



1st Grade “On My Own” Language Arts Understanding Winter Promise’s Vertical Phonics Method

What is Vertical Phonics and Why Does it Matter to a First Grader Who’s Reading?

Vertical phonics is a specific reading methodology chosen by Winter Promise as the primary learning methodology for phonics. Although your first grader is now reading, this methodology is still influential in what we expect your first grader to know with proficiency, and how well he or she will be reading. Please read the following so that you know what to expect from this program, and how to adjust it so it meets the needs of your student, especially if you are transferring to LA I from another phonics program.

Fundamentals of Vertical Phonics

FUNDAMENTAL #1: Multiple Sound Introduction

Vertical phonics introduces all of the sounds of a letter at one time, rather than introducing “soft vowel sounds” then, later, introducing the “long sounds” and other sounds produced by vowels. In addition, multiple sounds may be introduced for consonants, such as the hard and soft sounds for letters like “c” and “g.”

HOW THIS BENEFITS THE STUDENT

This methodology is viewed as helpful for reducing the confusion a student may feel when told for weeks or months that “a,” for example, says /a/, and then finds that it also says its name (long sound) and the “aah” sound in father. The methodology also provides solid decoding skills that get student decoding with confidence quite quickly.

FUNDAMENTAL #2: Multiple-Letter Phonograms

Vertical phonics also provides sounds for multiple-letter phonograms such as “dge,” or “ai.” These additional phonograms the child learns add an even more broad and solid system of sounds that are reliable for decoding.

HOW THIS BENEFITS THE STUDENT

The reliability of the multi-letter phonograms means the system does not depend upon phonics rules that seem made to be broken as often as they are kept, such as “when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking,” which is as often not true as it is true. It also gets students decoding much more difficult words with ease, as he or she would see the word *sweater* as a combination of five phonograms: **s w ea t er**.

FUNDAMENTAL #3: Writing & Speaking as You Learn Phonograms

Each letter or phonogram that is introduced to a student is written, and its sound spoken aloud by the student as they write it repeatedly for handwriting practice. Hearing the sound aloud accesses a student’s oral learning center, while the act of writing it accesses the student’s kinesthetic learning center, and seeing it as it is written accesses a student’s visual learning processes.

HOW THIS BENEFITS THE STUDENT

This triple-redundancy in accessing each learning center is proven to imprint well on the student’s mind.

FUNDAMENTAL #4: Writing with Small-Lined Paper

You’ll notice we recommend a small-lined page with our writing originals. This is actually a part of the methodology as well, as writing in this size lines does two things: it forces the student to utilize fine motor skills, and it forces the student to concentrate to produce the correct letter shape. Larger lined paper allows

for such large letter shapes, that a student can actually produce letters by using major muscle groups, as he moves his entire arm from the shoulder to make the letter. Unfortunately, these muscles are not those we want to train for letter formation. This is why we adults find it difficult to make nice letters on a garage sale sign -- these muscles are not designed for letter formation! Training these major muscle groups to create handwriting is pointless when it is the fine motor skills and muscles that must perform this task in the long run. It's somewhat like training your arm muscles to click your computer keys -- there's just no point -- only your fingers and wrists together are designed for this task, and all the training in the world will not make you a better typist until you train your fingers and wrists. It's the same for handwriting.

AS REGARDING FIRST GRADERS, THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND! Your student may be reading at a first grade level, and yet not have the fine motor skills well-developed enough to be writing with proficiency or even ease. This does not show a lack of effort or delay, but simply a lack of fine-motor readiness. This develops at different speeds with different children. It is often delayed in boys, whose bodies are designed to develop faster in the major muscle control, while fine-motor skills lag behind. This is why you'll see boys tearing around corners at breakneck speed on bikes very early. Girls are often just the opposite. They develop fine-motor skills more quickly, while major muscle control lags behind. This is why you'll find them writing and drawing early, and dressing and undressing tiny dolls with efficiency very early. It's also why they often succeed with handwriting supposedly "on time," while boys have trouble meeting the expectations of the established school system. Rest assured, all children do develop fine-motor skills. Once your child has developed the fine-motor skills needed for reading, writing within the lines we've given you will not be a problem, and it will show that he or she is truly learning the skills needed for long-term writing success.

HOW THIS BENEFITS THE STUDENT

The smaller lines keep students concentrating on making correct letter formation and train them early in key formation skills. These formation skills are honed when there is not a lot of "room" for error.

How Vertical Phonics May Impact Your Student (Especially if you're transferring from another program.)

Some students may lack initial proficiency with some phonograms.

Your student may find this year that he or she does not know with proficiency some of the more advanced or multi-letter phonograms that students "raised" on VWP are familiar with. This is easily remedied by purchasing WinterPromise's Phonics Cards, which have all of the more advanced phonics along with games to reinforce the learning. Reviewing with these cards may help your student if you feel more help is needed than just some simple review on your part.

Some students may find the reading a bit challenging initially, but will rapidly make that up!

Your student may find the reading a bit challenging at the beginning of the year, but, chances are that gap will close during the year, and your student will be reading right along by the end. At first, you may want to take turns reading sentences, or take additional review time on unfamiliar words in the readers. Splitting reading assignments into two parts may also help, so that the student is reading less, but is reading twice a day. Most students rapidly progress through this early reading stage, however, and rapidly gain proficiency. Don't worry. Starting slow does not indicate that your student is not going to succeed with the program, but only that additional guidance at the beginning will make the difference all of a sudden when the "key" finally turns in his head, and his reading explodes into full bloom.

Some students need more oral work, and less written work until their fine-motor skills kick in.

If your student is one whose fine-motor skills aren't quite "there" yet, concentrate on finding ways to make parts of the program oral, rather than written, to alleviate frustration in your student. Although you shouldn't put the brakes on writing entirely, ease into it slowly, and make the other parts of the program oral or active when you can. Quiz spelling and vocabulary in oral test, make the most of the "Creative Narration" time you have together, and ask questions from resources aloud when you can. You can also find creative ways to help along fine-motor development with challenging mazes, which are just plain more fun for developing writers than handwriting, and may assist your student in making forward progress in this area.

Grade 1 ★ "Reading On My Own"

Week 1



Resources	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
PHONICS STUDY					
<i>Right into Reading - Book 2 Phonogram SH</i>	Page 1-2 Have student sound out word list aloud.	Page 3	Page 4-5	Page 6-7 Have student read the story aloud with help, as needed.	
<i>Explode the Code 6</i>		Page 1-2		Page 3	
WORKBOOKS					
<i>Spelling - Words I Use When I Write</i>	Spelling begins in Week 3				
ACTIVITIES					
<i>Language Activities</i>			Nouns & Verbs LA Worksheet 1		
<i>Games for Reading</i>		Play "Vowel Zoo"			
SELF-EXPRESSION SKILLS					
<i>Creative Narration</i>				None this week. Begin next week	
<i>Handwriting Practice - ✓ when done</i>	Home Address				
READING PROGRAM					
<i>AMERICAN STORY 1: The True Story of Pocahontas</i>	Pages 4-7	Pages 8-11	Pages 12-15	Pages 16-20	
<i>ANIMAL WORLDS: Tentacles!</i>	Pages 4-7	Pages 8-11	Pages 12-15	Pages 16-19	
<i>CHILDREN ATW: Which Way, Wendy?</i>	Pages 3-7	Pages 8-11	Pages 12-17	Pages 18-23	
<i>ALL: The Young Readers Bible</i>			Pages 14-19		

Notes

It's Your First Week!

Introduction to Right Into Reading, Book 2

We are going to jump right in here! This year in the "Right into Reading" text, you will be studying phonograms in words that will be both familiar and unfamiliar. These will expand your student's vocabulary. In addition, they will work on several sight words throughout the year in this text.

Spelling Notes

Your student's spelling list will be words that are in his book, "Words I Use When I Write." Throughout the year, the student will look up words, check his own spelling attempts, and even add new entries. Looking up the words and adding new ones requires understanding alphabetical order. Next week we will cover alphabetization. For this reason, spelling will not begin until Week 3.

Language Arts Activities

Each 5th day, a language arts activity from "Language Arts Activities for Advanced students" will be scheduled. If you want to stick to a four-day schedule, complete it on one of the other days.

Creative Narration - Most weeks there is an assignment.

Games for Reading

Instructions for play and assembly are included in the book "File Folder Games for Reading." Again, a reminder -- it would be helpful if these were made up before the year began. Using colored file folders and coloring the games themselves with colored pencils will make them more interesting. (You may like to include your student in the prep work!) You will re-use the games throughout the year, and they can be kept for another student, as well.

Handwriting Pages

Handwriting is not scheduled for every day, but space is provided for you to check it off when you complete it. There is one suggestion listed per week with details on how to complete it. There are reproducible sheets to use for handwriting practice included in this program. You will need to write out an example for the student to follow in some cases.

What to do for additional handwriting practice? Look for a comprehensive list of ideas in the introductory notes of this program guide. These are used throughout the year, but could be done more than once. Again, do not feel you must practice handwriting every day. There is a lot of handwriting required in the other workbooks.

THIS WEEK: Write out home address & phone number several times.