

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments/About the Author	5
Introduction	13
Phonics Instruction	13
Research Findings.....	13
Tucker Signing Strategies for Reading	16
Guidelines for Teaching Reading Using Hand Signs.....	16
Manual Format.....	19
Beginning the Program	20
Emergent Readers	20
More Advanced/Older Readers.....	20
Phonetic Organizer.....	22

Part I: Lessons

Part II: Student Pages

Lessons	Page	Text	Student Page
1 – long e	24	eeeeee	116
2 – m	26	Me	117
3 – s	28	See me.	118
4 – w	30	We see.	119
5 – short u	32	See us.	120
6 – long i	34	I see ...	121
7 – b	36	bees!	122
8 – n (and silent e)	38	Nine bees ...	123
9 – z	40	buzz.	124

Lessons	Page	Text	Student Page
10 – r	42	<i>Run, run!</i>	125
11 – p	44	<i>Run up!</i>	126
12 – long o	46	<i>I see no bees.</i>	127
13 – long a	48	<i>I see a pup.</i>	128
14 – h	50	<i>Hi, pup.</i>	129
15 – y (long i)	52	<i>I see my horse.</i>	130
16 – d	54	<i>Ride my horse.</i>	131
17 – g	56	<i>See us go.</i>	132
18 – j	58	<i>See us jump.</i>	133
19 – f	60	<i>Fun, fun, fun.</i>	134
20 – t	62	<i>Time for ...</i>	135
21 – short a	64	<i>a nap.</i>	136
22 – k	66	<i>Wake up! Wake up! Time to go home.</i>	137
23 – c	68	<i>My horse can run fast.</i>	138
24 – L	70	<i>Home at last.</i>	139
25 – short i	72	<i>I see a pig. It is a pink pig, and it is big.</i>	140
26 – short e	74	<i>It is my pet pig. I let my pet play in wet mud.</i>	141
27 – sh	76	<i>She is a mess.</i>	142
28 – er/ir/ur	78	<i>My pig is a girl. Her name is Furl. One day Furl ran away.</i>	143
29 – short o	80	<i>It was a summer day. My pig got hot. She went to sleep.</i>	144

Lessons	Page	Text	Student Page
30 – th	82	<i>A thin sheep with thick hair came by. The thin sheep sat by the pig.</i>	145
31 – ing	84	<i>But the pig kept sleeping, so the sheep got up and kept going.</i>	146
32 – x	86	<i>Next a fox came by. “You need a bath,” she said. The fox kept running, and the pig kept sleeping.</i>	147
33 – long u	88	<i>A cute mule trotted up to the pig. “Hi, pig. You are cute, but you need a bath,” he said. Then the mule kept going, and the pig kept sleeping.</i>	148
34 – y (long e)	92	<i>A pony named Tony trotted up. “That pig smells funny,” he said. Then the pony kept going, and the pig kept sleeping.</i>	149
35 – ow/ou	94	<i>A cow came by and said with a frown, “Wow. How did a pink pig get so brown? You need a bath now.” Then the cow kept going, and the pig kept sleeping.</i>	150
36 – wh	96	<i>A white rabbit with whiskers came hopping by. “That is a messy pig,” he said. “Why are you so dirty, and when did you play in the mud?” But the pig kept sleeping, so the white rabbit kept hopping.</i>	151
37 – y (consonant)	98	<i>A duck and her duckling came by. “Yuck,” said the duck. Her duckling said, “Yes, that is a yucky pig.” Then the ducks kept going, and the pig kept sleeping.</i>	152

Lessons	Page	Text	Student Page
38 – <i>ch</i>	100	<i>A bird hopped by. “Chirp, chirp. Such a messy chum,” the bird sang. But the pig kept sleeping, so the bird kept hopping.</i>	153
39 – <i>ar</i>	102	<i>It got dark. The pig was still far from home.</i>	154
40 – long <i>oo</i>	104	<i>A goose flew by. “You are too dirty,” said the goose. “The new moon will be out soon.” Then the goose kept flying, and the pig kept sleeping.</i>	155
41 – <i>v</i>	106	<i>Five deer ran by. “You are very dirty,” one deer said. “You should dive into the lake.” The five deer kept running, while the pig kept sleeping.</i>	156
42 – short <i>oo</i>	108	<i>An owl took a look at the pig. She shook her wings. “Just look,” she said. “Go jump into the brook.” The owl did not stop. She just kept flying, and the pig kept sleeping.</i>	157
43 – <i>aw</i>	110	<i>Last of all a skunk named Paul crawled up to the pig. The pig woke up. She saw the skunk. “Hello,” said the pig. The skunk was glad to have a friend. “You smell nice,” said the skunk. “So do you,” said the pig. The skunk said, “I will walk all the way home with you.”</i>	158

Lessons	Page	Text	Student Page
44 – <i>tion</i>	112	<i>When the pig takes a notion to play a game, she will motion for the skunk. These friends play action games. They may even take a vacation somewhere in the nation!</i>	159
APPENDIX	114		
INDEX OF SIGNS	160		

© Hawker Brownlow Education

INTRODUCTION

Phonics Instruction

Learning to read involves recognizing the printed symbols for words. Children learn to read printed text in a number of ways. Words instantly recognized are part of the child's sight vocabulary. The context in which a word is found can contribute to one's ability to recognize certain words, such as the word *stop* on a stop sign. Instruction in the acquisition of sight vocabulary and contextual-clue recognition is an essential component of any reading program.

A third vital component of reading instruction is phonetic analysis. In order to grasp the fundamentals of the reading process, children must learn that printed letters represent speech sounds. Phonics instruction involves teaching the relationship between printed letters and the speech sounds they represent.

Of the three interrelated reading skills – sight vocabulary, contextual clues, and phonetic analysis – the latter is frequently the most difficult for children to master, primarily because learning letter-sound relationships is totally different from the child's previous life experiences. Additional difficulties stem from the fact that letter shapes are arbitrary and abstract. There is no logical relationship between the appearance of the letter and the sound it represents – no inherent clues to assist the child in remembering the associated sound.

A child attempting to read a word containing the letter *p*, for example, obviously can see the printed letter on the page. His/her task is to remember the speech sound represented by the printed symbol and blend that speech sound with others that surround it. The goal of the signing strategy is to provide a tool to assist the reader in accomplishing this task.

Research Findings

The strategy of signing phonetic sounds has been field-tested with children and adults from a variety of backgrounds in various settings, including one-on-one and large-group instruction in public and private schools – and among home-schooled children and private tutorials. With certain modifications determined by the needs of the child, the program is effective with all populations and in any environment.

Research shows that the signing strategy has been successful in meeting the original goal of the program – to build a bridge between printed symbols and the speech sounds they represent. Children move almost immediately from learning the signs to using them to decode unfamiliar words. Children who have been taught this strategy frequently are observed moving their hands to decode words when reading for pleasure and when reading from Science and Social Studies texts during silent reading and oral recitations.

In addition to building a bridge between letters and speech sounds, several surprising (yet equally important) benefits have been identified.

- 1. Because the signing inherent in the strategy interjects movement into the reading process, many very active students demonstrate the ability and the desire to read for longer blocks of time when using the hand signs.** The reading act naturally includes visual clues in the form of printed words; auditory clues are added when the teacher and the students pronounce the sounds that the printed letters represent. The process is typically devoid, however, of kinesthetic involvement. The Tucker hand signs not only allow for, but actually require, bodily involvement to become part of the reading process. This movement component particularly benefits the child whose preferred learning style is kinesthetic/tactile, which some studies indicate may be as many of 80% of young readers. Whatever the learning style, all children need to move about in order to release excess energy. Although slight, the movement included in hand signing allows for some energy release, enabling the learner to concentrate more intently and for longer periods of time.
- 2. Benefits to boys and ADHD students are immediate and dramatic.** Perhaps because most boys are naturally active, and certainly because ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder) children, the majority of whom are boys, are quite active, these groups of students have demonstrated the most immediate positive reaction to, and appear to have derived the greatest benefits from, the hand-signs. Teachers and parents of learning-disabled and mentally challenged children also have reported success with the strategy.
- 3. Requiring children to attempt an unfamiliar word using hand signs shifts the onus of responsibility for solving a word from the teacher to the child.** When confronted with an unfamiliar word, beginning readers sometimes stare at an object or look intently at their teachers, waiting for help. By reminding the child to sign the word the teacher is saying, “You have the power to read this word.” Children no longer need to wait for someone to do the work for them. This sense of self-empowerment transfers very quickly to new reading situations. The signing strategy identifies tools – the hands – that almost always are readily available to the child.
- 4. A surprising result of the *Tucker Signing Strategies for Reading* has been the degree to which children enjoy using the hand signs.** Many appear to view this experience as learning a special sign language (or even “secret code”), with learning to read an added bonus. They come to enjoy identifying the “special” signs and chunks in words. As a result, they learn to look at the entire word rather than guessing the word based on the initial consonant or syllable. The program also makes learning some phonetic rules less of a burden because the children enjoy making the associated signs.
- 5. The signing strategy cues teachers to the students’ thought processes.** Children typically reveal very few clues as to what they are thinking as they gaze at an

unfamiliar word. The overt behaviors involved in the signing process provide insight for the teacher as to what mental processes are taking place in the child's mind. The requirement to sign is in essence a requirement to think out loud.

- 6. Learning the hand signs requires little effort for most children.** The author's initial concern over "adding to the curriculum" proved to be unfounded. Most children of first-grade age or older learn all 44 signs in two or three half-hour sessions. Younger children naturally need to learn the signs and the associated speech sounds at a slower, more developmentally appropriate pace.
- 7. Adults report that they benefit from learning the signs.** A number of adults have been taught to read using the Tucker signing strategies. They report that when in an environment where they don't want to use the signs, they can think about them and thereby remember the associated speech sounds.

© Hawker Brownlow Education

TUCKER SIGNING STRATEGIES FOR READING

Tucker Signing Strategies for Reading is designed to prompt associations between letters and the sounds they represent. The prompts are hand signs. The program includes a hand sign for each letter and some letter combinations that represent distinct speech sounds. The Tucker hand signs are different from the signs of American Sign Language. Each hand sign is designed to resemble, to the greatest extent possible, the shape and the sound of the letter it represents. The hand sign for the letter *p*, for example, is shaped like the letter *p* and is held in front of the lips as the *p* sound is pronounced. The sign, therefore, builds a bridge between the printed letter and the associated speech sound.

Guidelines for Teaching Reading Using Hand Signs

- 1. All hand signs must be made with the left hand.** Many letter shapes appear backwards when signed with the right hand (see LESSON 1: long e). Naturally, some children (and many adults) who are right-handed initially resist using the left hand. Research in the Tucker signing strategies demonstrates that ...
 - A. Signing with the left hand is not difficult. Right-handed children demonstrate very little if any frustration forming the signs with their left hand. While a few children need to be reminded regularly at first to use their left hand, a quick and casual verbal prompt usually suffices.
 - B. After some practice, resistance to left-handed signing quickly diminishes or disappears. Children can be encouraged to use their left hand in a number of ways. Some teachers instruct the children to hold an object in their right hand while signing, which makes it impossible for them to sign with the incorrect hand. Another successful strategy is to provide the children with yarn bracelets that slip easily over their hands – and to which small bells have been tied. The bracelets can be slipped over the right hand, with the warning that no bells should be heard – or over the left hand, with the invitation to “let the signs ring.”
 - C. After the initial presentation of each sign, the child rarely looks at the shape of his/her hand when signing; therefore, the kinesthetic involvement becomes more important than the visual appearance of the letter in sparking the appropriate letter-sound relationship. Thus many teachers choose not to correct children who occasionally forget to use the left hand at this point but are experiencing success decoding words.
- 2. Students must make the letter speech/sound(s) as they make each sign.** This simultaneous “signing,” “seeing,” and “saying” strengthens letter shape/sound associations and creates a multi-modal learning situation.

- 3. New signs should be demonstrated in isolation very briefly, then immediately blended with other letters in the context of a word.** When a word is signed, the individual letter signs should be blended into one continuous motion, flowing smoothly from one letter into the next. When signing the word *no*, for example, the *n* sign and *n* sound should be made distinctly, stretching the *n* sound. Then, without breaking the sounds of the word, the left hand should move downward into the *o* sign as the *n* sound blends into the *o* sound, completing the word *no*. Beginning with LESSON 2, each new sound is presented in the context of a word. Each new word and all other words in the children's story pages in the second half of the manual contain the new letter combined with previously taught letters only, so the child should be able to read each page in the story independently, with the help of the hand signs.
- 4. Blends and other common letter combinations should be signed as one unit – or chunk.** These blends – or chunks – should be practiced as a unit whenever they are encountered. When teaching the word *horse*, for example, the teacher would point out the *or* chunk, and students would practice signing *or* several times. The teacher also would prompt students to recognize the silent *e* at the end of the word. The word would then be signed *h-or-s* (silent *e*). Students should later be prompted to recognize the *or* chunk in additional words. Other word chunks to point out and practice include *oy*, *oi*, and consonant blends. When teaching the word *brisk*, for example, the *br* blend should be recognized and practiced, then the *sk* blend addressed. The reason the letter *i* represents the short-*i* sound should subsequently be discussed. Finally, the word *brisk* would be signed *br-i-sk*. Tucker hand signs have been formulated for certain very distinctive word chunks, such as *tion*, *sh*, *ch*, *ow*, *ou*, and *r*-controlled vowels.
- 5. Students should discontinue use of the hand signs when they are reading immediately recognizable words.** The researcher was initially concerned about students relying too heavily on the hand signs, allowing them to become permanent crutches. This concern also was unfounded. Children automatically drop the hand signs upon recognition of a word or words. On many occasions a child will need to sign only one word in a sentence – or perhaps only a portion of a word. If, for example, a student can read the *see* portion of the word *seeing*, he/she should be encouraged to read *see*, sign *ing*, then put the word parts together and solve the word.
- 6. Rules of phonetic analysis must be taught.** The Tucker hand signs assist children in recalling letter-sound relationships and blending sounds to make words. They do not, however, hold any secrets for teaching phonetic rules, other than the fact that the hand signs sometimes make learning rules more fun. Research demonstrates, for example, that many children enjoy decoding words that end with silent *e* using the signing strategy because they enjoy making the silent-*e* sign. Many children also enjoy looking for special signable chunks in a word before they attempt to read it. This level of enjoyment can occur only after rules have been taught through both the signing strategy and those strategies that teachers typically employ.
- 7. Long-vowel sounds are presented before short vowels.** Because long-vowel sounds “say” the vowel names and therefore are easier for children to remember, they are