



Homestead Readers

The Toad

and other stories

by Kimberly Young

with contributions from Patti Dillistone

homesteadreaders.com

Printed in Canada

Why Homestead Readers

How are Homestead Readers different from other leveled books on the market labeled as early reading books? Unlike many early reading books, Homestead Readers progress through well thought-out phonics steps to give the student mastery of one skill before moving on to another skill. The new skill(s) for each story is explained at the beginning of the story, so the adult is prepared to help their student learn the new reading skill if they don't already know it.

Most other early reading books introduce all kinds of words at the same time without the student having the skills to decode those words. This often results in the student looking at the picture to guess what the words are saying rather than truly reading. This is a hard habit to break. Just because a book has few words on a page does not mean the page will be easy to read.

Have you never taught phonics? Don't worry. It really is not hard. Phonics is the key for students to be able to decode words they have never seen before. This is an important skill to have! The beginning of each story in the Homestead Readers series will have an explanation of how to go about teaching a student how to decode the words that use the new phonetic concept for that story.

Beginning Reading Tips

- Each story begins with a list of the new words in that story. Practice reading these words until the student can read them fluently. Then, proceed to the story.
- Have the student point with his finger under the words as he reads. This will enable him to keep his place.
- It is important that the student learns to decode the word for himself. If they incorrectly read a word, tell him to try it again by breaking the word down into its individual sounds.
- Never tell the student a word. You may help by telling him to sound out the word again, but let him do the decoding. If he is tempted to look at the picture and guess, cover up the picture. After he has read the words and explained what he has just read, then let him look at the picture.
- After reading a page, ask the student to explain in his own words what happened on that page. This immediate feedback is your way of checking on his reading comprehension. It is important that he can decode the words as well as understand what those words mean all together.
- Ask the student to read each book several times before moving on to the next book. Practice makes perfect, and success breeds success.
- A letter cluster is a group of letters that make one sound (sh, ch, etc.). It can be helpful to have the student copy the words and put a circle around the letter clusters to help them remember to say these letters as one sound.

Introduction to the Long Vowel Sounds

What is a long vowel sound? This is the vowel sound you hear when singing the traditional “A, B, C” song. A long vowel sound is also referred to as the vowel’s “name”. If a vowel has a straight line over the letter (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū), this indicates the letter makes the long vowel sound (it says its name). This symbol is not commonly used, but it is helpful to know its meaning.

Story 1

Two Vowel Rule - When two vowels are together in a word, the first vowel is a long vowel (it says its “name”) and the second vowel is silent. Examples are “sail”, “heat”, and “toad”.

Explain this new rule to the student. Then cover the letter after the first vowel with your finger. Together with the student, blend the beginning letter(s) with the long vowel sound, for example “sā”. Then say, “Let’s add the sound of the last letter to see what the word is. “sā....l. It is fun to sail on the lake.”

Story 3

Silent “e” Rule - When there is one vowel in the middle of a short word with an “e” on the end of the word, the first vowel is a long vowel (it says its “name”) and the “e” on the end is silent. Examples are “make”, “fire”, and “rope”.

Explain this new rule to the student. Then cover the silent “e” on the end of the word with your finger. Together with the student, blend the beginning letter(s) with the long vowel sound, for example, “mā”. Then say, “Let’s add the sound of the next letter to see what the word is. “mā....k. I will make a craft.”

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Review Word List

Skills introduced in Levels 1-5

on	his	drink
fast	grass	last
got	give ø	swim
did	glad	Dad
Grant's	went	sun
help	will	dog
lam b	off	pass
still	land	to
yell	but	is
stop	in	have ø
and	Tex	of
twigs	next	into
ran	sad	the

A line through a letter indicates the letter is silent.

The Toad

The Two Vowel Rule

See page 4 for instructions.

Word List

hear

leaf

gear

neat

feet

boat

creep

green

pail

floats

deep

clean

wait

jeans

need

Sight Words

keep

you

see

I

toad

said



“Wait! Can you still hear it?” said Dad.

“It did stop!” Grant said.

“You and I need to keep still,” Dad said to Grant.



“I see it!” said Grant. “I see a toad on a leaf!”

“Neat! It has a boat!” Dad said. “The green toad floats on a leaf.”



“Dad, creep up to the leaf,” Grant said. “Get the toad!” Can Dad lift the net and get the toad? Yes, Dad can. But, Dad did trip and fell in the pond! Dad got wet!