

A Quick Guide

THE FITZROY PROGRAM is a complete F-6 phonic literacy resource. Nine sets of ten sequential *Readers* form the core of the program. The accompanying *Word Skills* workbooks provide activities that focus on each **new sound** introduced in the *Readers*, as well as spelling, grammar, comprehension, creative and persuasive English exercises.

THE PHONIC APPROACH English is a **phonic** language. Letters have **sounds**, words are combinations of sounds, and reading is the **sounding out** (decoding) of words. The English language has only 26 letters, but at least 44 sounds. To make all the sounds required, some letters are joined together to make **new sounds**. We call these special combinations of two or more letters **digraphs**.

STRICTLY GRADUAL Reading involves the learning of these **rules** of spelling and pronunciation as well as the **exceptions** to these rules. The *Fitzroy Readers* teach these rules and the exceptions in a gradual and systematic way, using special stories with a limited vocabulary. This way, we can introduce the knowledge to students one step at a time. Just as we teach Maths one step at a time.

LIMITED VOCABULARY This common-sense approach makes sense to students – it makes English make sense. The somewhat “silly” very early stories (with their very limited vocabulary) are appreciated by students because **they can read them**. They know these stories have been written especially for them to be able to read.

The *Fitzroy Readers* provide students with the necessary tools to quickly become successful readers of English. The Fitzroy Program works because students thrive on success.

WHOLE WORD

The “whole word” approach is to learn each word as a unique block of letters – a task which, given the huge number of words in English, is like climbing a mountain with no peak. Too many students are demoralised by constant failure. This “immersion” approach also leads to guessing incorrectly, and inaccurate reading and spelling habits.

On the other hand, each *Fitzroy Reader* is based around the teaching of a **sound**. The first five *Readers* focus on the **basic vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u)**. Additional practice of these key vowel sounds is then given in the following few *Readers*. This review provides extra practice in the initial stages of reading, consolidates the phonic method, and builds the foundations for the successful reading of many other sounds.



DIGRAPHS The next *Readers* each introduce a digraph – for example, the sound that **oo** makes in **too, moon**, etc. This, our first such rule, is taught in *Reader 9*. From *Reader 12* onwards, each *Reader* teaches another one of these new sounds (**ch, ar, all, ay**, etc).

Students can read an actual book (a *Reader*) without having had to learn all the ways of spelling all the sounds. Sometimes, two or three digraphs are taught in the higher *Readers* where students are already reading competently.

Before beginning the *Readers*, students need to know the **basic sounds** of some letters: the **a** in **apple**, **b** in **bat**, **c** in **cat**, etc. To teach the letters – and in particular their **sounds** – we have created the **Alphabet Book**. We also have the **Fitzroy Sounds** which includes an audio MP3 with a little song for each letter **sound**.

The fact that the letter **c** also makes another sound – the **c** in **ice** – is taught in a later *Reader*. (The letter **c** sounds like **s** when followed by **e, i** or **y**.)

EARLY SUCCESS To create a sense of accomplishment for beginner students, they can start on the first *Reader* once they have learned the sounds of just thirteen letters. This allows students to get on with reading early and experience success. It makes the task more manageable.

The second *Reader* requires students to learn the sounds of a further four letters. In this way, students are able to progress in reading before they have learnt the whole alphabet or completed the *Alphabet Book*. Reading is already something they do – something they know they can do.



NAMES OF LETTERS and SOUNDS OF LETTERS Students need to understand that words are made up of **sounds put together**, e.g. the word **cat** is made up of the three letter sounds, **c-a-t**. The *Readers* focus on the **sounds** that letters (and later, digraphs) make. In reading, the **sound** a letter (or digraph) makes is more important than the **name** of the letter (“ay”, “bee”, “see”, etc).

The difference between the **name** of a letter and the basic **sound** of a letter must be made clear to students. At the beginner stage, we explain this by showing a picture of a cat to our students, naming it a “cat” and then asking what sound a cat makes. The students will reply, “Meow.” “Cat” is the **name** and “meow” is the **sound**.

We explain that letters also have a **name** and a **sound**, and it is this **sound** that is the key to reading. At this early stage, we say the **sound** of each letter – and we ask students to utter the sounds. Rather than say “see”, “ay”, “tee” (the names of the letters), we say **c-a-t** (the sounds of the letters).

To make the sound **c**, for example, begin to say *cat* without saying *at*. Similarly, **a** from *apple* and **t** from *tent*.

Say the word and circle the **a**.

HEARING

apple arrow ant axe

A rectangular box containing four illustrations and their corresponding words. The words are 'apple', 'arrow', 'ant', and 'axe'. The letter 'a' in each word is circled. The word 'ant' is written as 'ant' with a small 't' at the end. The word 'axe' is written as 'axe' with a small 'e' at the end. The word 'ant' is written as 'ant' with a small 't' at the end. The word 'axe' is written as 'axe' with a small 'e' at the end.

SIMPLE START Before reading the first *Reader*, it is advisable to practise putting some sounds together. The final pages of the *Alphabet Book* contain some pre-reading exercises. These exercises contain mainly pictures, but have the students form basic two-sound words such as **on, in, at**, etc.

Once the student understands that it is the **sound** of the letter that is important, and that words are made up of these **sounds joined together**, the next step is to teach and then practise the **new sound** on which each new *Reader* is based. Each *Reader* will provide many words using its new sound.

All words contain **vowel sounds**, and for beginner readers a firm grasp of the basic vowel sounds is vital. That is why the early *Readers* focus on teaching and then reviewing these. Later *Readers*, as we have noted, focus on the **new sounds** that are made when letters are joined together, e.g. **oo** as in **moon**, **ch** as in **chip** (the digraphs), and the alternative sound that a letter can make: e.g. the **c** in **ice**, the **y** in **my**, etc.

As many educators, schools, families and students desire greater practice and consolidation at this crucial early stage, a second set of *Readers*, the 1x -10x set, mirrors the first set, but has a higher degree of difficulty with more and longer words – though no additional knowledge of sounds is required to read these.

SPECIAL WORDS There are, of course, words that are exceptions in spelling: e.g., **was, of, the**, etc. We term such words **special words** (also called **sight words**) and incorporate a few of these into most *Readers*. The *Fitzroy Readers* contain the fifty most common special words and many others, which, together with the basic **sounds** and **digraphs**, enable students to read a vast body of written English.

NOT-SO-SPECIAL WORDS Some words are **special words** when first encountered (e.g., **too** in *Reader 7*), but become **sounding words** later when a new digraph has been learned (in this case **oo** as in **moon**, introduced in *Reader 9*). These words turn out to be **not-so-special words**. (It is up to the educator whether to tell students that a word is *not-so-special* and that one day it will be a normal sounding word.)

Special words that never submit to a rule – words like **eye** or **yacht** – are called **very special words**.

WORD SKILLS WORKBOOKS When used together, the *Fitzroy Readers* and *Word Skills* workbooks provide a complete English literacy program. The *Word Skills* workbooks provide worksheets for each *Reader*.
















The A-sheets concentrate on the **new sound** taught in that *Reader*. The B-sheets reinforce the **special words**.

Completing the A and B sheets prior to starting the corresponding *Reader* provides ideal preparation for the student. The remaining worksheets focus on punctuation, grammar, comprehension, creative and persuasive writing.

There is one *Word Skills* workbook for each set of *Readers*, except the last set which has two *Word Skills* workbooks.

FITZROY WORD SKILLS SHEET 4XA **Basic vowels**

Look at the picture. Say the word. Sound the word. Write the missing letter.

 l _ g	 d _ g	 p _ t
 h _ n	 b _ d	 n _ t
 h _ t	 j _ m	 _ n t
 c _ p	 b _ g	 b _ n
 p _ g	 l _ d	 _ n k

THE BACK COVER The **back cover** of each *Reader* introduces the **new sound** (digraph) and the **special words** (sight words) that are taught in that *Reader*. It is important to practise these before attempting to read the story.

It should be made clear that **special words**, which do not follow the rules we have learned, cannot be sounded out as other words are. These words need to be learned by sight and simply read out.

After a *Reader* and its *Word Skills* worksheets have been mastered, we recommend some **dictation**. Say aloud a sentence that by now they should be able to read and spell. Ask them to write it down.

SEQUENCE The order we recommend for the first two sets of *Readers* is 1-6, and then 1x-6x (as these *Readers* practise the five basic vowel sounds, and do not contain any digraphs). After these have been completed, we recommend *Readers* 7-10 then 7x-10x.

After this the rest of the program should be completed in the order laid out in the table below, ie. 11-20, then 11x-20x. Having completed the program, students will have a high standard of early secondary English. This will prepare them well for secondary subjects.

TITLE	SUGGESTED SCHOOL YEAR*
<i>Fitzroy Alphabet Book</i>	4 year old/ Foundation
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 1-10</i>	Foundation
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 1x-10x</i>	Foundation
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 11-20</i>	Year 1
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 11x-20x</i>	Year 1 / 2
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 21-30</i>	Year 2
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 21x-30x</i>	Year 2 / 3
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 31-40</i>	Year 3 / 4
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 41-50</i>	Year 4 / 5
<i>Fitzroy Readers & Word Skills 51-55 & 56-60</i>	Year 6

*When using the *Fitzroy Readers* in conjunction with the *Fitzroy Word Skills* workbooks.

For more information, visit our website:

www.fitzroyreaders.com

