

 **S.P.I.R.E.[®]**

Specialized Program Individualizing Reading Excellence



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INTRODUCTION

From school textbooks, to job applications, to online news articles, reading is part of our everyday lives. This is one of the reasons that reading and language arts are given so much attention in curriculum development and in policy making. It is also why millions of dollars have been spent on government-sponsored programs such as No Child Left Behind and why the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts have been developed. In order to be a successful adult, one must be able to read and comprehend text with ease.

A variety of best practices in the teaching of reading have passed in and out of favor over the years. However, it is clear that having a strong foundation of basic reading skills benefits students as they tackle complex texts, allowing them to focus not only on the act of reading itself, but on understanding and evaluating the information that is read.

A good grasp of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics is essential to building a strong foundation for reading. This knowledge allows children to move onto more complex reading skills, such as fluency and comprehension. The vast majority of children must be taught the code—that is, the connection between sounds and the symbols that represent them. While all children need practice with sound-symbol correspondence, those who struggle with reading need far more of it. This is where decodable texts can be especially beneficial. They play a key role in solidifying foundational reading skills because they include only those phonics skills that children have already been taught. With the knowledge that *c* says /k/, *a* says /a/, and *t* says /t/, children can read the word *cat*. Early success breaking the code is a powerful experience for young readers, enabling them to focus on reading with expression and understanding. These readers will enjoy reading and do more of it, which leads to even greater reading achievement.

DECODABLE READERS

What Makes a Book “Decodable”?

While non-educators may think of decodable books as ones that are merely easy to read, this is not the whole story. The term “decodable” refers to words that contain only those phonic elements a child has already learned. For example, if the child has learned all the consonants and the short vowel sound of the letter *e*, the child can be expected to read, or decode, words such as *pen*, *net*, and *Ben*. Most decodable books also introduce a number of sight words. Some of these are phonically irregular. Others are words that will become decodable once the child has learned more phonic elements. As more phonic elements and sight words are introduced, the child becomes a more masterful decoder.

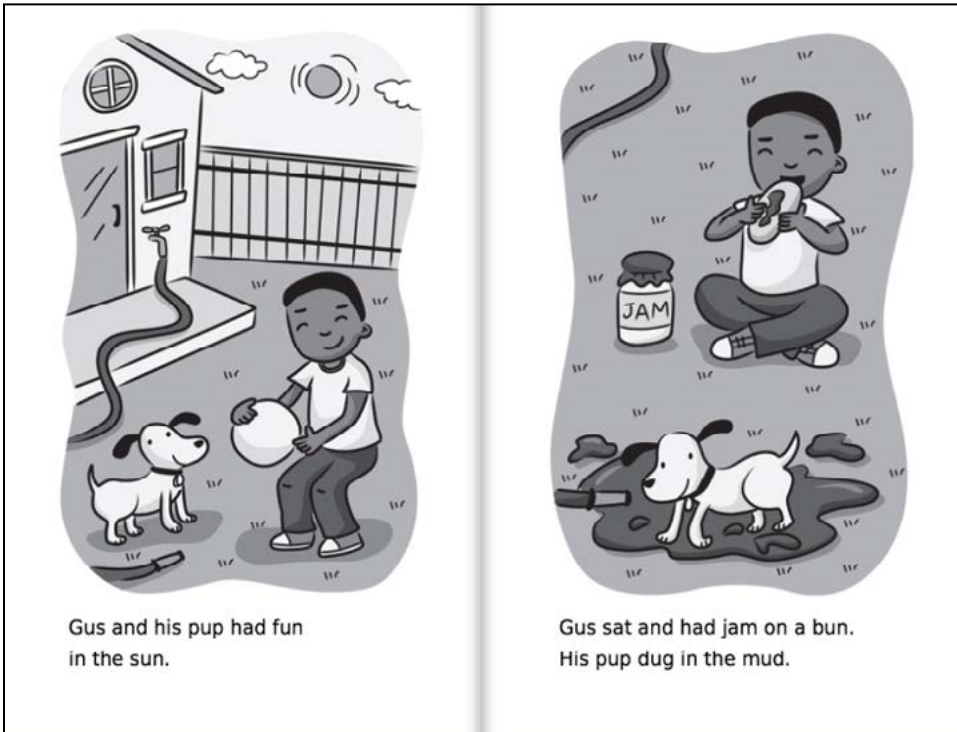
Bad Luck?	Previously Taught Skills	
Focus Concept: <i>ck</i> (clock)	Consonant Sounds	Vowel Sounds
back dock duck ducks luck quack rock sack snack stuck yuck	all consonants sh (ship) ch (chin) th (this, thin) wh (whisk)	a (ax) i (hit) o (ox) u (up) e (bed)
	ff (cliff) ll (will) ss (miss)	al (ball) wa (wasp)
	qu (quilt)	
	Welded Sounds ang (sang) ing (ring) ong (strong) ung (stung) ank (bank) ink (wink) onk (honk) unk (trunk)	
Sight Words* a, his, I, is, into, of, said, the, The, to, what		

*Sight words are nonpatterned or very low-patterned words of high frequency.

Bad Luck, Set 2A

Each *S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Reader* includes lists of focus concept words, sight words, and concepts the reader will already need to have mastered.

When choosing decodable books for a child, take a look at the skills addressed in each title to make sure they align with what the child has already learned. A list of skills covered in the *S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers* series can be found beginning on [page 14](#).



Gus and his pup had fun
in the sun.

Gus sat and had jam on a bun.
His pup dug in the mud.

Gus and His Pup, Set 1B

The content of the *S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers* series ranges in difficulty, from easy-to-read, one-syllable, short-vowel words in Set 1, to complex multisyllabic words and advanced sentence structures in Set 6.

Any men who were still strong enough to walk had to journey forth in search of food and firewood. And any who could still stand were set to guard the encampment. These guards were sometimes forced to stand on their hats to keep their bare feet out of the snow.



Finally, after some three months of intense suffering, things began to get better at Valley Forge. As the weather lightened, the Continental Congress was able to send in wagons with food and other supplies. A company of bakers arrived. The Schuylkill River was now swarming with fish that were easy to catch. Fresh volunteers began to arrive in camp. France entered the war on the American side, providing money and military support.

Valley Forge, Set 6A

How Can Decodable Books Help Early Readers and Struggling Readers?

Reading is not a skill that comes naturally; it must be learned. Some children pick it up with less support than others, but all children benefit from instruction in phonics: that is, instruction in the sounds that letters represent and how these letters are combined to make words. Those who struggle with reading especially need to spend dedicated time developing their phonics skills.



Reading decodable books can benefit students at all ability levels by enabling them to:

- » read independently after learning just a few letters and their sounds;
- » “sound out” unfamiliar words, which makes students’ reading more accurate and discourages bad habits, such as skipping over unknown words or guessing what the words say, based on the first few letters;
- » apply the phonics skills they’ve learned in the context of a story or nonfiction text;
- » experience success and develop confidence in their reading abilities.

Decodable Readers and the Common Core State Standards

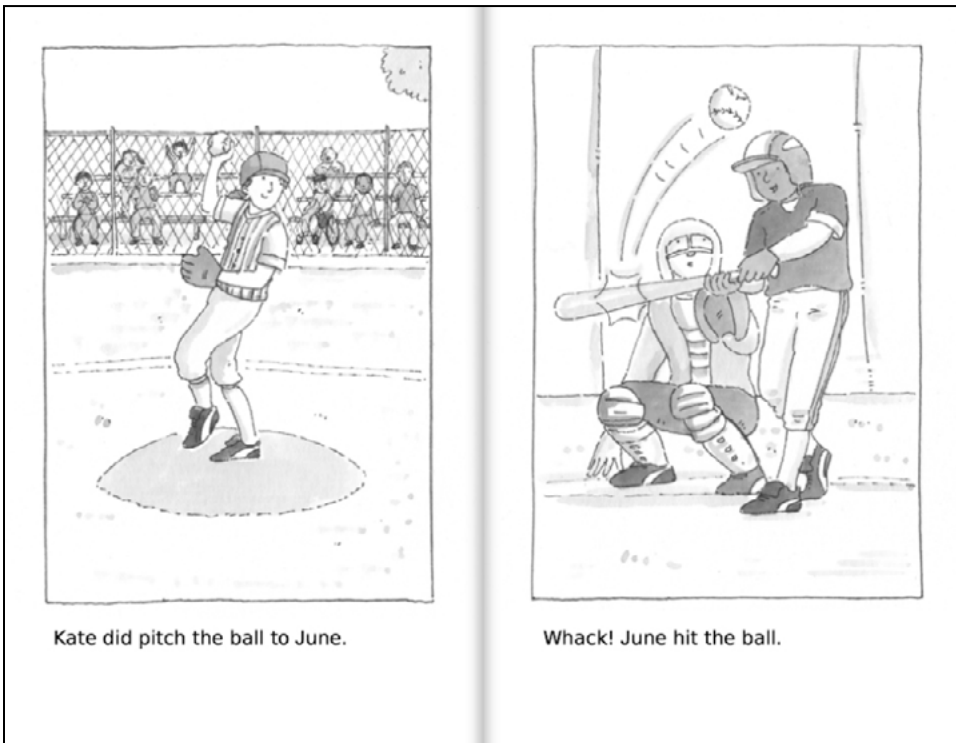
Decodable readers play an important role in curricula designed to meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)*. The CCSS say this about what they call the Foundational Skills: “These foundational skills identified are not an end in and of themselves; rather they are necessary and important components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers...” (CCSS, 15). The Foundational Skills identified are Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Word Recognition (decoding), and Fluency.

By fifth grade, the expectation (CCSS, 15–17) is that students will be able to do the following:

- » Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print
- » Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes)
- » Know and apply grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills when decoding words
- » Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension

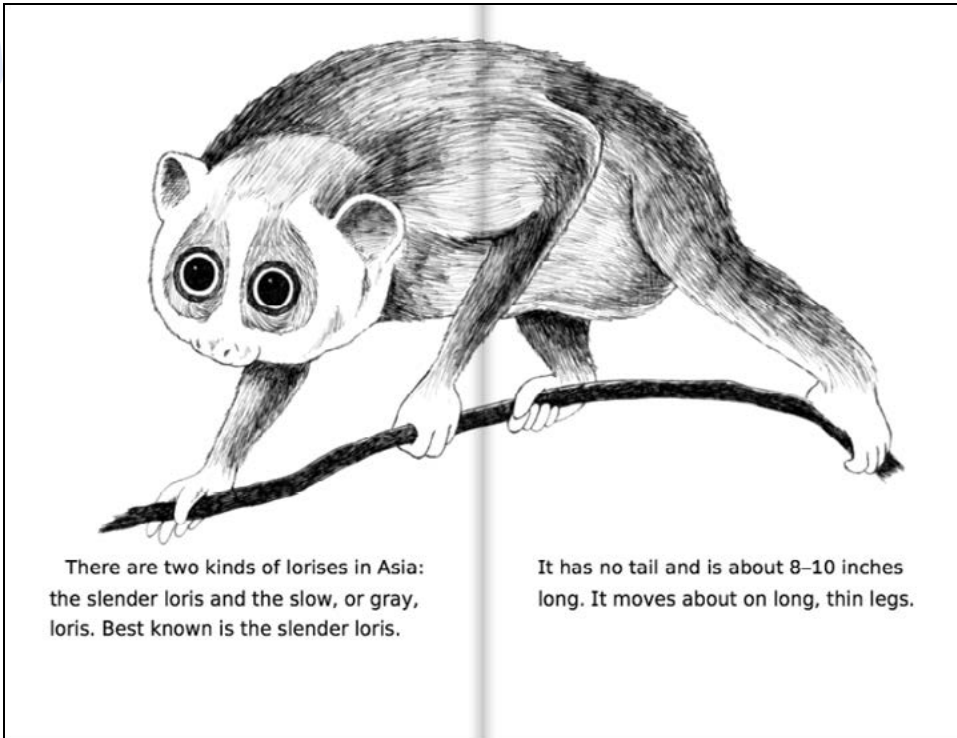
* National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Washington, DC: Authors.

Decodable books provide connected text students can use to practice their newly acquired reading skills. While students often have opportunities to decode words in isolation, decodable books provide the additional challenge of reading for meaning, which is the ultimate goal of all reading. As such, decodable texts may be considered the first step on the so-called "staircase of text complexity" that is discussed in the Common Core State Standards. Decodable texts are not meant to replace other kinds of books. Rather, they should be used as a tool to precede and facilitate the reading of more challenging texts.



Kate's Game, Set 2B

Detailed black-and-white illustrations facilitate comprehension without distracting students from the reading task at hand.

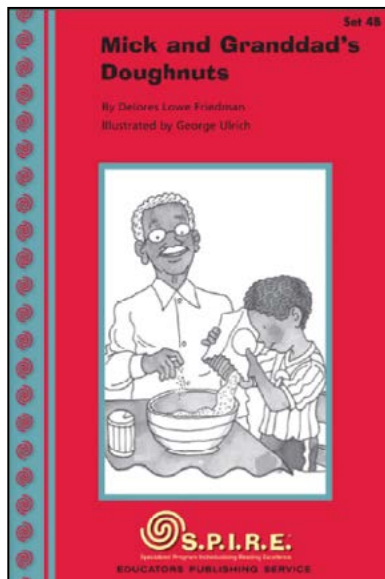


The Loris, Set 5A

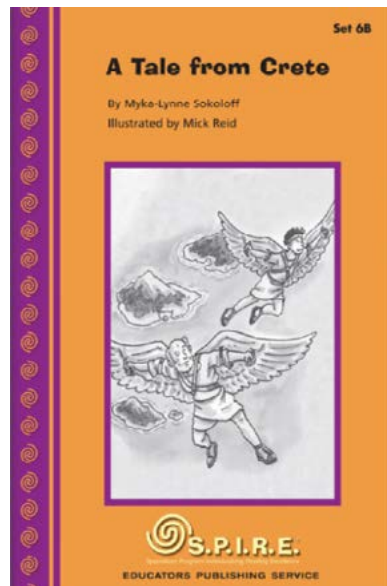
For specific activities using *S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers* to meet the Foundational Skills (K–5) Standards, see “Foundational Skill Activities” on [page 12](#).

THE S.P.I.R.E. APPROACH TO READING

S.P.I.R.E. is a comprehensive, multisensory reading intervention program that has been used successfully with a wide range of students, from those in elementary school to those who continue to struggle with foundational reading skills even into high school. The program incorporates lessons in phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension in an instructional design that is sensitive to the needs of struggling readers. Based on the Orton-Gillingham Approach, every concept in *S.P.I.R.E.* is learned to mastery before students move on, and there are many opportunities built into the program for extended practice.



Mick and Granddad's Doughnuts, Set 4B

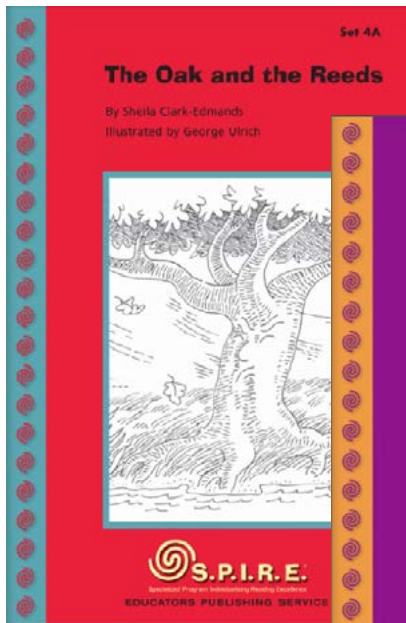


A Tale from Crete, Set 6B

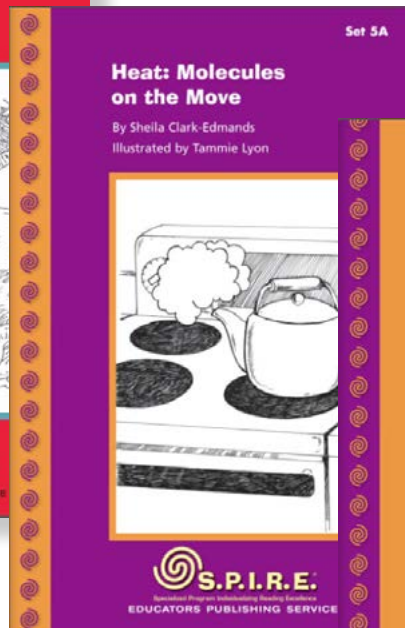
Fiction titles include original stories, folk tales, myths, and fables.



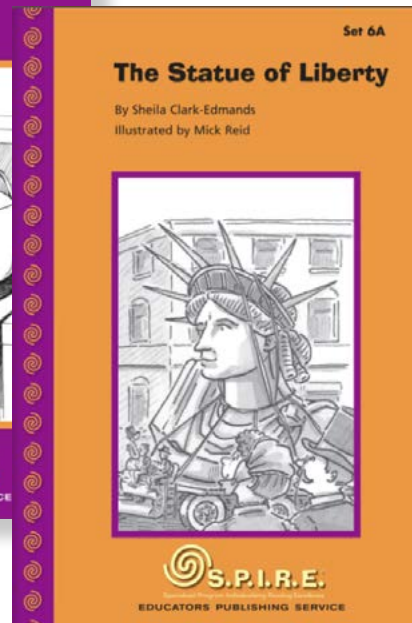
A differentiator between *S.P.I.R.E.* and other similar reading intervention programs is the large number of decodable texts students read throughout the program. Like any quality reading program, *S.P.I.R.E.*'s goal is to help students become confident, independent readers. The *S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers* offer the perfect opportunity to employ newly learned skills and strategies in real reading situations in order to comprehend text.



The Oak and the Reeds, Set 4A



Heat: Molecules on the Move, Set 5A



The Statue of Liberty, Set 6A

Nonfiction titles cover topics from literature, science, and social studies.

Using S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers in Classroom Phonics Instruction

S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers were designed specifically for early readers and struggling readers. These books help students practice and solidify their decoding skills and become better readers of increasingly complex texts.

S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers can be used in many ways:

- » As a whole-class reading activity, by displaying the ebook version of each text on an interactive whiteboard;
- » As a capstone experience to any phonics lesson;
- » For fluency practice, timed or untimed (word counts appear on the back of each book);
- » As independent reading practice for students who need to work on early literacy skills;
- » To build home-school connections by having students bring the books home to read to a caregiver or sibling.

Note to Teachers and Parents

All children should have the opportunity to experience success when reading. The decodable ebooks in this engaging series begin with simple words and sentences and increase in difficulty from level to level. Children may begin reading anywhere in the series, depending on their reading ability. The focus concept and sight words for this title, as well as a list of phonics skills children may already be familiar with, can be found at the end of this book.

This decodable ebook is perfect for independent reading. Encourage children to find a quiet spot to read, away from distractions. Help children build confidence by having them read aloud to you or to a friend or sibling.

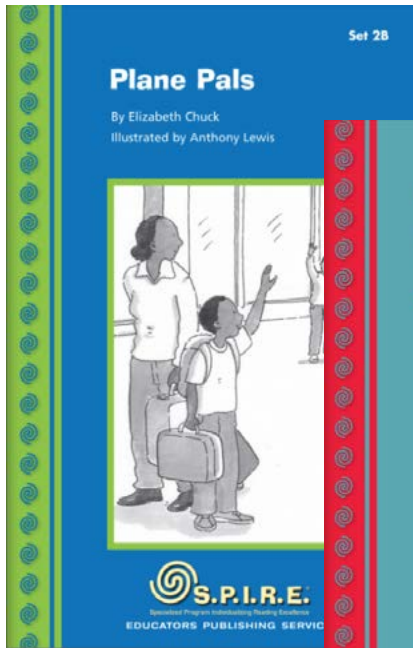
Before beginning, you may wish to have children read the list of focus concept and sight words. When children have finished the story, encourage them to find these words on each page. To extend children's experience with these phonics concepts, encourage them to name or write down other words that follow the same phonics pattern. For example, if the focus concept is short *o*, they might write *log*, *pot*, and *frag*.

The presentation of phonics concepts in this series of ebooks was developed for the S.P.I.R.E.® reading program, a product of Educators Publishing Service.

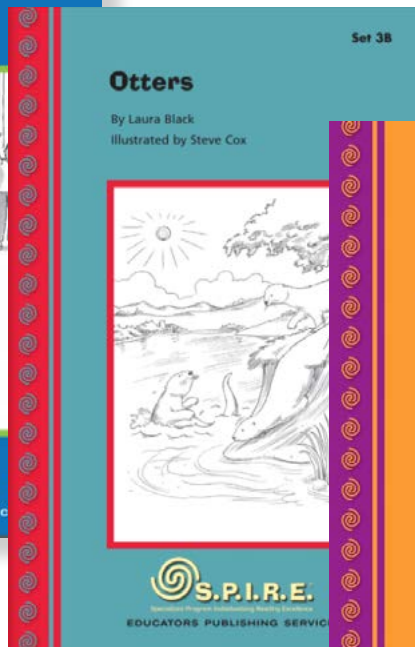
To learn more about EPS and S.P.I.R.E.®, visit:
eps.schoolspecialty.com

In the ebook version of the readers, the Note to Teachers and Parents offers additional ideas for using the books.

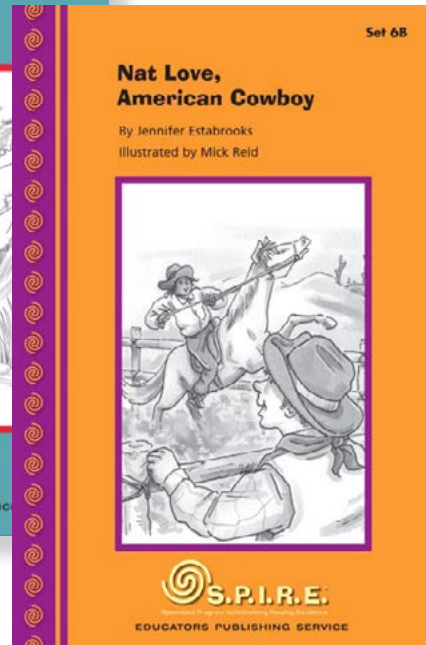
Independent reading time can be uncomfortable for students who are not reading at the same level as their peers. The ebook version of the *S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers* offers a stress-free solution for such students, in that reading on an eReader offers privacy. Struggling students will build confidence as they work on early literacy skills.



Plane Pals, Set 2B



Otters, Set 3B



Nate Love, American Cowboy, Set 6B

From stories about friendship, to informational books about animals, to biographies of famous Americans, these books will keep students engaged and motivate even the most reluctant reader.

Foundational Skill Activities

The following menu lists activities that use the *S.P.I.R.E. Decodable Readers* to help students practice and hone crucial foundational reading skills. Whether implemented in the classroom or at home, these activities reinforce what students are learning in school. To help educators, Common Core standards covered by each activity appear in brackets in purple type. Grade levels appear in parentheses.

For those activities in which students use an eReader or tablet, see “Taking Advantage of Device Features” on [page 20](#).

PRINT CONCEPTS [RF1]

(K) It's a Book! Have students take turns playing the role of teacher by demonstrating to each other the process for reading a book (follow words from left to right, lines of text from top to bottom, and pages from left to right). Invite students to point to individual words and the letters of the alphabet that make up those words.

(1) Sentence Style Have students select sentences from the book and point out their distinguishing features (e.g., first word capitalization, ending punctuation).

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS [RF2]

(K) Rhyme Time With a partner, discuss pairs of rhyming words found in the book and name other words that rhyme with them.

(1) Short and Long Have students sort words by long and short vowel sounds. They can use a journal to write the words, or, if using an eReader, they can use the commenting tool to type “short” or “long” (or “S” or “L”).



PHONICS AND WORD RECOGNITION [RF3]

(K) Word Search Have students read aloud the list of sight words on the inside front cover of the print book or on the Focus Concept page in the ebook. Then invite them to search for the words within the story. If students are using an eReader, have them use the device tools to highlight the sight words throughout the book. Alternatively, you may choose to display the book on an interactive whiteboard and search for the words as a group.

(1) Say My Name Have students find words in the book with long vowel sounds and write them in a journal. Or, if students are using an eReader, they can highlight the words using the device tools.

(2) Beginnings and Endings Have students sort words by their prefix or suffix. They can use a journal to write the words, or, if using an eReader, they can highlight the words using the device tools. If working on paper, have students swap lists with a partner and read the words aloud. Challenge partners to add more words beyond those that are found in the book.

(3, 4, 5) Divide and Conquer Have students make a list of multisyllabic words found in their book. Students should then swap word lists with a partner and mark up the words by underlining the vowels and drawing lines between syllables. Finish the activity by having students read their lists of words aloud.

FLUENCY [RF4]

(K) Read It Invite pairs of students to take turns reading each page of the story aloud.

(1–5) Read It Have individual students read the story aloud to you or to a partner. Monitor them for accuracy, rate, and expression. Word counts for each book appear on the back cover of the print book and on the last page of the ebook.

S.P.I.R.E. DECODABLE READERS' SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF SKILLS

SETS 1A AND 1B

Sets 1A and 1B feature simple, one-syllable words with short vowels.

Set 1A	Set 1B	Skill(s)
The Pig and the Ant	Snip and Snap	short <i>a</i> (ax), short <i>i</i> (hit)
The Lost Dog	Mom and Dad Jog	short <i>o</i> (ox)
The Gum	Gus and His Pup	short <i>u</i> (up)
The Pet Hen	Get the Pets!	short <i>e</i> (bed)
The Fish Wish	A Red Sash	<i>sh</i> (ship)
At Lunch	Lunch on the Sand	<i>ch</i> (chin)
Dash on the Path	The Math Test	<i>th</i> (this, thin)
A Whiz Kid	A Fast Dog	<i>wh</i> (whisk)
The Lost Ring	Lunch with the Gang	<i>ng</i> (sang, ring, strong, stung)
Hank's Fish Tank	Mink and Skunk	<i>nk</i> (bank, wink, honk, trunk)

All Set 1 titles are fiction.



SETS 2A AND 2B

Sets 2A and 2B feature longer, multisyllabic words, with both short and long vowels.

Set 2A	Set 2B	Skill(s)
Deb and Ross on the Job	Miss Hiss	<i>ff</i> (cliff), <i>ll</i> (will), <i>ss</i> (miss)
Help!	A Walk to the Mall	<i>al</i> (ball)
Watch the Frog Hop	The Swamp	<i>wa</i> (wasp)
Chad's Problems	Quin's Pet	<i>qu</i> (quilt)
Bad Luck?	Stuck!	<i>ck</i> (clock)
Tricks Will Not Fetch	Catch a Batch of Fish	<i>tch</i> (catch)
The Whale	Kate's Game	Vowel-Consonant- <i>e</i> (lake, bike, rode, tune, Pete)
The Long Hike	The Love Note	Vowel-Consonant- <i>e</i> (lake, bike, rode, tune, Pete)
A Scare	The Kite	Vowel-Consonant- <i>e</i> (lake, bike, rode, tune, Pete)
A Valentine	Plane Pals	Vowel-Consonant- <i>e</i> (lake, bike, rode, tune, Pete)

All Set 2 titles are fiction.



SETS 3A AND 3B

Sets 3A and 3B feature multisyllabic words, including words with suffixes.

Set 3A	Set 3B	Skill(s)
The Big Catch (F)	Blake's Flying Class (F)	open single syllables (so, he, fly)
The Bold Robins (NF)	The Fish Pond (F)	closed syllable exceptions <i>-ild</i> (child), <i>-old</i> (cold), <i>-ind</i> (find), <i>-ost</i> (post), <i>-oll</i> (roll)
The Rays of the Sun (NF)	Otters (NF)	<i>ay</i> (spray)
A Day of Play at Black Cove (F)	All Is Well (F)	suffix <i>-ed</i> (melted, smelled, winked)
No Time to Ride (F)	The Wishing Lamp (F)	suffixes <i>-s</i> , <i>-es</i> , <i>-ing</i> , <i>-er</i> , <i>-est</i> , <i>-en</i> , <i>-ish</i> , <i>-ly</i> , <i>-y</i> , <i>-ful</i> , <i>-ness</i> , <i>-less</i>
Helpful Pals (F)	Who Plays Tricks? (F)	twin-consonant syllable division
The Best (F)	My Clothes Do Not Fit (F)	twin-consonant syllable division
A Play (F)	Sunset Magnet (F)	nontwin-consonant syllable division
The Humpback Whale (NF)	Big Hippos, Small Hippos (NF)	nontwin-consonant syllable division
A Big Problem (F)	Ned's Pout (F)	<i>ou</i> (mound, doughnut, cousin, you), Prefix <i>a-</i> (alike)

(F) Fiction, (NF) Nonfiction



SETS 4A AND 4B

Sets 4A and 4B feature multisyllabic words and more difficult vowel combinations.

Set 4A	Set 4B	Skill(s)
Basketball Dreams (F)	Kenny's Visit (F)	ea (eat, bread, steak)
A Great Mess (F)	The Castle (F)	consonant-le (bubble, uncle, fiddle, ruffle, juggle, sprinkle, apple, kettle, puzzle)
Rob's Wish (F)	Mick and Granddad's Doughnuts (F)	oa (goat)
Just Like Old Times (F)	Brother? Sister? (F)	ai (paint)
A Fearful Tale (F)	A Job at the Ranch (F)	ee (sheep)
Live Your Dream (F)	The Best Gift (F)	ee (sheep)
Shooting Hoops (F)	The Campers (F)	oo (food, cook)
Goofy Zoo (F)	Free! (Poetry)	oo (food, cook)
Light (NF)	Night Flight (NF)	igh (light)
The Oak and the Reeds (Fable)	Chief and the Mouse (F)	ie (pie, chief)

(F) Fiction, (NF) Nonfiction



SETS 5A AND 5B

Sets 5A and 5B feature multisyllabic words, more challenging vowel combinations, and complex sentence structures.

Set 5A	Set 5B	Skill(s)
Heat: Molecules on the Move (NF)	Grace the Dancing Rat (F)	soft <i>c</i> (cent)
The Rooster and the Gemstone (Fable)	Stage Fright (F)	soft <i>g</i> (gym)
A Great American: A School Essay (F)	The Prince and the Gobbler (Fairy Tale)	<i>er</i> (fern, berry), <i>ur</i> (surf), <i>ir</i> (squirt), <i>ear</i> (earth), <i>wor</i> (world)
The Badger (NF)	Sky City (NF)	<i>dge</i> (judge)
Deserts of the World (NF)	It Pays to Advertise (NF)	<i>s=/z/</i> (rose)
The Butterfly and the Moth (NF)	Rainbows (NF)	<i>ow</i> (snow, plow)
If You Can’t Say Something Nice (F)	Hiccups (F)	<i>oe</i> (toe)
The Loris (NF)	Alice’s Strange Friend (NF)	<i>or</i> (fork)
The Ugly Buckling (F)	Corny (F)	<i>or</i> (fork)
Moose in Love: A Real Story (NF)	A Hard Game (NF)	<i>ar</i> (car, warthog)

(F) Fiction, (NF) Nonfiction



SETS 6A AND 6B

Sets 6A and 6B are the most challenging books in the series, featuring multisyllabic words and complex sentence structures.

Set 6A	Set 6B	Skill(s)
The Shark (NF)	Amanda Has a Scare (F)	prefix <i>a-</i> (alike), ending <i>-a</i> (camera), suffix <i>-able</i> (huggable)
The Inventor of the Telephone (Biography)	Bottlenose Dolphins (NF)	<i>ph</i> (dolphin)
The Boy Who Thought Friends Could Be Bought (F)	I Caught It! (F)	<i>ought</i> (thought), <i>aught</i> (caught)
The Statue of Liberty (NF)	Rescue Dogs (NF)	<i>ue</i> (clue), <i>ue</i> (barbecue), <i>ew</i> (chew, few), <i>tu</i> (statue)
The City of Troy (NF)	Nat Love, American Cowboy (Biography)	<i>oi</i> , <i>oy</i> (coins, cowboy)
The Hawk (NF)	Tide Pools (NF)	<i>aw</i> , <i>au</i> (hawk, saucer)
Valley Forge (NF)	Can Turkeys Fly? (NF)	<i>ey</i> (donkey, prey)
The Tomb of King Tut (NF)	Mark Twain's Great River (NF)	<i>kn</i> (knight), <i>wr</i> (wrist), <i>mb</i> (climb), <i>gh</i> (ghost), <i>gu</i> (guide)
The <i>Voyager</i> Spacecraft: Messages for Outer Space (NF)	Maiden Voyage, Last Voyage (NF)	suffix <i>-age</i> (package)
A Tale of King Midas (Myth)	A Tale from Crete (Myth)	open syllables (baby, tiny, open, tulip, music, even)

(F) Fiction, (NF) Nonfiction

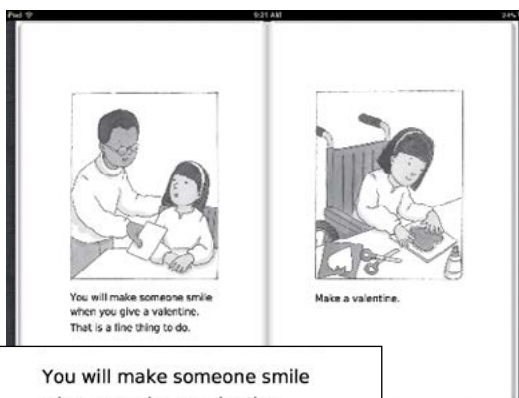


TAKING ADVANTAGE OF DEVICE FEATURES

One way to meet the needs of readers and to engage them in the text is to take advantage of device features. Your eReader or tablet may not have all the following features, or it may have additional features not discussed here. Over time, advances in technology will make even more features available to you. Check the user manual for your device to find out which features are available and how they might be used to customize the reading experience.

Modifying the Look of the Text

Most tablets and eReaders have settings that allow you to change the size of the text. Young readers, struggling readers, and readers with vision impairments will benefit from enlarging the text. You may also be able to select a simpler typeface, which can make for an easier reading experience. Devices also typically allow you to customize the margins and space between lines of text. Enlarged white space often makes it easier for the eye to follow the text. Play around with the settings to find the right ones to meet the needs of your students.



A Valentine, Set 2A

You will make someone smile
when you give a valentine.
That is a fine thing to do.

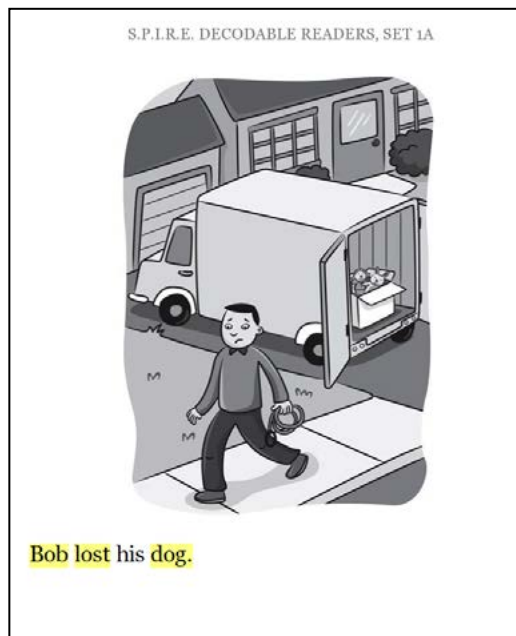
On an iPad®, use a pinching gesture to enlarge the text.

Highlighting, Note-Taking, and Bookmarking

Some tablets and eReaders allow users to highlight text, make notes or comments, and bookmark pages. These features help students engage with the text in a similar way to using sticky notes or marking the actual text of a print book. Studies have shown that readers retain information better when they actively engage with what they are reading. Marking the text can help readers remember, understand, and ask questions about what they've read.

Students can use these device features to:

- » highlight focus concept and/or sight words;
- » make note of questions regarding the meaning of the text or the pronunciation of words; and
- » bookmark pages they wish to return to.



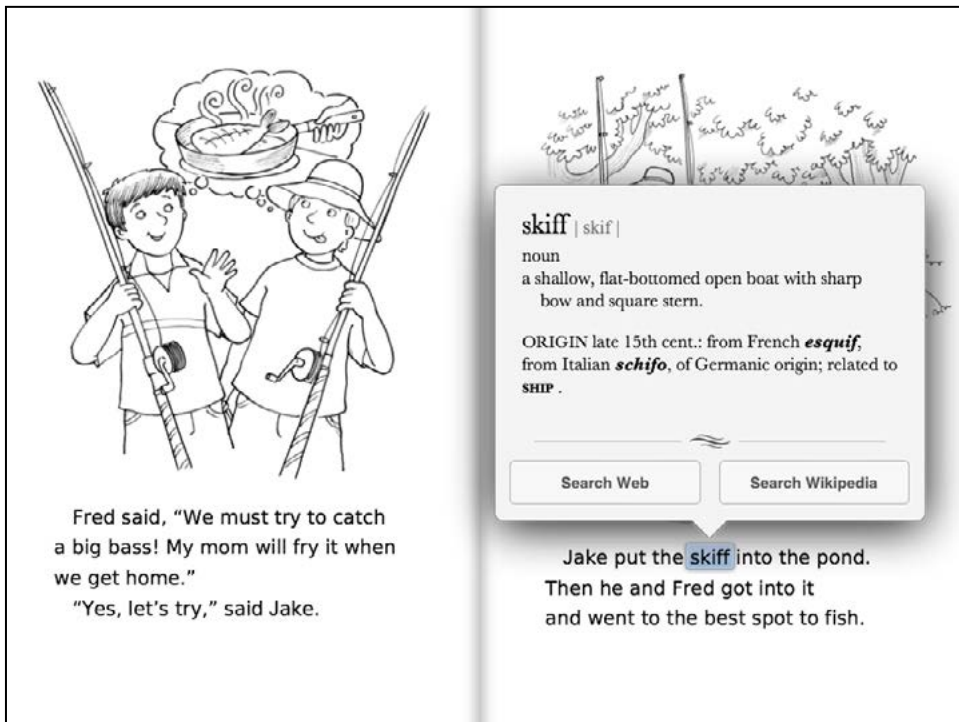
The Lost Dog, Set 1A on the Kindle Fire HD

Use the highlighting tool to mark words with the focus concept.



Looking Up Definitions of Words

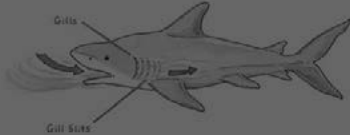
Some tablets and eReaders have built-in dictionaries, and users can click on any word in the ebook to get a definition. This feature can be very useful for students, especially English Language Learners. Students are more likely to look up words they don't know when they can do so with a simple touch of the screen.



The Big Catch, Set 3A on the iPad®

Tap and hold your finger on a word to get a definition.

S.P.I.R.E. DECODABLE READERS, SET 6A



Sharks are not like most fish. For one thing, most fish have skeletons made of bone, just like people. But a shark's skeleton is all cartilage, with no bone at all. Cartilage is softer than bone and can bend. It's the stuff under your skin at the end of your nose.

Me
he
br
slit
slits. They must constantly swim with their mouths open to force water through their mouths and past their gills.

Location 41 - Note

Do sharks swim in their sleep?

Close Delete Edit

Home Back Search Star

The Shark, Set 6A on the Kindle Fire HD

This student highlighted important information and used the Notes feature to ask a question about the text.



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