

A Note from Brooke Vitale

Dear caregiver,

I get calls and e-mails every day asking the same question: "How do I know which books to get for my child?"

And every day, I answer by asking the same set of questions:

- Does your child know their letter sounds?
- Can your child read CVC words?
- Is your child able to blend two consonants together?

Every child is at a different stage in their reading journey, and as parents, we don't always have the tools at our disposal to know where they are—or to *understand* where they are. It wasn't until my own son was in kindergarten that I even learned what a digraph was! But I do know one thing: reading is a cumulative experience.

Would you put your child on a bike for the first time and expect them to ride? **No.**

Would you put your child in front of a keyboard and expect them to type? **No.**

Would you pitch a child their first baseball and expect them to hit a homerun? **No.**

Each of these skills take time to learn. Each has to be mastered one step at a time, with one skill growing on top of another. **Reading is the same way.**

Before a child can read, they must understand that letters make sounds. They must know what sounds those are. Then they must learn to put those sounds together. And they must do it again and again until it becomes as automatic as riding a bike or typing without looking. Only then, once the words begin to form naturally in their minds—once they have gained what is called automaticity—can they truly start to comprehend the words and the page.

But in order to support your child on their reading journey, you need to know where to begin. That's where this assessment comes in. Use the following pages to test your child's reading skills. If they can complete stage 1, move on to stage 2 and so on. If they cannot complete a stage easily, then you have your answer! You now know where to begin with their reading journey.

Our books are designed to support your reader as they learn one sound at a time. But your little reader can't do it alone. Once you know where your child is in their reading, set aside some time each day to read one book with them. I can't wait to hear how you and your little ones enjoy my stories!



Instructions to Caregivers

This assessment is broken into three parts that are meant to test your child's reading (decoding), spelling (encoding), and comprehension skills.

Introduce this assessment to your child one stage at a time, beginning with short vowel sounds. As you move through each section, cover the sentences or words above and below to allow your child to focus on only the words in front of them.

Section 1: Reading

In the **reading section**, listen to how your child reads each word. Are they stopping to sound each out or are they moving quickly through them?

Section 2: Spelling

When you reach the **spelling section**, ask your child to say the name of each picture first. Then ask them to spell the word shown in the picture aloud. If your child gets stuck, ask them to tap out the individual sounds (phonemes) in the word.

Section 3: Comprehension

In the **comprehension section**, give your child a fresh piece of paper to draw what they read. Encourage them to pay attention to descriptive words, such as the color or size of an animal and well as words that will help them to determine one object's placement in relation to another.

If your child is struggling or seems uninterested, take a step back and try another day!

Terms to Know

Teaching your child to read can often feel overwhelming. With so many terms to understand, it's easy to get confused. This glossary of terms will help you navigate not only the Charge into Reading books, but the ways in which your child is being taught how to read.

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound in a word. These are not letters, but the *sounds* letters make. The word *duck*, for example, contains three phonemes: /d/, /u/, and /k/. The English language contains 44 distinct phonemes. When children decode text, they are "blending" the phonemes in a word.

Grapheme: A written symbol that represents a sound. The phoneme /k/, for example, can be represented by the graphemes c, k, ck, ch, or que. (cat, kite, duck, school, antique)

Decoding: Using knowledge of letter-sound relationships and patterns to pronounce words. For example, knowing that the letter c can make a /s/ or /k/ sound.

Encoding: Using knowledge of letter-sound relationships and patterns to spell words. For example, knowing that the /z/ sound can be written in 4 ways: z, s, zz, and x (zip, hose, fuzz, xylophone)

Blending: The act of putting sounds together to form a word.

Segmenting: The act of breaking a word into its component sounds.

CVC: A word that follows a Consonant-Vowel-Consonant pattern. Examples include: cat, dog, pet

Digraph: Two letters that work together to form a single sound. Examples include: SH, CK, TH.

VCE: Also known as MAGIC E words, VCE words (or syllables) have a long vowel followed by a consonant and then a silent e. Examples include: late, pine, cube.

R-Controlled Vowel: A grapheme that features a vowel + R Sometimes called the "Bossy R," in an R-controlled vowel, the R "controls" the sound of the vowel. Examples include: car, corn, burn.

Vowel Team: Two vowels working together to form a single sound. For example, the "ea" in *meat* forms the long E sound, while the "ai" in *rain* forms the long A sound.

Diphthong: A sound formed by the combination of two distinct vowels (or sounds) in one syllable. In a diphthong, one sound slides into another. Both sounds can be heard, but neither is distinctively its own sound. Examples include the "oi" in *coin* and the "ow" in *now*.

Short Vowel Sounds

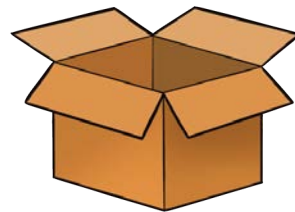
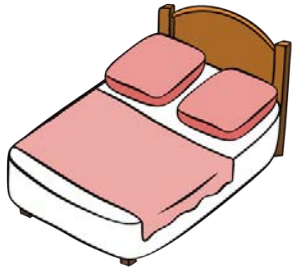
Read these sentences:

Sam sat in a bus.

Jen had a bit of ham.

The pig was in his pen.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The red hen sat on a mat.

The dog got in a van.

Consonant Blends

Read these sentences:

The lamp was on a flat slab.

Brent had a plump plum.

Stan claps his hands.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The frog jumps past the pond.

Fred sets a crab on his desk.

Digraphs

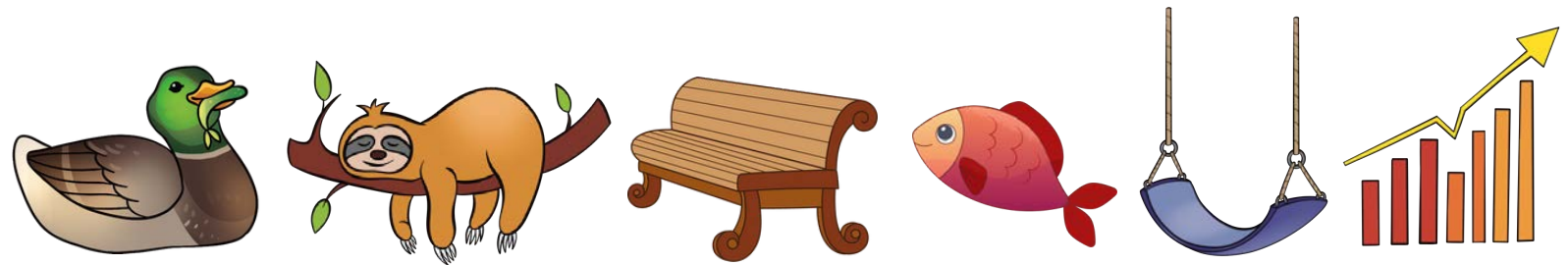
Read these sentences:

Beth sings a quick song.

That is a fresh fish!

Math has a lot of graphs.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The moth has big wings.

The path has shrubs and a bench.

Long Vowel VCE Words

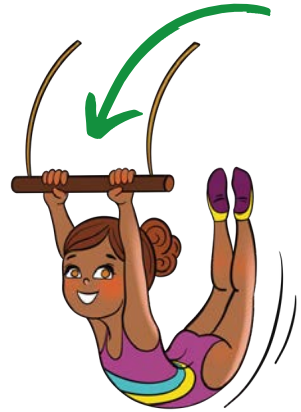
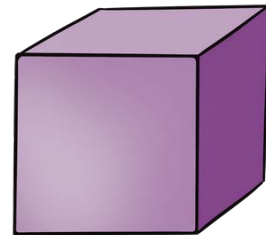
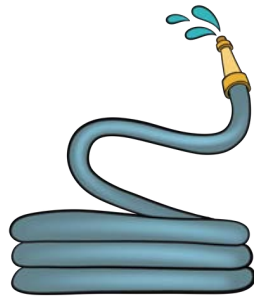
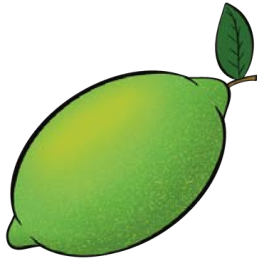
Read these sentences:

Jake hates lime cake, but Mike likes it.

Eve and Lane made a date to convene at five.

The crane drove in the wide lane.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The athlete rides a white bike.

Duke made a cake with red lines.

Word-Ending Spelling Patterns

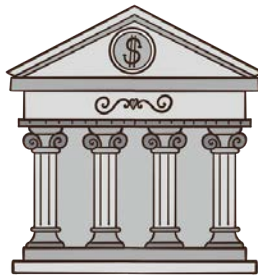
Read these sentences:

The judge chose the child that won the most games.

Toby had a watch, but it fell off the bridge.

That old blanket stinks like crazy!

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The fudge had a speck of pink mold.

The witch mixes her spell well.

R-Controlled Vowels

Read these sentences:

Nora got a cart for the garlic and parsnips.

Dirk churns the milk to turn it into butter.

The storm was over before it began.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The fork fell into the dirt.

The car turned into the yard.

Vowel Teams

Read these sentences:

Ray treats himself to a feast in the moonlight.

The waves shook the boat all day and night.

Lou reads books on shooting hoops daily.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The rooster crows in the daylight.

The pie is next to the green teapot.

Diphthongs

Read these sentences:

The cat's meow is loud.

The hawk let out a noisy caw.

Elroy paused outside the shower.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The boy looks up at the clouds.

The coil toy is on the couch.

Advanced Spelling Patterns

Read these sentences:

Shea knocked the stew off the table.

Trey wrote "Dear Sable" on a piece of beige paper.

Pierce has a knack for hockey.

Spell these words:



Draw a picture to go with each sentence:

The steak and the knife sat on the table.

Jeanie had a pair of reindeer.