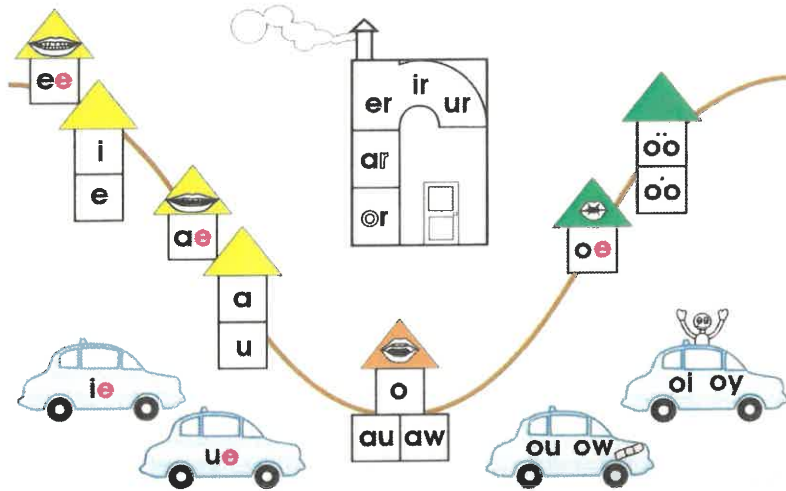
The Pathways to Reading program makes learning these vowel sounds easier by making a visual picture of the vowel sounds.

In **Kindergarten**, you child will learn their short vowels- a e i o u, by placing them on a hill called “**vowel hill.**” They are located on the hill by the shape of your mouth as you say the sounds.



In **First and Second Grade**, your children will add the rest of the vowel sounds by placing them in “**vowel town.**” Like in the vowel hill, the sounds are located in the town according to the shape of our mouth as we say the sounds.





To help your children learn the vowel sounds, we break it down even further and group similar sounds onto 4 different busses.

Sound Bus- These sounds all say their sound, so they ride the sound bus.



a e i o u

Name Bus- These sounds all say their name because they have a “what’s your name E”. These sounds ride the name bus.



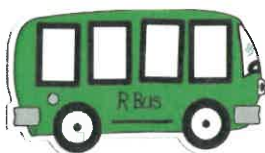
ae ee ie oe ue

Buddy Bus- These sounds either look the same or sound the same as another sound. These sounds ride the buddy bus.



oi – oy oo - oo
ou – ow au - aw

Bossy R Bus- These sounds all have a bossy r.

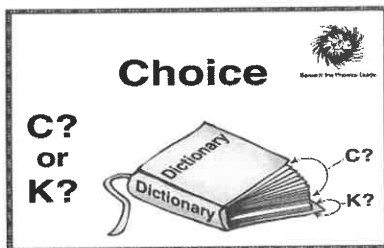


ar er ir or ur

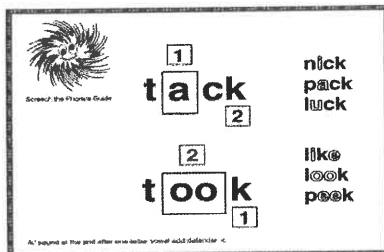
What are Screech reading guides?

Reading guides are reminders to help your children determine how to read and spell words. The Pathways to Reading program has a total of 11 reading guides.

**There are always words that “don’t play fair”. These guides work most of the time, but there are always exceptions to the rule. 😊



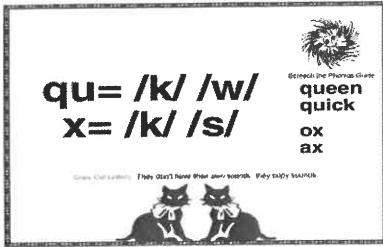
This guide helps the children when they hear the /k/ sound at the beginning of a word. It tells us that most of the time the /k/ sound is spelled with a C. There are more C words in the dictionary than K words.



This guide helps the children spell the /k/ sound at the end of a word. If the vowel sound has 1 letter, you spell the /k/ sound ck. If the vowel sound has 2 letters, you spell the /k/ sound ck.



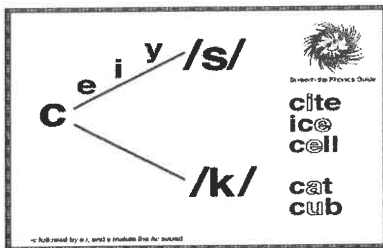
This guide helps children spell the long vowels by reminding them that when a vowel says its name, the letter E goes to the end of the word. EXCEPT the ee's. They stick together like twin brothers, rarely do they leave each other's side.



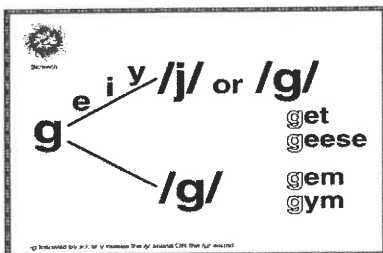
This guide reminds children that the /qu/ and /x/ sounds are copy cat letters. They don't have sounds of their own, so they copy other sounds.



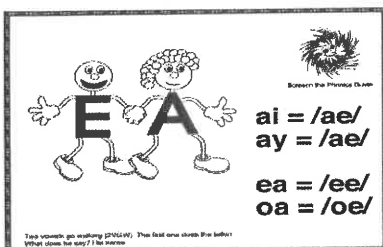
This guide reminds children that the letter Y says many sounds depending on where it is in the word. In the beginning, the y says it's sound. In the middle, it copies the short i sound. In the end, it can say either the long ie or the long ee sound.



This guide teaches children that if the letter c is followed by the letters e, i, or y, it will always say the /s/ sound.




This guide teaches children that if the letter g is followed by the letters e, i, or y, it could say either the /j/ sound or the /g/ sound. Try them both and see which one makes sense.



This guide is set to a poem, I'm sure you have heard before:

If two vowels go walking.
 The first one does the talkin'.
 What does he say?
 His name.




Search the Farm & Dairy

ge
/j/

cage
huge
large

© Sound at the end of a word is ALWAYS spelled ge

This guide teaches children that the /j/ sound at the end of a word is ALWAYS spelled ge.



Search the Farm & Dairy

1
fudge


2
large

3
edge
badge
ledge

2
urge
huge
page

© Sound at the end after one letter vowel. Add definition.

This guide helps the children spell the /j/ sound at the end of a word. If the vowel sound has 1 letter, you spell the /j/ sound dge. If the vowel sound has 2 letters, you spell the /j/ sound ge.



Search the Farm & Dairy

1
hutch

2
couch

3
patch
witch

2
beach
lunch

© Sound at the end after one letter vowel. Add definition.

This guide helps the children spell the /ch/ sound at the end of a word. If the vowel sound has 1 letter, you spell the /ch/ sound tch. If the vowel sound has 2 letters, you spell the /ch/ sound ch.



Don't Get Stuck by Tricky Endings!



le = /l/



puzzlele

tion = /shun/



lotion

ture = /cher/



picture



How Do I Read a Multisyllable Word?

1. Find the vowel sounds. *Be careful! Sometimes there are two-letter vowels.*



* Don't forget to check for **tricky endings!**

2. The number of vowel sounds = the number of syllables.

cabin = 2 syllables
1 2

3. Make the first vowel bump into the letters after it.

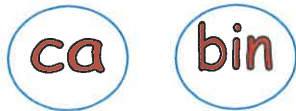


Vowel Bump Chant

If I bump into two, there's one for me and one for you!

If I bump into one, I get none!

4. Imagine a circle around each syllable.



5. Read the word one syllable at a time. Say the word.



ca

bin

cabin

6. Does it make sense?



If it doesn't make sense: Try the name hat or the sound hat on the first one-letter vowel.



cabin

If it's in a sentence read the words around it:
The boy hiked to the **cabin** in the woods.

7. Read the word!



cabin

There are many Pathways to Reading activities that your child will participate in throughout the day that you may not be aware of because they are done in small reading groups. Here are a list of some of the following activities we do grades K-2.

ABC songs- Kindergarten learns how to say and match the letters of the alphabet to the tune of Mary Had A Little Lamb.

Cross the Wild River- Students are given vowel practice sheets of different ability levels. They are asked to read the vowel sounds in order to make it across the river.

Example: i ae o oe ie u e ee a

Freeze and Match- Students are asked to make the exact sound the teacher has modeled for them.

Freeze and Match in Sets- Students are asked to make a sequence of sounds that the teacher has modeled for them.

Old Word / New Word- Your child is given a word in the same format as in segment and write. They are then given another word that is very close, but a sound has changed. They need to identify the changed sound and change it to fit the new word.

Example: bit /b/ /i/ /t/ = bit

New Word: big /b/ /i/ /g/ = big

* The t changed to a g

Read Single and Multisyllable Words- Students practice reading a variety of high frequency words, vocabulary words, and even non-sense words.

Segment and Write- Your child is given a word. They must determine how many sounds are in that word. They need to identify a letter with each sound and then write the word.

Example: bat /b/ /a/ /t/ = bat

Sight Word Olympics-This is a great way to learn our sight words. Every list gets harder and harder as the students read lists of sight words to earn bronze, silver, and gold medals.

Spot the Vowel- Students are asked to identify the vowel sounds in one syllable words.

Example: What is the vowel sound in the word **fox** = /o/

Vowel Town Practice- Students gain practice in saying the sounds that live on the vowel town. Our ultimate goal is to say and spell them independently without any help.

These are just a few of the activities we do during the school day. We do so much!!!! Just because things don't come home, don't think we are not stretching our brains. 😊

What are Comprehension Strategies?

In addition to the Pathways to Reading programs, the Clinton County RIII School District also focuses on 7 comprehension strategies. Below is a list of the comprehension strategies and why each strategy is important in teacher your child how to comprehend what they are reading.

7 cognitive strategies for comprehending

1. **Monitoring for Meaning** - Proficient readers are aware of what they comprehend; they monitor their comprehension.
2. **Determining Importance** - Proficient readers make purposeful and spontaneous decisions about what is important in text at the word, sentence, and text level.
3. **Creating Mental Images** - Proficient readers create mental images while and after they read. The images emerge from all five senses and the emotions are anchored in a reader's prior knowledge.
4. **Synthesizing** - Proficient readers are aware of changes in their conclusions about text as their thinking evolves and/or as the text itself changes.
5. **Relating new to known (schema)** - Proficient readers/learners recall their prior knowledge before, during and after they read and learn (text to self-connections).
6. **Questioning** - Proficient reader generate questions before, during, and after reading.
7. **Inferring** - The process of creating a personal meaning from text. It involves a mental process of combining what is read with relevant prior knowledge (schema) and creating a meaning that is not stated explicitly in the text or illustrations.

How can I help my child become a better reader?

I loved getting this question from parents. The best thing you can do to improve your child's reading is to show them how wonderful reading can be. You can do this many different ways:

- Read to your child on a daily basis. You can start this at a very young age. I started reading to my son when he was a few weeks old.
- Once your child starts learning how to read independently, alternate pages together.
- Cook together using a book or recipe.
- Read for pleasure and make sure your child sees you☺
- Play letter or word games such as bingo and matching games.
- Put magnetic letters on the refrigerator or foam letters in the bathtub.
- Write them notes and put them in their lunch box for a surprise.
- Keep a journal together at home.
- Write a thank you letter to someone special.
- Take advantage of the public library! Go at least one time per month!

If you would like more information on how to help your children become better readers and writers, I highly recommend this book. It breaks down what you can do with children at different age levels ranging from birth-12 years of age.

READ TO ME: Raising Kids Who Love to Read

By: Bernice E. Cullinan