



Homestead Readers

Ellie's Surprise

and other stories

by Kimberly Young

with contributions from Patti Dillistone

homesteadreaders.com

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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.

Review Word List

Skills introduced in Levels 1-14

faster

how

busy

farmer

now

happy

supper

cow

empty

September

plow

study

hopper

brow

Larry

wow

Len

fancy

good

pound

frisky

look

ground

thirsty

would

around

hungry

could

crop

anniversary

Review Word List

Skills introduced in Levels 1-14

factory

field

head

kittens

durum

thread

chickens

great

ready

cheese

country

elevator

wheat

castle

stairs

combine

climb

newborn

May

Ellie

barnyard

days

surprise

kernels

full

found

question

faithful

flour

congratulations

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Harvest Time

“ph” as in “phone”
“ch” as in “machine”

When we see “p” and “h” together in a word, we hear the “f” sound, as in the word “phone”.

When the letters “c” and “h” are together in a word, it is possible for this combination to make three different sounds. In all the words in this story, these two letters make the “sh” sound, as we hear in the word “machine”.

Word List

phone

photo

trophy

nephew

chute

machine



“Next, the whole plant gets pulled up into the combine. The combine separates the kernels from the rest of the plant. Then all but the kernels fall out of the back of the combine. This part of the crop is not food, so it gets left behind in the field,” continued Uncle Larry.



“The kernels end up in a part of the combine called the hopper. This is a giant container for holding the crop. Once the hopper is full, we empty it into a grain truck using an auger. An auger is a big chute that moves grain from one place to another.”



“The grain truck takes the durum kernels to a grain elevator. Here, the grain is loaded on a train,” Uncle Larry explained.