

The “Little Book” with the Big Heart Why Little Books work with all learners



Anatomy of “Little Book 21, Set 1” The Red Set, Kindergarten Level

This download is to demonstrate the components of a *Reading for All Learners Program* (RALP) “Little Book.” We have selected one of the 26 kindergarten books, Book 21, to use as an example. You will need a copy of Book 21. Download a copy of Book 21 from our website www.iseesam.com.

Why a “Little Book”?

Utah State University (USU) built this reading program on the research of the early 1970s, conducted by the Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (SWRL). These original “Little Books” combined the needs and interests of children with the research on structured, systematic phonics-based approaches to reading instruction. At a time when many reading programs used one large expensive textbook for grade 1, SWRL used approximately 60 inexpensive “Little Books” that combined both the fun stories and the systematic instruction. To build skills and a positive attitude to reading, the child needs consistent demonstrations of success. To increase the sense of student accomplishment, USU added color to highlight set changes. There are now 140 different Little Books in eight sets. The sets, each with a markedly different color, take students from beginning kindergarten to grade 4. A call the USU received from a school principal, the father of child with a learning disability, tells it all. He expressed, “Thanks,” with emotion in his voice and said, “I came home late from a PTA meeting and Brad ran down the driveway waving a little red book and yelling – “Dad, I read my first book! Can I read it to you?”

The Cover

Covers are intentionally kept simple to focus discussion. In most cases animal friends provide the topic for the introductory discussion of the book. In all kindergarten and grade 1 books (the first 4 sets), the animal characters and settings provide a high-interest, cross-cultural context. This sensitivity to diversity provides one of the reasons that the *Reading for All Learners Program* (RALP) is in extensive use from the Native American schools of the west, to all the inner city boroughs of New York City, to Puerto Rico, to Guyana, South America, and to a wide range of English instruction programs in Africa, Europe and Russia.

Inside the Front Cover: The Pronunciation Guide

Welcome to something different and very important. Each Little Book is, first, a fun book for the students, and second, each Little Book provides an on-the-job staff development resource for every member of the instructional team, the teacher, the resource teacher, the instructional aide, the volunteer, the cross-age tutor, and parents. The Pronunciation Guide is one of many instructional prompts carefully and strategically placed throughout each book. The 44 sounds (phonemes) are based on the research and ensure compatibility with most research-based core reading programs. Joseph Torgesen, from the Florida Center for Reading Research, noted that, “There are 26 letters to learn. There are 44 phonemes to worry about. There are 8,400 root words to know by fifth grade.”

Page 1: Sound Practice

Our best teachers start every lesson with a fast-paced, high-success, active student participation activity. Sound Practice is a review of previously taught sounds that will be needed to successfully and confidently read the story that is coming. This review is ideal in setting the tone for the whole lesson with an engagingly paced, high-success activity. Notice the instructional prompt in small print at the bottom of the page. It states:

“Read all sounds without a mistake before moving on.”

This curriculum-embedded assessment requirement sets a high success expectation for the whole lesson. If this requirement is not met, the teacher reteaches immediately, and the expectation of success is communicated. Most

students are well skilled in identifying a teacher's low expectations and lowering their efforts to adjust to these low expectations.

Page 1: New Sound

This Little Book introduces one new sound, "u." This sound will then be applied to two new words. One word is "us," with the new sound in the initial position, and "sun," with the sound in the middle position. These two words will then be immediately practiced in the following story with at least 10 examples of "us" and "sun." This carefully introduced new sound and word content and the immediate application to story reading is the essence of effective and meaningful instruction. Also the preteaching of prerequisite decoding skills is the essence of decodable readers. Our Little Books are 100% decodable in that students are never required to struggle with the decoding of new words and the comprehension of new content at the same time. The research is very clear. If understanding of content is your goal, do not distract students by requiring them to consume their psychological resources with words they can not decode.

Page 2: Word Practice

These are review words that will be needed for reading the following story with fluency and comprehension. To achieve fluency, these review words must all be read with accuracy and confidence. See the instructional prompt in small print at the bottom of page 2.

Page 3: New Words

Four new words are introduced in Book 21. They are:

What sun them us

The underlining is an instructional prompt to denote to instructor and student that this is an "irregular" word. This is a word that does not play by the rules we have taught about previous letter-sound relationships. While some might teach this irregular word by "rote," we follow the research that says that even if all sounds are not "regular," the remaining sounds are the best clues we have. So, we first sound out the phonemes and blend the word as we would a "regular" word. The word attack skills for both regular and irregular words are detailed and exemplified in the *Reading for All Learners Teachers' Manual*, Chapter 1, parts G and H. The complete teachers' manual can be found on www.iseesam.com and downloaded at no charge. See Teacher Resources on this site. Reteach new words until all words are read with accuracy and confidence.

Page 4: Reading the Story

When the story starts, students are ready. The students have the interest, competence, and confidence because the prerequisite decoding skills have been taught. The story is read at least twice, one time for accuracy and one time for fluency, understanding, and expression before moving to the next Little Book. See Teachers' Manual, Chapter 1, part D, for error correction procedures.

Page 5: Comprehension Prompts

In small print at the bottom of the page is one of the many instructional prompts to ensure the story is read with understanding. On page 5 the prompt states:

"Who is sitting in the sun?"

These prompts provide examples and reminders to ensure that comprehension is consistently addressed. We recommend that the questions and discussions be far more extensive than these minimum prompts. As the story content becomes more complex, the questions change.

In the early sets the emphasis is on literal questions. By the end of grade 2, the emphasis has moved to inferential and evaluative questions. The Scope and Sequence section in Chapter 2 of the Teachers' Manual provides details on the increasing complexity of comprehension questions.

Page 15: Praise Prompts

In the bottom right-hand corner of page 15 is one of several praise prompts. Praise needs to be extensive, specific and directly linked in time and context to appropriate student behavior. For example: "Wow, well done, you read that without errors and you read with expression."

Page 17: The Looking Back Assessment

These assessments are the major curriculum embedded-assessments. The term "Looking Back" is used because this assessment covers skill content from this book and the previous four books. In set 1 there are 26 books with Looking Back assessments at the end of books 6, 11, 16, 21, and 26. In Book 21, page 17 must be read with no more than 2 errors. Reteaching starting in book 17 must be done immediately. The research and associated federal and state requirements mandate that the curriculum-embedded assessments "inform instruction," in this case the assessment result dictates the reteaching needed. Our past evaluations of the implementations of the *Reading for All Learners Program* indicate that the program is very effective with high and low achievers. The program is most effective when the reteaching called for by these curriculum-embedded assessments is done immediately and consistently. Low achievers, the most vulnerable students, suffer the most when the required reteaching is not done.

Page 18: Coming Attractions

In this section the teacher raises interest in specific skills and gives a short introduction to the next story. The word "Sun" is taught on this page. This word was introduced in this book, but the first letter was not capitalized. Coming Attractions allow the book to end on a high interest, high success note.

The Back Cover

The inside of the back cover lists the sequence of books in the set. **Remember:** the Little Books must be taught in sequence. This Little Book sequence provides a proven, researched hierarchy to reading independence for all learners.



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