

A guide to the  
teaching of reading  
using the  
Ladybird  
Sunstart Reading  
Scheme



# A guide to the teaching of reading using the Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme

## Introduction

This illustrated guide has been created especially for parents and teachers who are teaching children how to read. It explains how to use the Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme and how to get the most from the resources available which accompany the scheme.

The Sunstart Reading Scheme uses the key words method of learning to read, featuring characters and stories set in the Caribbean.

The clear structure of the key words method allows for steady progression through the six readers. When used alongside the three Sunstart workbooks, the series provides children and teachers with a complete scheme.

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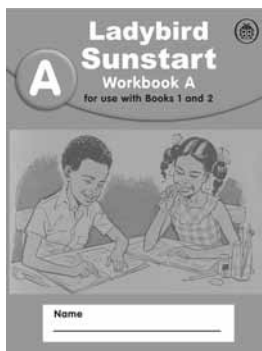
# Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme

- A series of six carefully graded mini hardback readers.

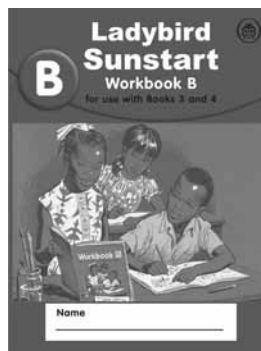


1 Lucky dip      2 On the beach      3 The kite      4 Animals, birds and fish      5 I wish      6 Guess what?

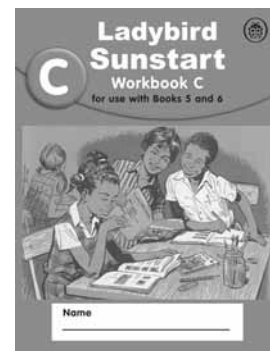
- Workbooks A, B and C reinforce the words learned in the six readers, whilst teaching handwriting and introducing phonic training.



**Workbook A**  
(Linked with Books 1 and 2)

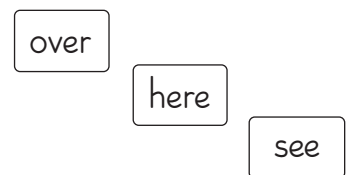


**Workbook B**  
(Linked with Books 3 and 4)

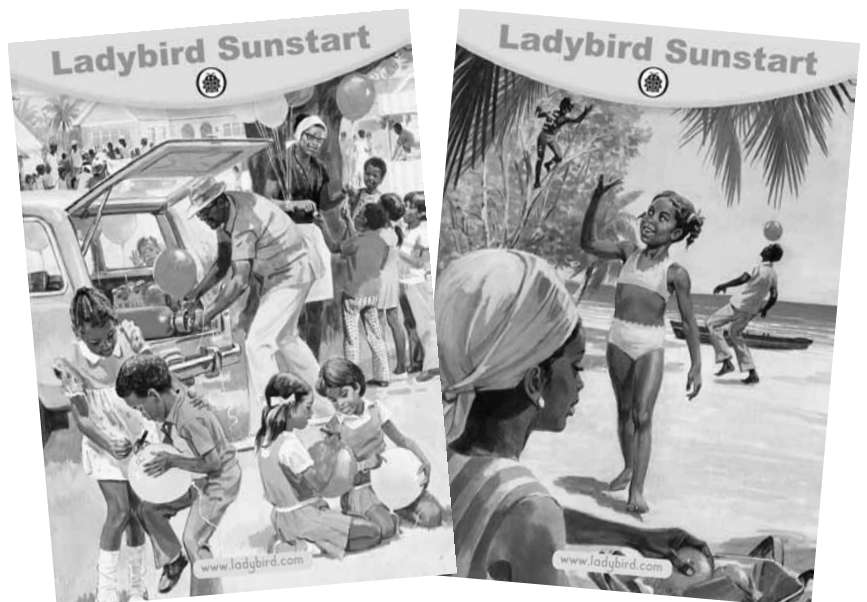


**Workbook C**  
(Linked with Books 5 and 6)

- For classroom use, flash cards from the Key Words Reading Scheme, containing the first 100 key words.



- One double-sided A1 wall picture featuring illustrations from the scheme. Ideal for use with flash cards for reading activities to develop reading, interaction and imagination.



## Dialect, patois and standard English

In a number of English speaking countries many young children come to school speaking varieties of English known as dialect or patois. Each of these has its own richness and worth, but contains many differences from so-called standard English. The local variety of English and standard English have many complementary not opposing roles, and both are essential.

However, learning to read in standard English can present considerable difficulties to a young child if he meets sounds, word forms and grammar strange to him, in his first standard English reading books. With this in mind, care has to be taken in the early stages of this Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme to use only standard English word forms and grammar, which are not peculiar to standard English but used in other dialects and patois also.

## The importance of learning to read and write

Most people agree that English has become the first global language. English is the preferred language in the increasing use of the internet, multi-media use and in many other ways. Therefore, many parents and teachers consider it is very important for children to learn to speak, read, write and spell English.

Parents are often the first and only continuous teachers of their child, although they may have little formal instruction in how to teach. Parents and teachers will find it easy and rewarding to teach a child to read and write if:

- The adult really wants to do so, and has a kind and understanding approach
- He/she understands the basic principles of learning
- The adult has an attractive, scientifically prepared reading scheme available
- He/she has time to give the child some personal attention each day



This guide gives the basic information needed, and explains how to use the Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme. It also offers teachers realistic advice and help over possible difficulties arising from large classes of children; many of whom may have varying standards of ability, behaviour and attendance.

The understanding of child development and method of teaching reading described are those developed and used throughout the English-speaking world.

## The whole child

There is general agreement that the teaching of a child, whether by a parent or teacher, should be in the context of child study. Before any programme of instruction is drawn up, it is necessary to consider whether the basic needs of the child are being satisfied.

At the planning stage of this reading scheme an international consultant group of headteachers and teachers drew up the following list of points, based on their experience and worldwide research on child development:

- Children are people in their own right and should be treated with respect and understanding. The characteristics and behaviour of children should not be discussed in front of them. They need to feel secure in the love of their parents
- It is what a child feels within that matters. With understanding one can tell from the child's action what he is feeling
- Parents and teachers can help to give children an environment in which the real self of the child can grow and not be stifled or lost
- Children should be allowed to do things for themselves from the earliest possible moment
- Character is developed through experiment and experience. Children should be encouraged to explore and should not be punished for mistakes or for curiosity, for by these we all learn
- Always laugh with children, never at them. A child's fears should never be laughed at, for there is nothing cowardly in fear itself
- Encouragement is essential to the development of the child
- When a child seems not to be healthily inquisitive, encourage discussion. If left unsatisfied, he will inevitably make enquiries outside the home, sometimes getting just what he needs, and sometimes not
- It is wise for parents and teachers to recognise the important part played by each other in the child's development and to co-operate fully
- The children of yesterday are the world's citizens of today. Tomorrow's citizens are as yet, our children



## The pattern of learning - thinking, speaking, reading, writing . . .

When a child is learning to read and write, three of the greatest achievements of the human mind are being brought together. Ideas come first in the developing mind, then speech through which thought is expressed. Later comes the ability to record and interpret thinking, through writing and print. Man is essentially a symbol-using animal and progress in a literate community is difficult without the skills of reading and writing. Reading is vital. It's a resource we all need for enjoyment, information and for our work. Above all, as parents and teachers, we want children to be able to read with confidence and to enjoy reading for life. The teaching of reading and writing should flow through the natural interests of children; learning to read by reading, and to write by writing.

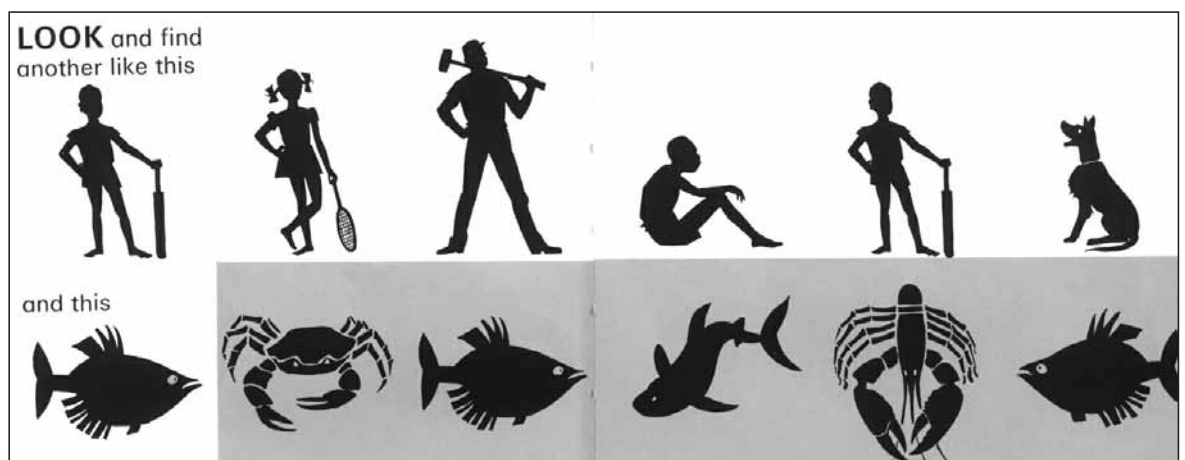


## The first stages of reading - from pre-reading to reading

Children will develop gradually at their own pace towards successful reading. During pre-reading, parents and teachers should foster positive attitudes towards books and reading, an understanding of how books work, and give happy experiences of stories and rhymes.

### **Some specific pre-reading skills to encourage are:**

- Retelling - remembering and saying what happens in a story
- Sequencing - putting pictures and events in the right order
- Predicting - saying what will or might happen next
- Matching - spotting what's the same and also saying what's different



- Picture reading - telling a story from pictures
- Focusing on detail - around us and within books
- Sound awareness - hearing sounds, especially at the beginning of words
- Rhyme awareness - hearing that certain words rhyme
- Rhyme memory - remembering nursery rhymes, songs and simple rhyming (or repetitive) stories
- Knowing letter names and letter sounds - beginning phonic knowledge
- Being able to read his/her name and a few other words

## Pre-reading activities

The best way to increase a child's experience and support language development is to encourage awareness and concentration and introduce stimulating activities to develop hearing, speaking, reading and writing.

### **Hearing and speaking skills can be developed by:**

- Listening and telling stories, rhymes, jingles and poetry
- Giving instructions
- Sand and water play
- Listening to radio and watching television programmes
- Dressing up, role play and telephoning
- Taking part in table games (snap, dice, Lotto, dominoes, snakes and ladders)
- Sorting and matching by colour/shape/size in various materials
- Playing with construction toys and doing jigsaws



Outside games can include parents, or the teacher or her assistant, taking a group of very young children on an educational walk or visit and then drawing or painting several pictures of where they went and what they saw, or did.

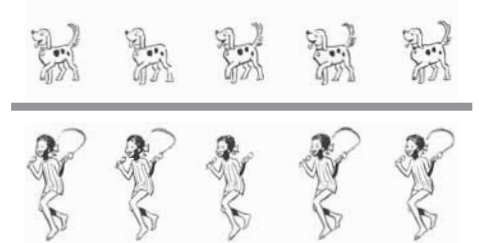
### **Reading skills can be developed through:**

- Picture books and pictures in comics
- Flash cards (of road signs, children's names, commands etc), labels, notices and storybooks

## Writing skills can be developed through:

- Pictures and patterns with finger and brush paint
- Patterns with fingers in sand and pencil on paper
- Drawing a story in pictures, tracing pictures, writing his/her name etc
- Adding words to picture

Memory plays a key role in reading and all other learning. Enjoyable repetition is important to train memory, so encourage memory and concentration games such as “Today I saw” (name five things from an outing to the neighbourhood/shopping trip) and spot the differences between two pictures.



## When is the child ready to learn to read?

Reading readiness combines many aspects of child development, and there are very wide differences in physical and intellectual maturity among children of the same age. For example, one child between four and five years of age might understand and use several thousand words, while another of the same age might have only a few hundred in his vocabulary.

Nevertheless, the age of reading readiness is now believed to be much lower than was previously thought. Many normal children of four years can learn to read, if the material presented daily is linked to their interests, carefully graded and has adequate word repetition.

In every community, there are a few specially gifted children of high intelligence who can learn to read earlier than this, if they have the same enlightened programme, a kindly understanding approach, and sensitive teaching. Attempting to teach a child too early, before he is ready for it, can not only fail, but also condition him adversely against reading.

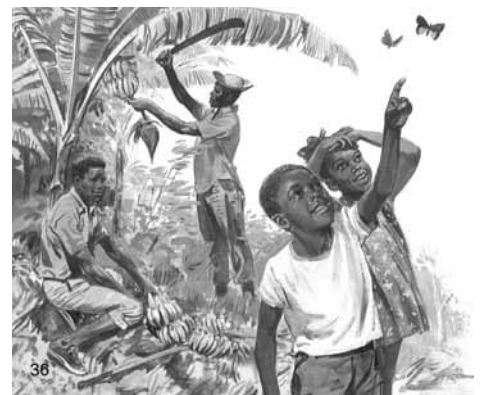


## Reading readiness guide

Reading readiness takes account of a child's language, co-ordination, play, concentration and curiosity about stories and the written word.

### The following checklist offers readiness guidelines:

- Can the child see and hear properly?
- Does he/she ask questions and want to know about the objects and things happening around him/her?



- Does he/she understand spoken instructions and can he/she carry them out?
- Does he/she listen to a story?
- Can he/she retell a simple story in a fairly logical sequence?
- Can he/she see similarities and differences in simple drawings?
- Does he/she draw recognisable objects?
- Is the child fairly self-reliant and able to work alone for short periods?
- Can he/she match identical shapes?
- Does the child shows signs of wanting to read?

If the child has reached this point and is eager to start, now is a good time to begin! Choose a simple structured reading scheme, such as Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme. Keep all sessions short and happy and praise constantly.

## Teaching reading with a reading scheme

Most teachers use a reading scheme to teach reading. A good reading scheme is a carefully planned series of illustrated reading books, workbooks and supporting apparatus, for example flash cards to develop reading skills. These are designed to take the beginner from the earlier stages of reading to reading fluency. A well-written reading scheme's vocabulary is controlled so that new words are introduced gradually, repeated a number of times, and carried over to the following book of the series. The best schemes ensure a scientific word control. The books of the Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme use these key words in the early stages to accelerate progress in learning to read. This method has proven successful worldwide with Key Word Reading Scheme being sold in many countries.

## The Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme

Book	Approximate reading age	To be used with	New words	New phonic words in workbook
1	4 - 5	Key Words flash cards, wall pictures and Workbook A	34	4
2	5 - 6		49	
3	6 - 7	Key Words flash cards, and Workbook B	74	32
4	7 - 8		101	
5	8 - 9	Workbook C	124	45
6	9 +		144	
			Total 526	Total 81
Overall Total 607				

## The scientific use of key words in early learning

Part of the scientific basis of this reading scheme is use of key words. This is the name given to a group of the most used words in English. These were formulated in the world famous research conducted by William Murray and Joe McNally, entitled *Key Words to Literacy*.

Their research found that the vocabulary of the ordinary adult has been assessed at about 20,000 words

the first 12 Key Words make up $\frac{1}{4}$ of those we read and write	the next 20	a further 200
	68 more words	19,700 words

The 100 words in the first three sections are introduced and then repeated at frequent intervals in the early books of the Sunstart Reading Scheme.

The total of these three sections shows that 100 words make up half of those in common use.

Parents and teachers will immediately realise the importance of this to children's learning. Of these 20,000 words only 12 form a quarter of those in common use. If children know these 12 words they then will recognise 25 per cent of any script put in front of them. The complete list of 300 Key Words represents two-thirds of the words in everyday use. The diagram printed above illustrates this, and when children know these they are well on their way to learning to read. The findings of this research was checked by a group of international educationalists. In their opinion the first two sections of the key words list represents approximately the proportional use of the words in their countries.

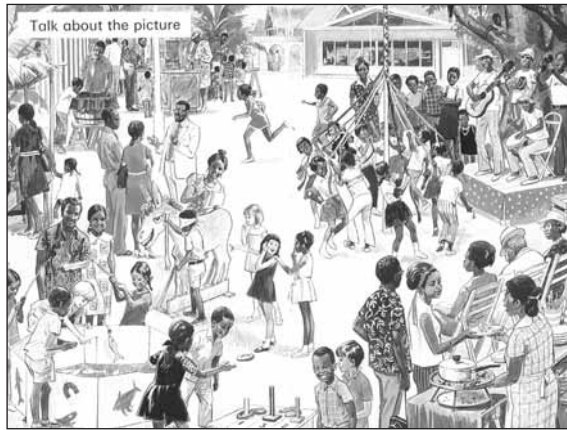
## The researched key words list and the Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme

The diagram below contains words in the first three sections of the key words list. It also shows, by the number printed above each word, in which book of the Sunstart Reading Scheme that word first appears.

1 <b>a</b>	1 <b>and</b>	1 <b>he</b>	2 <b>all</b>	3 <b>as</b>	1 <b>at</b>	3 <b>be</b>	3 <b>but</b>	3 <b>about</b>	2 <b>an</b>	3 <b>back</b>	4 <b>been</b>	4 <b>before</b>	1 <b>big</b>	4 <b>by</b>	4 <b>call</b>							
1 <b>are</b>	1 <b>for</b>	1 <b>had</b>	2 <b>are</b>	1 <b>for</b>	5 <b>had</b>	5 <b>can</b>	1 <b>come</b>	1 <b>could</b>	5 <b>did</b>	6 <b>do</b>	3 <b>down</b>	3 <b>first</b>	3 <b>from</b>	3 <b>get</b>	2 <b>go</b>	2 <b>has</b>	3 <b>her</b>	4 <b>here</b>	4 <b>if</b>	2 <b>into</b>	5 <b>just</b>	2 <b>like</b>
1 <b>have</b>	2 <b>him</b>	2 <b>his</b>	1 <b>have</b>	2 <b>him</b>	2 <b>his</b>	1 <b>little</b>	1 <b>look</b>	6 <b>made</b>	3 <b>make</b>	2 <b>me</b>	4 <b>more</b>	6 <b>much</b>	3 <b>must</b>	5 <b>my</b>	2 <b>no</b>	6 <b>new</b>	5 <b>now</b>	2 <b>off</b>	6 <b>only</b>	4 <b>or</b>	5 <b>our</b>	4 <b>over</b>
1 <b>not</b>	3 <b>on</b>	1 <b>one</b>	3 <b>not</b>	2 <b>on</b>	1 <b>one</b>	3 <b>other</b>	4 <b>out</b>	6 <b>right</b>	1 <b>see</b>	1 <b>she</b>	2 <b>some</b>	4 <b>their</b>	3 <b>them</b>	3 <b>there</b>	3 <b>this</b>	2 <b>two</b>	1 <b>up</b>	2 <b>want</b>	1 <b>well</b>	5 <b>went</b>	5 <b>who</b>	3 <b>were</b>
1 <b>the</b>	1 <b>to</b>	5 <b>was</b>	2 <b>we</b>	2 <b>with</b>	1 <b>you</b>	2 <b>were</b>	2 <b>what</b>	5 <b>when</b>	4 <b>where</b>	5 <b>which</b>	4 <b>will</b>	3 <b>your</b>	3 <b>old</b>	12	20	68						

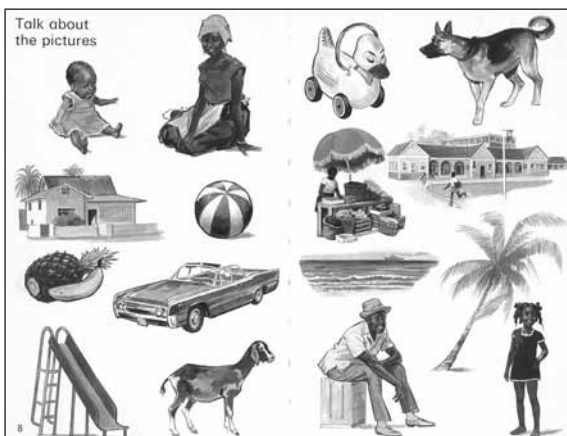
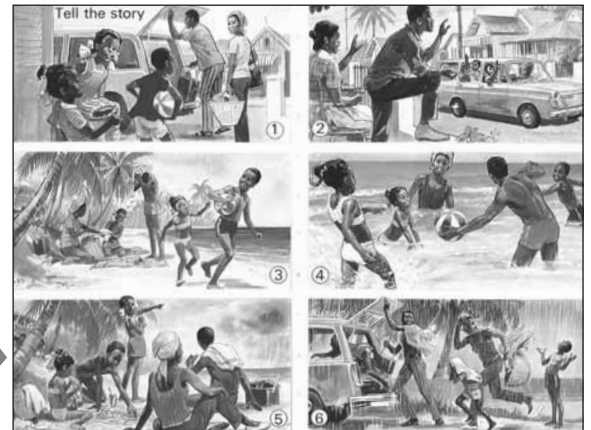
# Using the Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme

If the teacher is in doubt as to whether a child is ready to learn to read, she is recommended to use the first five openings of Book 1 Lucky dip with him, to aid her judgment. There are no words for the child in these 10 pages.



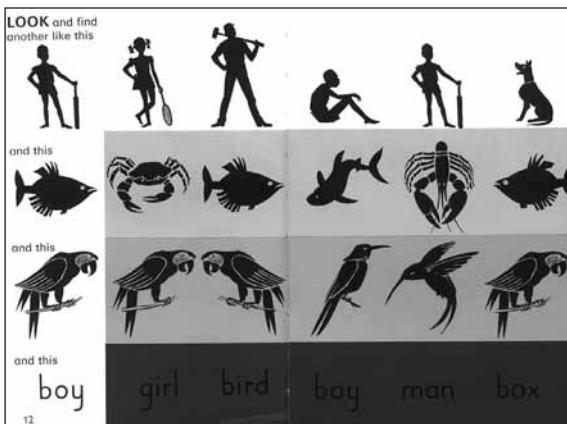
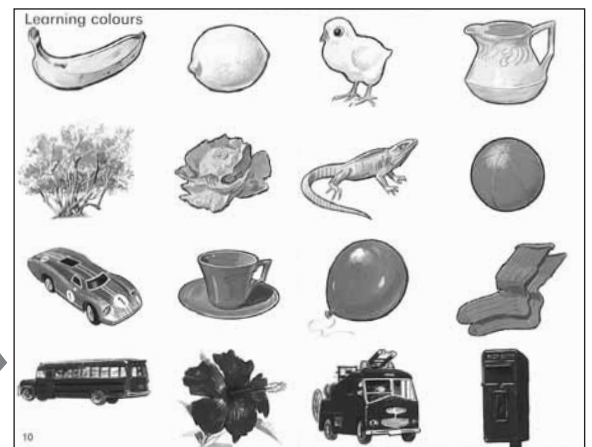
Pages 4 and 5: A double spread picture in colour of a school fete or fair, showing many activities

Pages 6 and 7: A picture story of six numbered parts



Pages 8 and 9: Sixteen small pictures of people, animals, objects and buildings

Pages 10 and 11: Two pages of objects shown in groups of the four primary colours

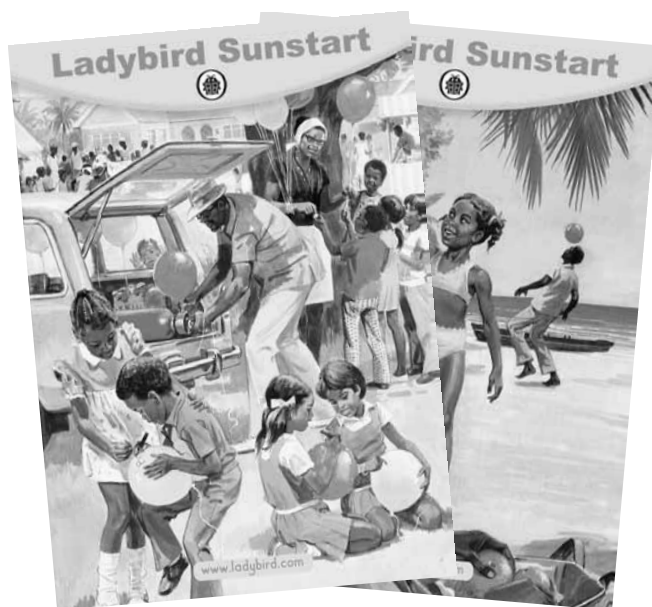


Pages 12 and 13: A visual discrimination test, based on the selection of identical shapes

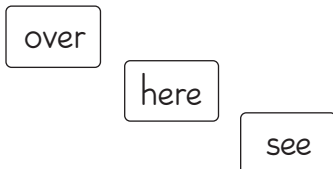
The child is encouraged to talk to the teacher about the contents of the page as described above. If reluctant, he is prompted by questions. His responses may add to the knowledge the teacher already has about him regarding his confidence, speech development, concept development, general knowledge, spoken vocabulary, experience, observation, perception, auditory and visual discrimination and general intellectual ability.

Guided by the overall impression the teacher has formed, she can then either start teaching him to read, or guide him through a programme of pre reading activities as outlined in this booklet.

Pages 4 to 13 of Book 1 described can, of course, be used with groups of children as a basis for teaching the skills required for learning to read. For children ready to learn to read, straightforward teaching of reading can be started from page 14 onwards, supported by wall pictures with sentence cards, and Workbook A, as the teacher describes.



**All colour wall pictures available free of charge from your Ladybird representative.**



The 34 words in Book 1 are in the Ladybird Key Words Flash Cards, which contain the first 100 key words. These are convenient for reading games and drills, and for testing.

## Teaching a class or group to read

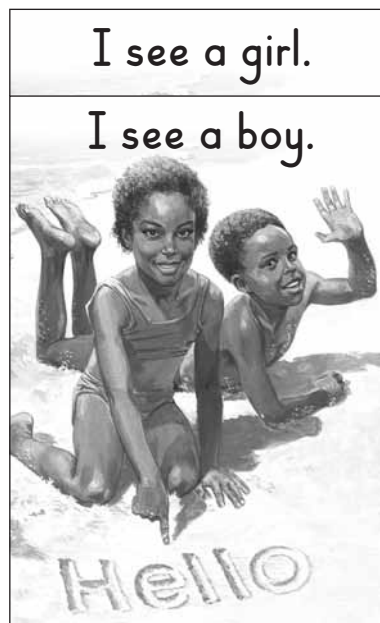
Every day teachers have to make decisions about the best way to teach individuals, groups and classes, including large classes. All good teaching demands a thorough knowledge of the subject, the materials used, and good class organisation.

Personal contact between teacher and child is important, since everyday teachers will spend a little time teaching individuals. However, the majority of their time is divided between teaching the whole class and group teaching. When teaching large classes it is essential the teacher is given the support and structure they need. The Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme including the workbooks and flash cards provides this and used sensibly never fails to prepare children for independent reading.

For many teachers the best classroom aid for a large class is the help of another adult. Increasingly, parents, grandparents or another adult give their time voluntarily to help in schools. When chosen carefully and guided by the teacher they are invaluable when helping in large classes.

## The use of flash cards

The Key Words Flash Cards containing the first 100 key words are an integral part of the scheme. The cards are useful for a variety of activities and reading games.



I

see

a

girl

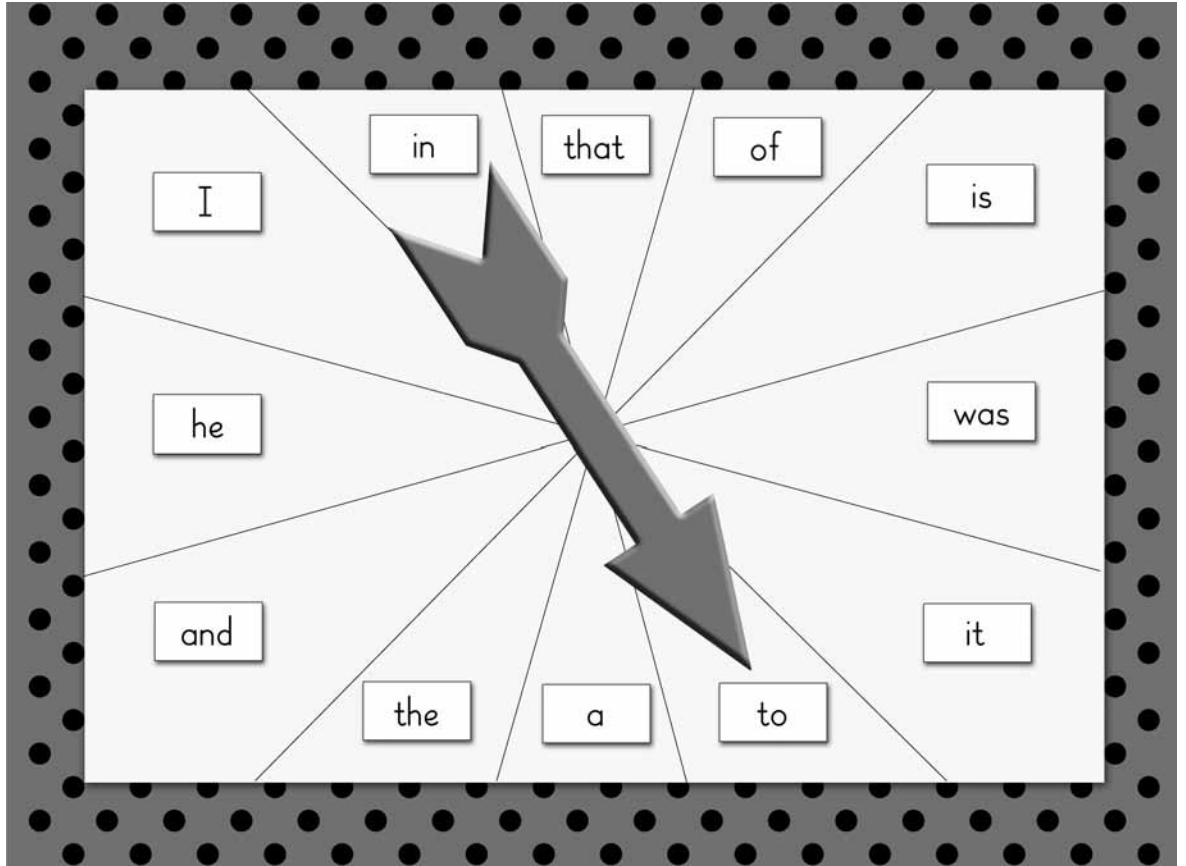
## Wall pictures and flash cards

A happy and effective start with beginners in learning to read can be made with the use of wall pictures and flash cards, which are available from Ladybird or can be produced by the teacher. At this early stage the teacher may find that some young children in the class or group do not know that English is read from left to right. They may not understand such words as letter, word, and sentence. The teacher begins by getting the children to talk about the picture pinned up in front of them. Then the teacher tells the children that they are going to learn to read, and pins up flash cards below the picture. The teacher points, moving their hand from left-to-right, from word to word, and reads, 'I see a girl'. Then another flash card is produced bearing one word - 'boy'. The teacher encourages the children to compare the words on the flash cards and the words on the picture. Children take turns to shuffle the four word cards and then arrange them in the same order as the ones on the picture.

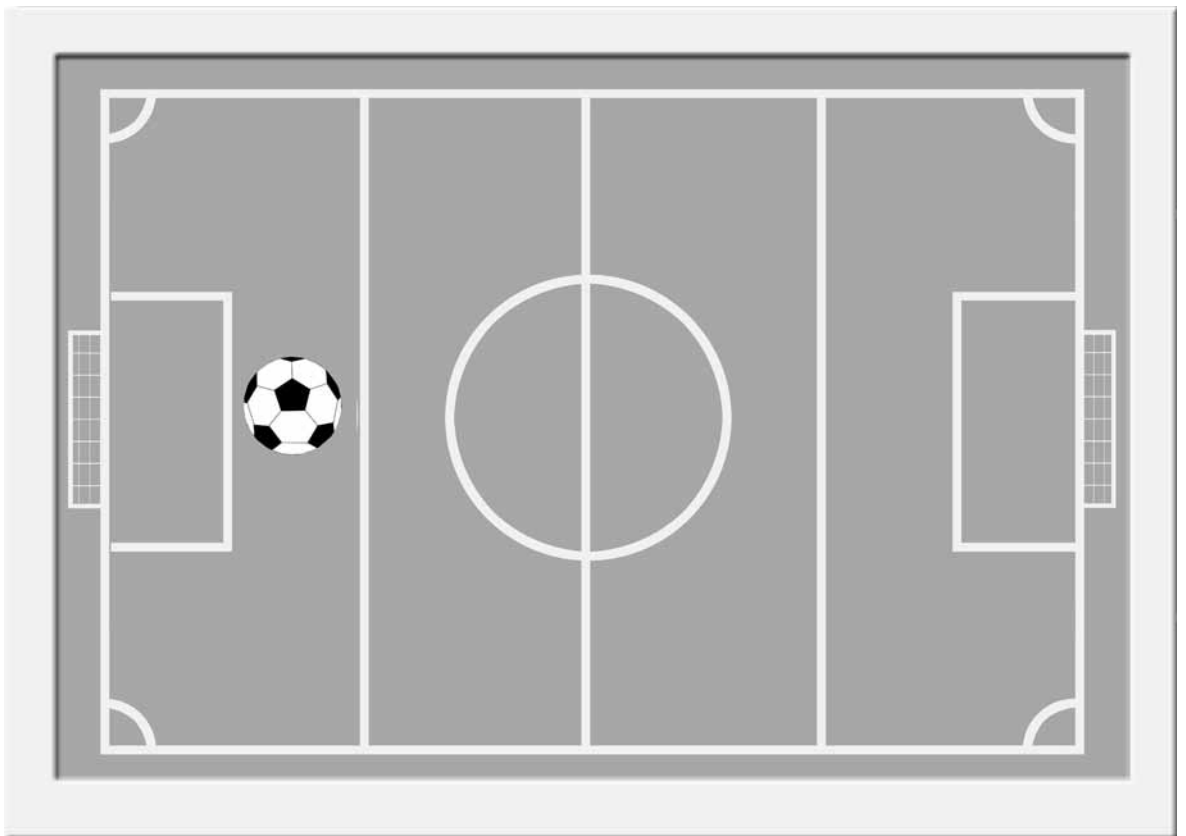
## Reading games and flash cards

As children progress, key words flash cards can be used in enjoyable reading games such as Lotto, with 12 key words written on cards, and where children are encouraged to place their flash cards over the correct words. Another popular game is to place words round an arrow, which spins, and children are asked to read the word where the arrow stops spinning. A correct answer gets a token and gentle team competition adds fun to learning. Teachers regularly use other group games using flash cards of key words. For instance, a football game where a correctly read word gives the player the chance to move the football nearer the goal, or a fishing game where a magnet on a string hooks a fish upon which is a paper clip, upon which is a key word to be read.

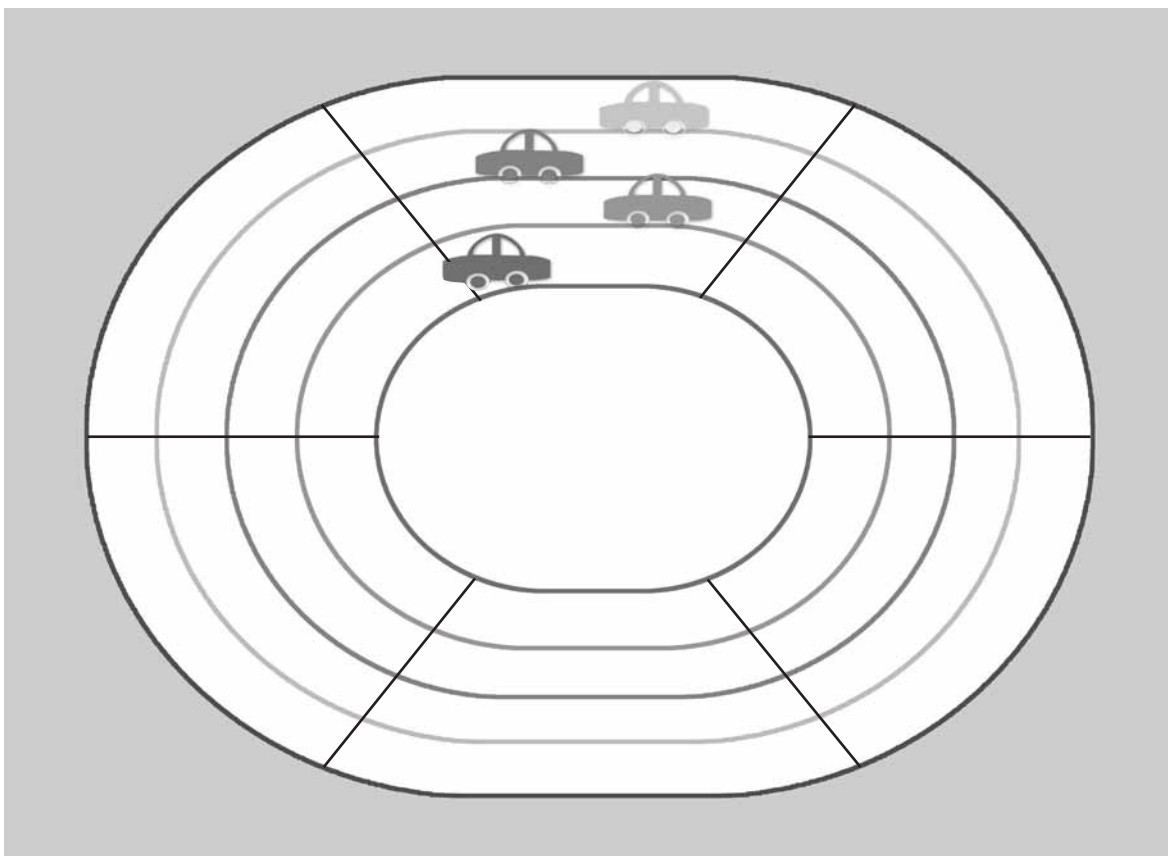
**Spinner Game** - The child or team receive one point each time they read or spell a word correctly.



**Football Game** - Each time a child spells or reads a word correctly, the football should be moved one step closer to the child's or team's goal.



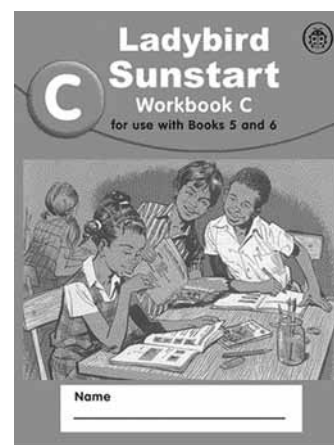
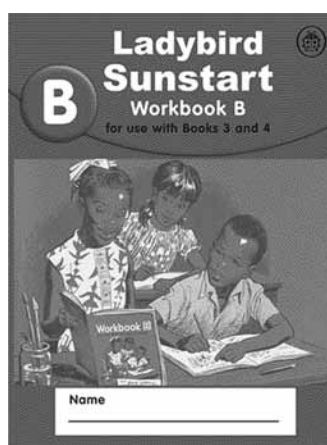
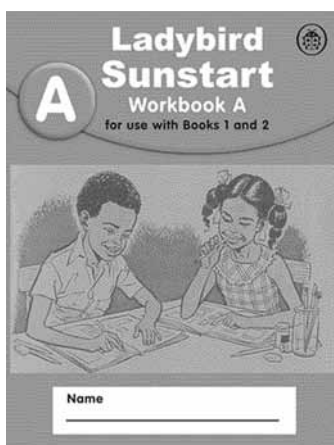
**Racing Game** - The child or team can move their car forward each time they read or spell a word correctly.



There is a wide range of ability in most classes, and at any given time some children are likely to be ahead of others in reading ability. In learning to read, well-organised small group work can play an effective part with most large classes. The members of the group (probably about four to eight in number) are chosen according to their level of reading skill, and for their ability to get on together. They each have, or share, a copy of the same reading book, and take turns in reading aloud to each other. The teacher moves from group to group, listening, checking, and giving some of their time to individuals. Sometimes a teacher needs to appoint a group leader, who may have a higher reading age than the others in the group. Here again, volunteer parents or grandparents are very useful in assisting in group work.



## The link with the workbooks



### **The workbooks are an essential part of the Sunstart Reading Scheme as:**

- Children find this kind of exercise enjoyable, which helps them develop a good attitude towards learning
- Valuable repetition is given in the workbook to the words in the parallel reading book
- Including writing practise helps greatly when a child is learning to read, especially if the same vocabulary is used
- Phonics are taught in the latter part of each workbook and knowledge of the sounds is an important aid in tackling new words
- Many of the exercises assist in diagnosing difficulties some learners experience
- Some of the test pages can form a useful section of the child's progress record

An example page from each of the Sunstart Workbooks can be found at the back of this pack.

## The use of phonics

### **Blending in the phonic method**

Most reading schemes use 'sentence', 'look say' or 'whole word' methods in their first stages. With these, the child soon becomes confident in his growing ability to learn to read, if the words are introduced gradually, with interest and adequate repetition. Then, when more than 100 words are known by these 'whole' approaches, the phonic method is used, to give an additional means of getting to know new words.

The phonic method is used in the teaching of reading because with 'regular' words, the sounds of letters (not their names) when uttered rapidly produce the words. English is not a purely phonetic language, so care must be when introducing this method to the learner.

### **Applying the phonic method**

The teaching of phonics in the Ladybird Sunstart Reading Scheme is supported in Workbooks A, B and C.

### **Successful phonic teaching ensures that:**

- Phonic teaching is used after an enjoyable and successful start to reading has been made by sentence and whole word methods
- Phonic instruction is given initially on words already known to the learner
- Maximum pictorial aid is provided
- A variety of interesting approaches is employed which gives disguised repetition
- Writing is used to assist retention of the sounds taught
- The sounds are applied in a meaningful reading situation directly they are learned

### **Three books at once**

There is common agreement that there should be at least three books in the life of a child who is learning to read.

The first is the one the teacher reads to the class or group. Besides giving the child pleasure and interest and encouraging him to listen carefully, story reading helps to develop a love of books and a desirable attitude towards reading. This book, carefully chosen by the teacher, gives the child his first glimpse of the wonderful world of literature awaiting him once he has achieved reading skill. Discussion often follows a reading lesson of this kind, and during this the teacher guides the child towards critical thinking.

The second book is the one in the chosen reading scheme. It is important that this is matched to the level of ability of the child, and that he should enjoy using it. Linked to this there can be the workbook, reading games and apparatus of various kinds, employing in the main the vocabulary of the reading book.

The third book should be the child's free choice, selected from the attractively set out book corner or library. Here a wide variety of colourful and interesting books are displayed so that the front cover of each is seen. Some of the appeal is lost for young children if books are stacked so that only the spines are shown. Plenty of space should be allocated to this book display and some kind of grading is necessary. One section should show picture books without words, or with very few words, to cater for the beginner.



## Links between reading and writing

William Murray considered that reading; writing and spelling should proceed as one functional learning whole. Writing is taught for its own sake and also helps greatly when the child is learning to read, if the same vocabulary is used. Workbooks A, B and C of the Sunstart Reading Scheme teach the learner to write, using the parallel vocabulary of the reading scheme. In the very first stage, every possible assistance needs to be given to the learner. The maximum amount of pictorial aid is provided, and the large print in the books is similar to the rounded script the teacher uses.

As the child progresses, he could also be supplied with a 'free' exercise book in which to write, draw, or trace whatever he likes. With a child who finds reading difficult, this often helps to overcome inhibitions caused through previous failures.

Later, writing to important people, television and sports personalities and pen friends can expand the usual letter and note writing to his friends. Purposeful writing generally awakens interest and often stimulates enthusiasm.

Further reading and writing exercises are provided in the Ladybird Keyword Reading Scheme Activity Books and the Picture Dictionary, which is useful when pupils are learning to write. There are many additional books available in the sister schemes of Sunstart, which are the Ladybird Key Words Reading Scheme and Read with me.



## The formation of letters

Many teachers believe that handwriting should be in a print-script, as near as possible to the type-face of the child's first reading books, so that he will have fewer characters to learn. The guide below shows the formation of the letters.



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LADYBIRD BOOKS LTD., 80 STRAND, LONDON, ENGLAND, WC2R 0RL

Complete the sentences.



Ken is in the.....  
(ball, boat, beach)



Joy eats some.....  
(find, for, fish)



He likes to.....  
(what, with, write)

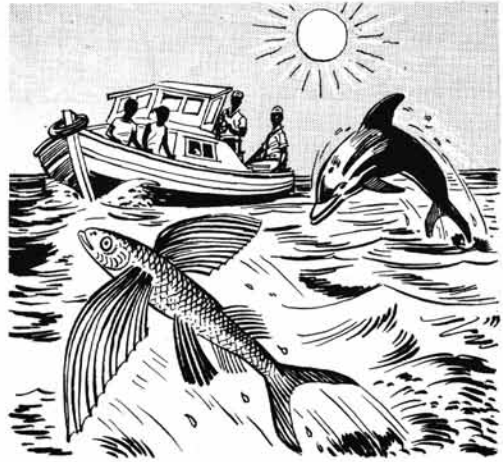


The men pull the.....  
(no, nets, sand)

An example of a page from the Sunstart Workbook B

Some more words from Book 4.





the sun    some water    a flying fish    a dolphin  
a cat    some wings    two butterflies    some flowers  
one boat    some fins    a humming bird    a caterpillar



1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....

An example of a page from the Sunstart Workbook C

a  apple	b  _all	c  _at	d  _og	e  _gg
f  _ish	g  _irl	h  _at	i  _nsects	j  _ar
k  _ite	l  _eg	m  _an	n  _et	o  _range
p  _ig	qu  __een	r  _aft	s  _un	t  _ree
u  _p	v  _an	w  _oman	x  bo_	z  _oo
			y  _ear	

You know the sounds of **a, b, m, t**, from Workbook A, and **c, d, e, g, h, i, o, p, s**, from Workbook B.

The workbooks can be ordered from your Ladybird representative. They are shown here at smaller than actual size of A4.

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