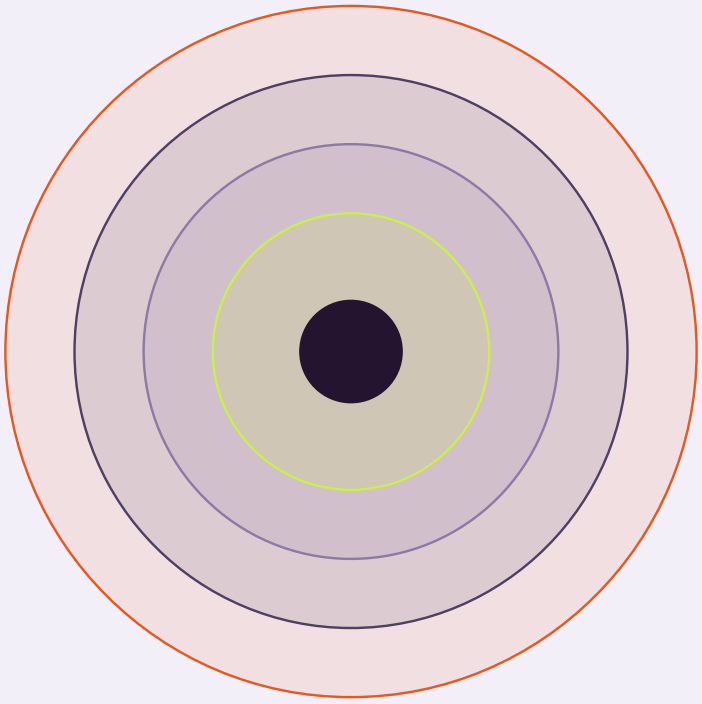


Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons

A reading of the book by Siegfried Engelmann, Phyllis Haddox and Elaine Bruner (1983)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Siegfried Engelmann, who developed the Direct Instruction approach to teaching, wrote this book with Phyllis Haddox and Elaine Bruner. It adapts DISTAR, the scripted reading programme Engelmann and Bruner built for classrooms, for one parent and one child at home. The authors argue that a parent with no teaching background can teach a young child to read by following a fully scripted lesson for about 20 minutes a day. The method is phonics first: the child learns the sounds letters make rather than their names, and blends them by saying a word slowly and then saying it fast. Early lessons use a modified print, with joined letters, marks over long vowels and small silent letters, and those aids fade before the end. After a short guide for parents, the book is mostly the 100 lessons themselves: sound drills, rhyming, word reading, short stories with comprehension questions and simple writing tasks.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Short and daily beats long and occasional.

Each lesson is built to take about 20 minutes. A tired child learns little and starts to dread the sessions, so the book's rhythm is a short lesson every day rather than a long one now and then. Stopping while the child is still keen is part of the method.

2 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Teach the sound a letter makes before the name it is called.

A child who knows that m says mmm can start sounding out words. A child who knows it is called em has to translate first. The programme teaches sounds and leaves letter names aside, because names do not help a beginner read a word.

3 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Blending is the real skill: say it slowly, then say it fast.

The child says each sound in a word without stopping between them, then says the word at normal speed. Plenty of children can name every sound on a page and still not hear the word. The say-it-fast step is practised again and again until the join feels natural.

4 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A script frees the parent to watch the child.

Every word the parent says is written out, along with what to point to. You do not have to invent explanations or decide what comes next. Your attention can go where it matters: whether your child got it.

5 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Correct a mistake at once, then go back to the start of the task.

When the child gets something wrong, the parent says the right answer, has the child say it, and repeats the task from the top. There is no lecture and no sigh. The aim is that every task ends with the child doing it correctly.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Clean print first, ordinary print later.

English spelling is full of letters that do not sound the way they look. The early lessons use a modified print where joined letters show one sound, long vowels carry a mark and silent letters are printed small. The aids fade out so the child finishes on ordinary text.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Praise is part of the method, not a bonus.

A young child keeps going when effort is noticed. The lessons build in frequent, specific praise for correct answers. Short, honest praise keeps a 20-minute lesson moving and makes the next one easier to start.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Reading means understanding, not only sounding out.

Once the child reads stories, the parent asks simple questions about what happened. The picture comes after the words are read, so the child learns to get the story from the text rather than guess it from the drawing.

9 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Firm ground before the next step.

Each lesson leans on the skills of the lessons before it, so a shaky skill causes trouble later. When a task keeps falling apart, going back over it is faster than pushing on to hit a date. Progress through 100 lessons is not a race.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Pick a fixed 20-minute slot
- [ ] Read the first lesson aloud on your own
- [ ] Practise the sounds yourself
- [ ] Set up a quiet spot side by side
- [ ] Start a simple lesson log

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Stop while it is still going well
- ◯ Correct the same way every time
- ◯ Praise each correct answer specifically

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

☐ SETUP 1

Pick a fixed 20-minute slot

Choose a time of day when your child is fresh, such as after breakfast, and put it on the calendar for every day this week.

Same time, same place makes it a routine rather than a negotiation.

MY VERSION DONE ON

☐ SETUP 2

Read the first lesson aloud on your own

Before you teach it, read the parent instructions and lesson 1 out loud by yourself.

The script should feel natural before your child hears it.

MY VERSION DONE ON

☐ SETUP 3

Practise the sounds yourself

Say each early sound without adding an uh: mmm, not muh.

Hold the sounds that can be held, and say short sounds like t quickly. Your child will copy exactly what you do.

MY VERSION DONE ON

☐ SETUP 4

Set up a quiet spot side by side

A table, two chairs, the book open between you and no screen in view.

Sit where you can point under the words and still see your child's face.

MY VERSION DONE ON

☐ SETUP 5

Start a simple lesson log

Use a sheet of paper or the tracker on this page: date, lesson number, minutes and one note.

On the days it feels slow, the log shows how far you have come.

MY VERSION DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Stop while it is still going well

End at about 20 minutes, or sooner if attention drops.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Correct the same way every time

Say the right answer, have your child say it, then go back to the start of that task.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Praise each correct answer specifically

Name what your child did well, such as saying every sound without stopping.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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30 ○						

December 2026

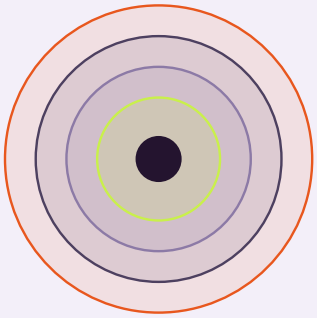
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



A few calm minutes a day, one sound at a time, add up to a reader.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER ENGELMANN, HADDOX AND BRUNER