

Growing confident readers

Read Write Inc. Phonics • Parent information booklet

Learning to read. Reading to learn. Reading for pleasure.

Our Read Write Inc. programme helps every child become a confident, fluent reader, develop a wide vocabulary and enjoy stories.

How and what do children learn?

- Learn 44 sounds and their matching letters or letter groups, using simple picture prompts. This is phonics.
- Blend sounds together to read words.
- Read lively stories containing words they have learnt to sound out.
- Answer “Find It” and “Prove It” questions to show their understanding of a story.
- Talk about what they have read and listen to other people’s ideas to deepen their understanding.
- Take part in a daily phonics and reading lesson in a group matched to their stage of development.
- Learn to write the letters and letter groups that represent the sounds, using handwriting phrases linked to the pictures.

At home: listen to your child read at least **five times each week**, and enjoy reading stories to them every day.



Meet Fred

Say the sounds, blend them together, read the word



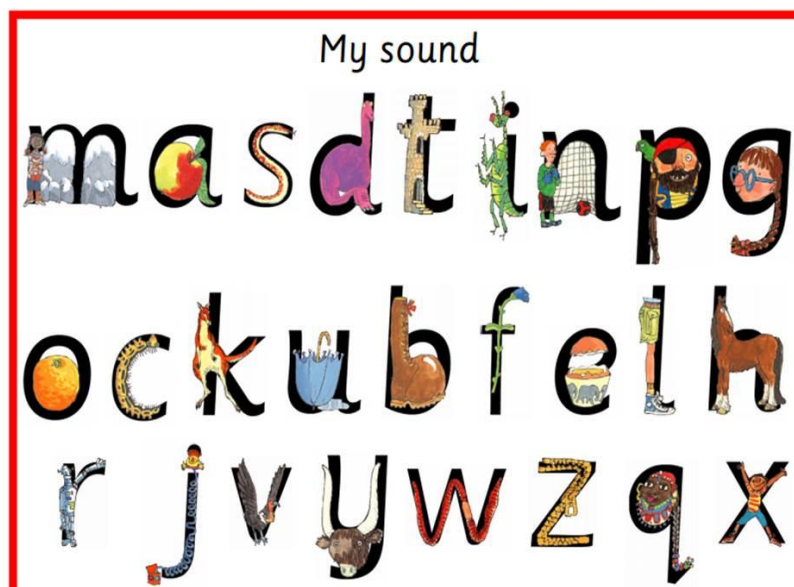
Fred is the frog we use in our RWI lessons. He can say the sounds in a word, but he needs children to help him blend them together and say the whole word. We call sounding out a word **Fred Talk**.

When blending, use the sounds the letters represent, rather than letter names. If your child meets an unfamiliar decodable word, encourage them to spot any **Special Friends** first, then Fred Talk and read the word. Special Friends are two or more letters that represent one sound, such as **sh**, **ch** or **igh**.

d-o-g → dog sh-o-p → shop

Special Friends → Fred Talk → read the word

Children also learn how to form each letter using a rhyme and a picture prompt. The pictures below help them remember the sounds and letter shapes.





Speed Sounds

Children learn each set when they are secure with the previous set

RWI uses three sets of sounds. Stories are closely matched to the sounds children have already learnt, so they can decode the words at their stage of learning.

Set 1: taught in this order

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

Set 2 and Set 3: Special Friends

Set 2 sound and phrase	Set 3 sound and phrase	Additional Set 3
ay: may I play	a-e: make a cake ai: snail in the rain	
ee: what can you see	ea: cup of tea e: he me we she be	e-e: go Pete and Steve
igh: fly high	i-e: nice smile	ie: terrible tie
ow: blow the snow	o-e: phone home oa: goat in a boat	
oo: poo at the zoo	u-e: huge brute ew: chew the stew	ue: come to the rescue
oo: look at a book		
ar: start the car		
or: shut the door	aw: yawn at dawn	au: Paul the astronaut
air: that's not fair	are: share and care	
ir: whirl and twirl	ur: nurse for a purse er: a better letter	
ou: shout it out	ow: brown cow	
oy: toy for a boy	oi: spoil the boy	
	ire: fire fire! ear: hear with your ear ure: sure it's pure?	

Other sounds taught include **kn** as in knock, **ck** as in clock, **wh** as in whisk and **ph** as in photo.



Understanding Red Words

Help your child notice and remember the unusual part

Red Words contain a spelling that is unusual or a sound-spelling correspondence your child has not yet learnt. They appear often in stories, so children practise recognising and reading them accurately.

For example, in **said**, the letters **ai** represent the sound /e/. Your child can recognise the familiar parts of the word and learn to remember the unusual part.

Practise the Red Words in your child's book. If they hesitate, encourage them to stop and think. Tell them the word if needed, then ask them to read it again in the sentence. Do not expect Fred Talk alone to work for every Red Word.

Examples you may see

Red Words to practise

what	all	no	we	so
to	me	call	her	there
want	go	old	some	one
I	the	my	you	said
your	are	be	he	does
who	were	any	where	two
love	many	here	once	talk
could	thought	great	son	water
there	their	come	watch	brought

These are some words your child may meet. Which words need extra practice will depend on the sounds your child already knows.

Reading at home

Two kinds of books, with two different purposes

Listen to your child read at least five times per week.

Home practice books are changed weekly. Read each practice book at least **three times**, preferably **four or five times**. Read a story to your child every day, too.

Decodable practice books: your child reads

Your child's RWI reading book is matched to the sounds and words they have been taught. It gives them a chance to practise reading successfully and independently. Use the three reads on page 8 to build accuracy, fluency and understanding.

Books to love and share: you read together

Your child also brings home a "star reading" book, marked with a star sticker. This is a book for you to read aloud and enjoy together. It may contain words your child cannot yet decode independently. There is no expectation that your child reads it alone.

Share plenty of other stories, too. Talk about what happens, explain new vocabulary, try character voices and enjoy favourite books again and again. This introduces rich language beyond your child's current reading level and helps develop a love of reading.

Use pure sounds

Say sounds clearly without adding an extra "uh": for example, **mmm**, rather than "muh". Pure sounds make blending easier. Use the pronunciation film below to help you.

[Watch: How to say the sounds](#)

[Explore: Ruth Miskin videos on Oxford Owl](#)



Sound games to try

Short, playful practice helps sounds become familiar

You will need sound cards. You can buy official RWI cards, including from Amazon, or print the Set 1, 2 or 3 Speed Sound cards linked from the RWI page on our school website. Practise sounds your child has been taught.

1. Sound-blending: Fred Talk

First, look through the Speed Sound cards and help your child say each sound purely and quickly. Then choose three cards and put them next to each other to make a word.

m a t → mat

Touch each sound from left to right. Fred Talk, then slide a finger under the word and say the whole word.

Praise your child as they blend. As they become more confident, include Special Friends they know. A digraph is two letters representing one sound: in **b-oa-t**, “oa” is one sound.

2. Speed Sound cards: letter side

Spread out 5 to 10 cards with the letters facing up. Say a sound, stretching or bouncing it as appropriate: **mmmm** or **a-a-a**. Ask your child to point to the matching card. Hide cards for them to find, or let them be the teacher and correct your deliberate mistakes. Keep any timed games light-hearted.

3. Speed Sound cards: picture side

Spread out 5 to 10 cards with the pictures facing up. Say each picture’s name, bouncing or stretching the beginning sound as shown on the card. Ask your child to touch the card and repeat it, for example **d-d-d-dinosaur**.

Each sound has a picture and phrase: **ay** - “**May I play?**” (children playing) and **ee** - “**What can you see?**” (two boys in a tree).

Listening to your child read

A calm routine, helpful prompts and plenty of praise

- Let your child read their decodable practice book to you first. Do not read the whole book aloud before their first attempt.
- Before the story, practise the sounds and the Green and Red Words inside the book cover. Green Words can be decoded using the sounds your child has learnt.
- If your child cannot read a decodable word automatically, prompt: **“Special Friends, Fred Talk, read the word.”** Give them time, but do not let them struggle for too long. Support them and praise their success.
- Use the Red Word guidance on page 4 when a word has an unusual or not-yet-taught spelling.
- After your child’s attempt, you can read back a sentence or page to keep the story flowing. At first, much of their attention is on reading the words.
- Ask your child to use the letters and sounds to read a word. Avoid asking them to guess it from the picture. Pictures are lovely to discuss once the words have been read.
- Talk about the text. Ask questions and encourage your child to find words or sentences that support their answer.

Keep it encouraging.

Notice what is improving: “You recognised that sound straight away!” or “You read that sentence so smoothly!”

If something is difficult

Return to Fred Talk when needed, even on a later read. The aim is accurate, confident reading. Please speak to your child’s teacher if they regularly find their practice book difficult or if you would like a demonstration of the reading routine.





One book, three reads

Rereading is how children build fluency

A familiar book is a chance to make progress.

Reading it again helps your child move from sounding out words to recognising them quickly, reading smoothly and understanding the story. Repetition is a way to build fluency, not a sign that learning has stopped.

Read 1: Fred Talk

Focus on reading the words accurately. Practise the Speed Sounds and the Green and Red Words inside the cover. For unfamiliar decodable words, spot Special Friends, say the sounds aloud and blend them to read the word. Support Red Words separately.

Read 2: Fred in Your Head

Encourage your child to work out familiar decodable words silently in their head, then say the whole word aloud. This is **Fred in Your Head**. As words become familiar, they will recognise more of them straight away. Use Fred Talk aloud again whenever they need it, and keep practising the sounds and words inside the cover.

Read 3: Fluency and comprehension

Now focus on smooth, expressive reading. Use punctuation to know when to pause and try character voices. If helpful, model a sentence after your child has read it and ask them to read it again in the same way. Talk about the story and use the “questions to talk about” inside the back cover. Ask your child to show you evidence for their answers.

Reads 4 and 5: Enjoy the growing confidence

Keep practising and enjoying the same book. Notice fewer pauses, quicker word recognition and clearer expression. These are signs of progress. Talk about the story throughout the week; understanding does not have to wait until the third read.

Weekly reminder: at least five home reading sessions; each practice book read at least three times, preferably four or five. Enjoy a separate book to love and share every day.