



# The big box

Written by Jan Polkinghorne. Illustrated by Trent Lambert.



**SPELD SA**  
**Phonic Book Series**

# Learning to read

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SPELD SA Phonic Books support the teaching of reading by using a structured synthetic phonics approach. They are designed to build on the pre-reading skills of oral language and phonological awareness needed for reading success. The books support the learning of letter-sounds and blending in a sequential phonic order, helping students to develop their independent decoding skills. The books also contain limited high frequency words that need to be taught before reading the book. The questions and activities focus on increasing a student's vocabulary and fluency and encourage the student to make deeper connections with the author's message.

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## The big box (62 words)

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Before reading the book, use the practice page to:

### 1. Revise the letter-sounds

### 2. Teach the blending of letter-sounds in regular words

The student points to each letter or combination of letters, saying the sound they represent. Swipe left to right under the letters, saying the sounds quickly and smoothly together to read the word. *e.g. b-i-g is 'big'; b-o-x is 'box'; l-i-d is 'lid'; w-e-n-t is 'went'; sh-u-t is 'shut'; th-r-ee is 'three'; ch-ee-p is 'cheep'; ch-i-ck-s is 'chicks'.*

During single word practice, check that the student understands the meaning of the word.

If the student is having difficulty hearing the word when blending:

- repeat the sounds more than once in succession to help the student 'hear' the word
- model stretching the sounds together without pauses, *e.g. nnnnniiiiip, is 'nip'*
- use letter tiles and push them together while saying the sounds.

### 3. Teach the high frequency words (words that the student will not be able to sound out)

Tell the student the words and determine any 'tricky' parts by breaking up the word into its sounds. Many high frequency words will be able to be sounded out later as the student learns more sounds and how they are written.

Provide practice through games like matching flash cards and Snap. For extra support, write the high frequency words on cards for the student to refer to as they read.

## Reading tips

A combination of letters can represent a sound, such as in boat (b-oa-t), song (s-o-ng), fern (f-er-n), shout (sh-ou-t), or night (n-igh-t).

The suffix <ed> can represent the sound /d/ as in 'rubbed', /t/ as in 'packed' and /id/ as in 'landed'.

Words can contain schwa vowel sounds. The schwa is pronounced as an /uh/ sound, such as in, 'Nana', 'butter', 'across', 'the'. Explore with the student which part of the word has the schwa sound by breaking the word into its sounds. Take note of how the schwa sound is spelt.

## Practice page

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Practise the sounds

s, a, t, i, p, n

c, k, ck, e, h, r, m, d

g, o, u, l, f, b

ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or

z, w, ng, v, oo (book), oo (room)

y, x, sh, ch, th (think), th (that)

Practise blending sounds

big

box

lid

went

shut

three

cheep

chicks

Practise high frequency words

the

what

their

they

she

her

scratch

scratched

# Vocabulary

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The words on this page can be used to help the student's comprehension before, during or after reading the book. Link the meanings of words with what the student already knows, show examples or have students act out the words.

**shut** – closed

**held** – hold (past tense)

**scratch** – the sound of sharp scraping

**cheep, cheep** – the noise birds make

**scratched** – scraped sharply

**pecked** – picked at with a beak

**seeds** – grains of plants



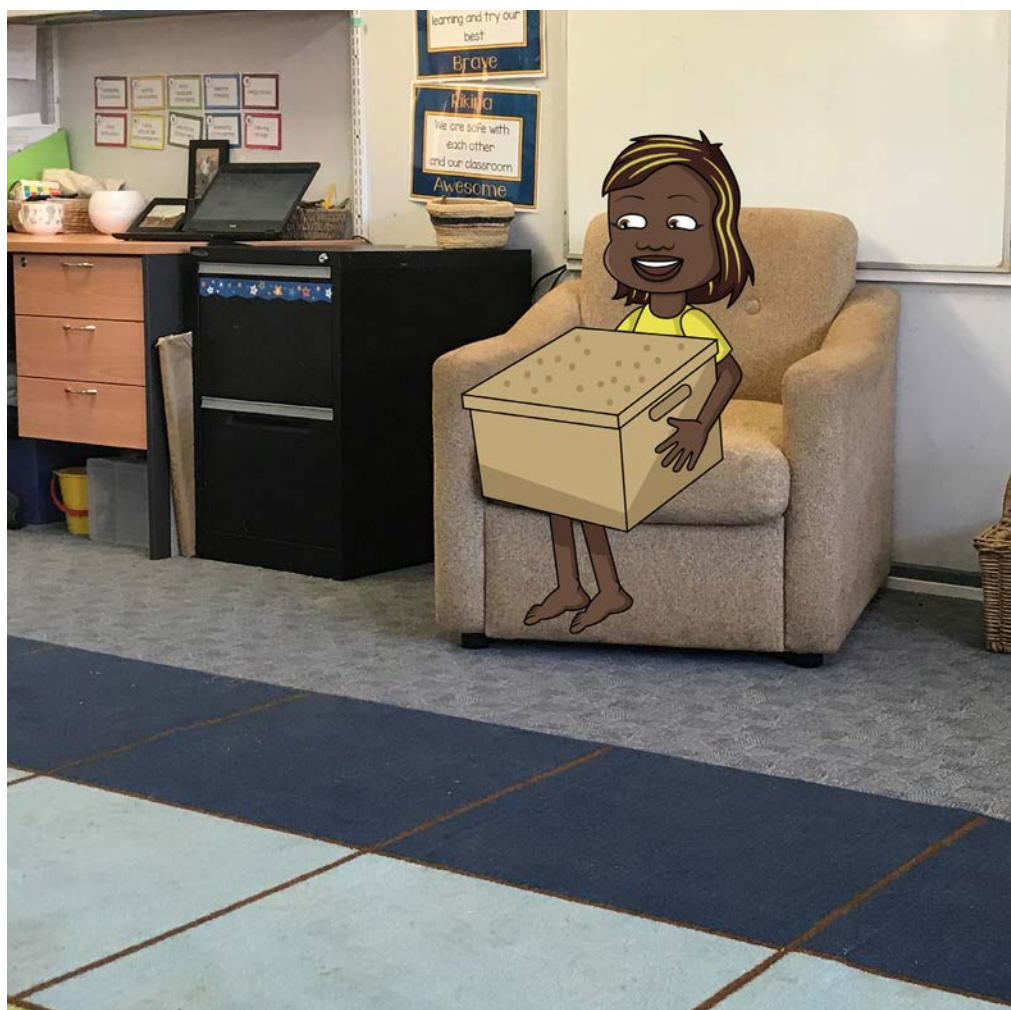
Willa sat on the bus with  
a big box.



What is in that box?



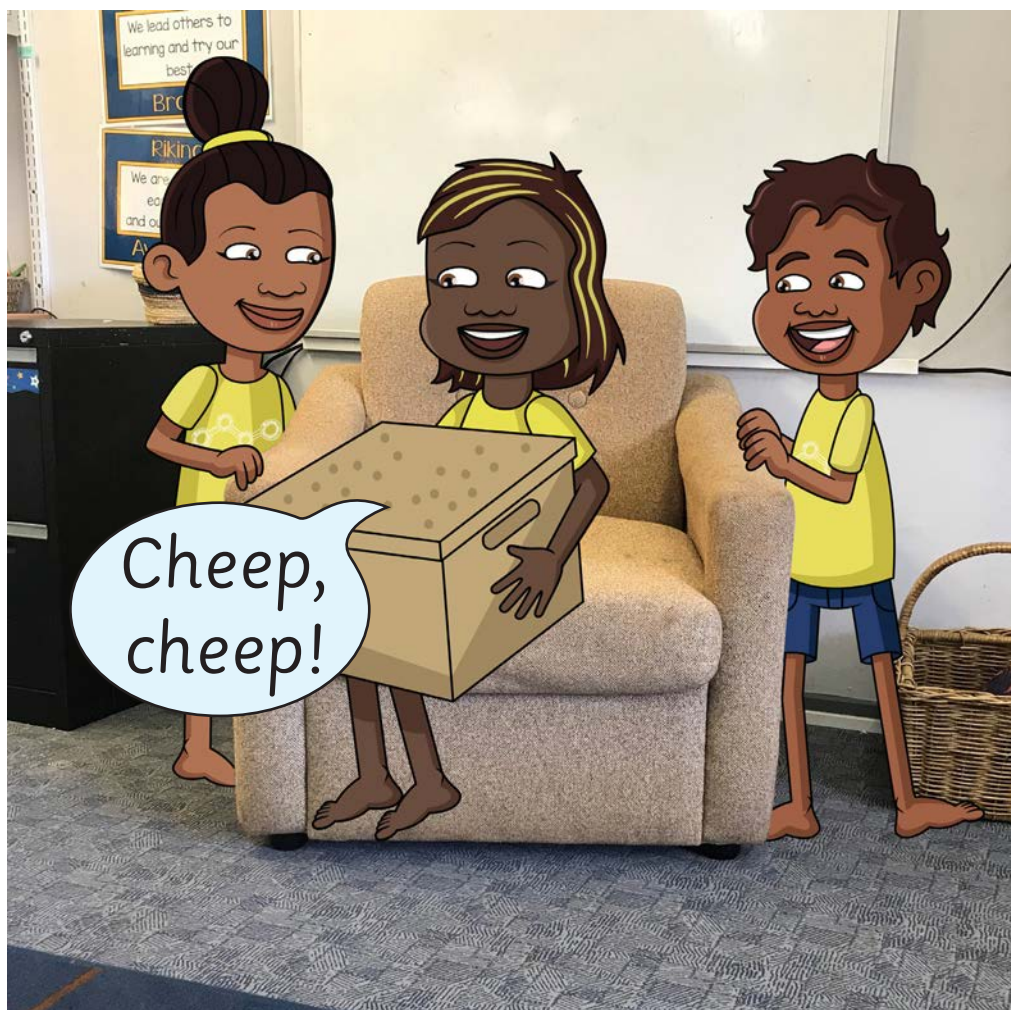
The box had the lid shut.



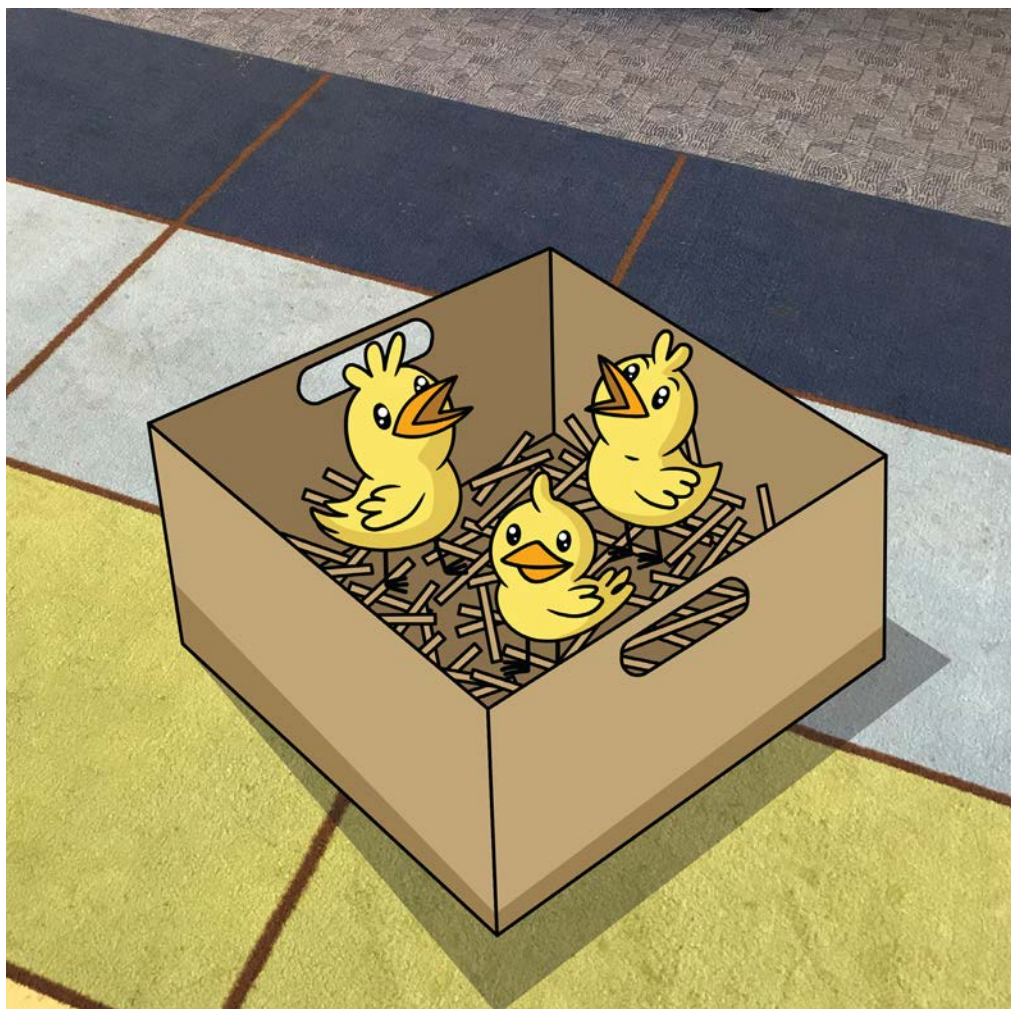
She held the box on  
her lap.



The box went scratch.



The box went cheep,  
cheep! What is in  
that box?



In the box she had  
three chicks. The chicks  
scratched with their feet.



They went cheep and  
pecked at the seeds.

# From blending to fluency

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To develop fluency, the student needs to re-read the same book multiple times. Students might initially sound out every word and re-read every sentence but, with practice, blending will become more automatic. The fluency chart can be used to develop automaticity of blending by providing single word blending practice.

While reading the book, the student:

- blends the sounds of each unknown word in the sentence
- identifies and reads high frequency words
- re-reads the sentence from the beginning
- discusses the meaning of the sentence

When finished, the student needs to re-read the whole book and practise reading the same book until they can read at a steady pace with minimal sounding out.

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## Making connections - questions and discussion

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After the student has read the book, or the relevant page, ask them one or more of the following questions and discuss:

1. Can you find words in the story with these sounds:  
/ch/, /sh/, /th/?
2. What do you call a baby chicken and a mother chicken?  
What sounds do they make?
3. What might happen if the chicks get out of the box?
4. Where do you think Willa got the chicks from?
5. Which other animal could be in the box, that you could guess from the sound it makes?

## Fluency chart

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in

had

box

lid

big

peck

that

and

shut

lap

mix

much

with

feet

went

crash

held

shall

three

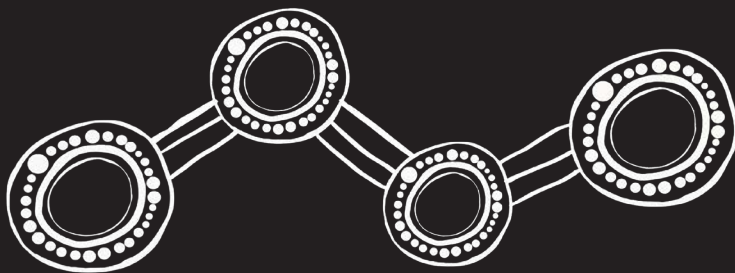
think

torch

seeds

chicks

thanks



## Cover artwork by Elizabeth Close

Elizabeth Close is an Anangu woman from the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara language groups in the APY Lands in outback South Australia. She was born in Adelaide and spent much of her upbringing in remote communities, learning her language and receiving cultural education.

*'This artwork represents the literacy and numeracy learning journey, and the path towards independent learning. The circles represent the collaborative learning and supports around children with specific learning difficulties, including children, schools, families, SPELD SA and others.'* **Elizabeth Close**, Artist.

## About this series

The SPELD SA Phonic Book Series complements the teaching of reading and writing using a structured synthetic phonics approach. SPELD SA aims to help Aboriginal students engage with phonic books by having characters, content and settings that reflect Aboriginal communities. In developing this series, SPELD SA has consulted with people who live and work in the Anangu, Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. We understand that the content, settings and characters may not reflect all Aboriginal people and their experiences but hope that Aboriginal students learning to read can find some familiarity in and connection with these books in their literacy journey.

Each set of books introduces a group of sounds for students to blend to read words. The books with a single star icon on the front cover contain a lower word count and less high frequency words. The books with two stars contain a higher word count, a greater number of high frequency words and/or more complex word structure. Please consider your student's ability when choosing a book for them to read. For a comprehensive explanation of the structure of the series, please refer to the SPELD SA website.

## Acknowledgments

Produced by SPELD SA, 2021 and supported by the Government of South Australia.



**Government of  
South Australia**

Thanks to Jan Polkinghorne for her contributions in the development of the series and to Angela Weeks for permission to use and revise some of her stories. Thanks to the Anangu Lands and Rueben Burton for support of this project. Thanks also to Sandra Ken for cultural advice on Anangu communities and language.

SPELD SA is grateful for the contributions of volunteers for: consultation and project development; writing texts, comprehension questions, charts and games; illustrating, photography and graphic design; character development and cultural advice; speech and language advice. This is a wide community project, with talents, expertise and knowledge being shared for a common purpose – to improve literacy. Thank you all.

Book design by Tricia Smith Design, compilation and additional design by Janet Stone.

SPELD SA Phonic Books follow the sequence of letter-sounds used in the Jolly Phonics synthetic phonics program. The books can be used with other phonics programs.

Set 1	<b>s, a, t, p, i, n</b>
Set 2	<b>c, k, ck, e, h, r, m, d</b>
Set 3	<b>g, o, u, l, f, b</b>
Set 4	<b>ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or</b>
Set 5	<b>z, w, ng, v, oo (book), oo (room)</b>
Set 6	<b>y, x, sh, ch, th (think), th (that)</b>
Set 7	<b>qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar</b>
Set 8	<b>y (sunny), a (apron), a-e (cake), e (female), e-e (eve), i (silent), i-e (kite), o (open), o-e (home), u (student), u-e (tune)</b>
Set 9	<b>ay (play), ey (they), oy (toy), y (mystery), ea (dream), ie (chief), y (dry), igh (night)</b>
Set 10	<b>oe (toe), ow (rainbow), ow (now), ir (bird), ur (turn), ew (few), au (launch), aw (paw), al (talk)</b>



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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page features several interconnected circles of varying sizes, some with internal patterns, set against a dark background.

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