

Using Phonics Pathways

by Dolores G. Hiskes

This is the first of several tutorials offering specific teaching tips for **Phonics Pathways**, as well as information of a general nature about teaching reading and spelling.

In this tutorial we discuss integrating **Phonics Pathways** with other Dorbooks educational products, in response to frequently-asked questions on this subject. We hope you find it useful! Let's begin!

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- Remedial Readers

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Blending Sounds into Syllables
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Building Words into Sentences
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Developing Comprehension

Introduction



Beginning Readers:

- 1) Read the "Getting Started" section of Phonics Pathways (page xii) for an overview of how to teach these lessons, including a suggested sample session.
- 2) Get a notebook to record your student's progress with these lessons- date, page, and any special comments.
- 3) Try to dictate a few sounds or words in each lesson before moving on, unless writing is too difficult. Writing always helps reinforce the lesson!
- 4) Once he begins reading short phrases and sentences (from page 38 on) he might be ready for short beginning readers that are ONLY comprised of decodable short-vowel words.
- 5) Write a brief summary of the lesson in the student's journal Was it easy? Difficult? Should he repeat it, or move on? etc.



Remedial Readers:

- 1) As above, but rather than begin on the first page, do a pretest to determine exactly where your student needs to begin. Just because a student is older you cannot assume they know the short-vowel sounds or can read without guessing!
- 2) Go to the first review page (6) in Phonics Pathways and see if he is able to read all of the short-vowel sounds. If he stumbles a lot or works too hard at it, this is where you should begin. He needs to know these sounds thoroughly and automatically, just as he knows his own name.
- 3) If he can read these sounds, keep testing with the review pages of each section of Phonics Pathways until you find the place where he slows down and begins to struggle. That is the place to begin--or even one step sooner if he lacks confidence.
- 4) If he seems to read fairly well already, go back and review the spelling rules in each section. (Also see spelling index on page 225.) Spelling and reading reinforce each other!

REMEMBER! Do not measure these lessons by "age" or "page" - only time spent. He might spend several days on one page or he might complete several pages in one day. Only ten minutes every day will result in real progress!



LEARNING SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS

- 1- Play **The Short-Vowel Shuffle** (page xiv) until all of these sounds are learned thoroughly. Begin playing with the "a" cards, add more cards as they are learned. (Older students can use them as flash cards.)
- 2- These sounds can be difficult to differentiate. If he is having trouble hearing the difference between "e" and "i," for example, try saying some of the "i" words with an "e" sound: "etch," "egloo," etc. Or tell him "we say inch, not ench." Hearing a word pronounced incorrectly can be quite helpful!
- 3- Keep **The Short Vowel Stick** (page xiii) on the table right by the book for students as a quick-reference and reinforcement until these sounds are automatic in recall, and it is no longer needed. It is a very handy reference!

4- Youngest students will enjoy **The Short-Vowel Dictionary**, their very own little board book teaching all of the short-vowel sounds. Especially recommended if student is intimidated at first by such a "big book" as **Phonics Pathways!**

5- As soon as your student knows the short-vowel sounds, begin playing the single-letter **Blendit!** It is an enjoyable way to increase recognition-response time after these sounds have been taught.



BLENDING SOUNDS INTO SYLLABLES:

1- Remember to take a deep breath and slowly blend the sounds together (page 9). This exaggerated activity helps develop the concept of blending.

2- Use **The Train Game** to supplement the two-letter blend section of **Phonics Pathways** (beginning on page 9). A hands-on manipulative will always help reinforce blending skills!

3- Refrigerator letters are excellent for this purpose as well, having the added advantage of being very kinesthetic. Name the sounds in each letter, and move them closer and closer together. When the letters click together, the sounds blend together!

4- Play the two-letter blend board game in **Blendit!** to increase recognition-response time.

5- If your child does not like making sounds without meaning and only wants to make real words, try saying "sa as in sat," or "fi as in fish," "a as in ant," etc. (Carrying this idea one step farther, you can try making a game out of it by asking, "How many words can YOU think of with this blend?")



BLENDING SYLLABLES INTO WORDS:

1- Practice blending sounds into words, beginning on page 28.

2- Use **The Train Game** to help develop this skill as well: Have a two-letter train card ("sa) to the left, and a consonant card to the right ("t"). Say the two-letter blend while you move it towards the center, then say the letter sound in the right train card while you move it towards the center. When the train cars hitch together, the sounds blend into a word! Vary the cards to make different words.

3- After he begins reading three-letter words, additional blending practice can be obtained in the corresponding top pages of **Pyramid**. These reading exercises always correspond to the lessons in **Phonics Pathways**, and are an excellent enhancement when used together.

4- Play the corresponding board game in **Blendit!** This will always develop the word recognition-response time of whatever lesson he is learning in an easy and enjoyable fashion.

5- Alternatively, play the corresponding **Wordwatch** card game. This, too, will develop his word recognition-response time, and is fun to play as well!



BUILDING WORDS INTO SENTENCES:

1- Practice reading the phrases/sentences on pages 28-38. "Connected reading" is a big step and may take time to learn. The readiness for learning this skill varies greatly from student to student, and has nothing to do with intelligence any more than wearing glasses does.

2- Additional practice can be found with the corresponding sections in **Pyramid**. This will help develop his eye tracking and increase his eye span.

3- Have him begin reading simple decodable books to develop his reading fluency.



READING MULTISYLLABLE WORDS:

1- Read the multisyllable section of **Phonics Pathways** on page 101, and explain to him what a multisyllable word is.

2- Write multisyllable words by syllables on **The Train Game** cards, have him read them.

3- Practice reading the multisyllable word sections of **Phonics Pathways** on pages 101-103, and 212-221.

4- Practice reading the back section of **Pyramid** (pages 58-79).

5- Make sure he is not guessing when reading more complex books-every so often dictate a multisyllable word from the story and have him rewrite it by syllables, and read it back to you.

6- **The Long And The Short Of It** is a new game that reinforces correct spelling when adding suffixes to long and short-vowel words (pages 94-95, 98-99, 168-169). It is a self-correcting test that checks for knowledge of these spelling rules.



DEVELOPING COMPREHENSION:

- 1- After he begins reading sentences, once or twice in every lesson ask him to explain the sentence in his own words after he has read it.
- 2- After he is able to paraphrase a sentence from **Phonics Pathways**, have him do the same thing with a whole story in **Pyramid**.
- 3- Have him read a corresponding decodable reader with comprehension questions at the end, and answer the questions.
- 4- Watch for language that is too complex. Define any words that he does not understand.
- 5- Make sure he is reading multisyllable words correctly and not just guessing at them. As Mark Twain said, "The difference between reading and almost reading is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug!"

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This tutorial is taken from **PHONICS TALK**, the new Dorbooks Newsletter. We hope you have found it useful! To see the entire issue and/or subscribe to future newsletters, visit:

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