

English Made Easy: Foundation Book 2

Notes for parents

This book is designed to help your child develop the visual recognition skills that are needed before learning to read. The matching, sorting and sequencing activities in the first part of the book encourage your child to look closely at the “squiggles” or letters on the page; to look for similarities and differences in the shape and positioning of letters; and ultimately to understand that print carries a meaning and relates to the words that we speak. The featured activities will encourage your child to make the discovery that reading is a fun and interesting skill to learn.

The second part of the book is designed to help your child develop careful listening and early reading skills. These activities encourage your child to match and sort rhyming pictures, to identify word patterns; and to practise writing words with the same endings. Hearing and identifying rhyming words and making rhyming pairs are very important steps towards learning to read, and recent research shows that children with rhyming skills find it much easier to learn to read, write and spell in later years. Rhyming demands a lot of practice in listening carefully to how words sound, so enjoy spending time with your child thinking up silly rhymes together.

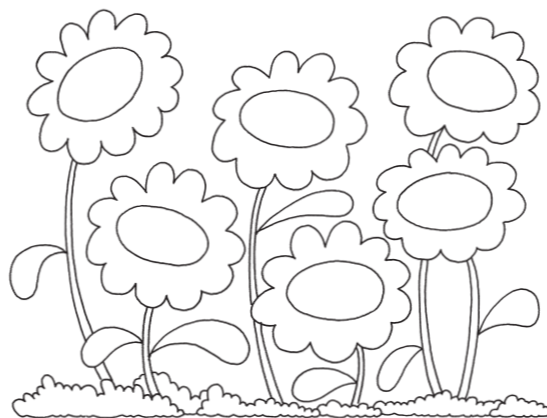
Content

By working through this book, your child will learn:

- to look closely at objects, shapes, letters and words;
- to match simple objects and shapes;
- to identify similarities and differences;
- to recognise finer details of more complex shapes;
- to sort objects and shapes by the direction they face;
- to match letters and words;
- to count and identify words in a sentence;
- to sort pictures into a story sequence;
- to predict story outcomes;
- to read a picture story;
- to develop early reading skills.

In the second part of this book, your child will learn:

- to develop more refined listening skills;
- to identify similar sounds;
- to recognise word families and different word endings;
- to broaden his or her vocabulary;
- to develop an awareness of simple spelling;
- to develop eye-and-hand coordination;
- to practise handwriting skills;
- to write from left to right on the page;
- to write lower-case letters in the correct way.



How to help your child with reading

By introducing a wide range of reading materials, you will be helping your child to become a fluent reader who reads for enjoyment and purpose. Read to your child frequently, and always carry a book with you to while away those difficult waiting times. If a book isn't readily available, tell stories. Traditional stories or made-up tales of your own will all help to develop your child's awareness of the key elements of a story, such as the main character, the sequence of events and the beginning and end. He or she will soon recognise the words *Once upon a time* as something special!

Encourage your child to "read" the pictures in books. Talk about what he or she can see, what is happening in the illustrations and what your child thinks will happen next. Many books have repeated words or phrases, so emphasise these when you are reading aloud. Encourage your child to say the words with you, and point to the print on the page as you read.

When you are out and about with your child, encourage him or her to look for the printed word in the environment, especially on signs and notices that you see regularly, such as road names and shop signs.

How to help your child with rhyming

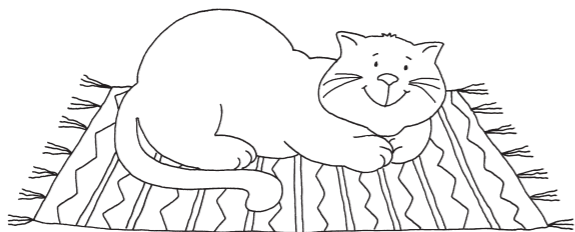
By singing and saying nursery rhymes with your child from a young age, you have been quite naturally introducing him or her to the enjoyment of rhyming words. Rhymes also have rhythm, as do many traditional stories, and this early exposure to rhythm and rhyme is very helpful to young children who are learning to read.

When choosing stories to read to your child, select those that have a strong rhythm or those that feature repeated phrases. For example, *The Little Red Hen* contains the phrases: "Not I," said the cat, "Not I," said the dog and "Not I," said the pig. Stories such as these are often fun to read aloud and will encourage your child to participate in storytelling.

When teaching rhymes and making up silly rhyming words with your child, it is important to be accurate at all times. For example, *ged*, *med* and *ked* are not real words, but they do rhyme. The words *nine* and *time* may sound very similar, but they do not rhyme.

Writing materials

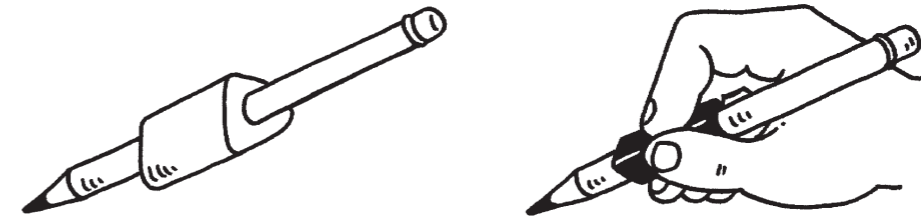
Your child should have a pencil that is sharpened, but not too pointed. A soft lead pencil (2B) is preferable for the writing activities. If the pencil is too hard, your child's writing may be difficult to see on the page, which could lead to frustration.



As each activity involves colouring pictures, your child will need a range of colouring pencils or felt-tip pens – not the type that bleed through paper, as they will spoil subsequent pages. Avoid crayons, as these are likely to be too thick for accurately colouring the pictures, which could lead your child to become frustrated with his or her achievements.

Pencil grip

It is important to encourage your child to hold a pencil correctly. Children should pick up the pencil in their dominant hand and hold it between their thumb and first finger. The second finger goes beneath the pencil to support it. Make sure that the pencil is not



gripped too tightly and not held too close to the tip. It should rest at an angle of 45 degrees between the first finger and the thumb. If your child has problems, it can help if you make a grip for the pencil using some plasticine. Mould a small piece into a three-sided pyramid, and push the pencil through the middle – this will encourage your child to place his or her fingers correctly.

Getting the most from the activities

Always work through the book in page order. The contents have been carefully planned to take your child through a progression of early reading skills. If you miss a stage, you will be jumping ahead to a more difficult concept or activity. If your child is struggling with the activities, don't worry. He or she may not be ready for this book or may only be able to do the first few activities. If this happens, leave this book for a while, but continue to share and talk about books with your child. Later on, return to this book, recapping any pages he or she may have already completed.

If your child has enjoyed a particular activity or is having some difficulty with it, try doing some additional practice on scrap paper. You may find it helpful to have some extra paper to hand before you start your activity sessions.

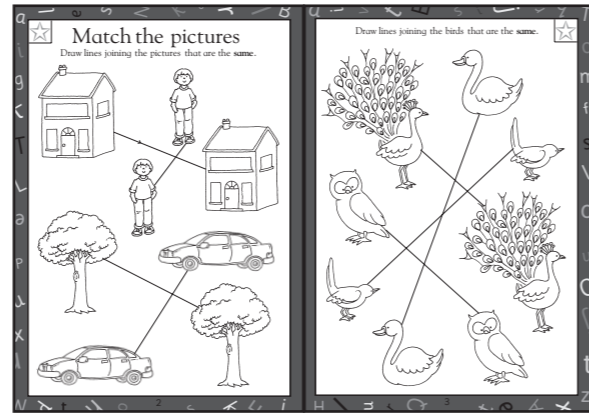
Working through the activities in this book should be an enjoyable shared experience for both you and your child, so choose a moment when you have time to concentrate and your child is not too tired or hungry. Read the instructions aloud, making sure that your child understands what he or she is expected to do for each activity.

Don't spend too long on each activity session – it's better to keep it short and fun, and to let your child get a feel for the reading skills involved. Celebrate your child's success, and build his or her confidence by giving plenty of praise and encouragement along the way. Have fun!

Page-by-page notes

Pages 2 and 3 – Match the pictures

Ask your child to match the pictures that are the same and to draw a line connecting each pair. Your child will need to look closely at the page of birds to differentiate between them and match up the pairs correctly. Learning to identify similarities is one of the most important early reading skills. Practise this developing skill at home with everyday objects or with toys when your child is playing.



Pages 4 and 5 – Odd one out

These activities encourage your child to identify similarities and differences between objects. By first looking at the picture on the left-hand side of the page and then moving his or her eyes across to the right, your child is practising the left-to-right movement needed when reading and writing.

Pages 6 and 7 – Match the shapes and Odd one out

The differences between the shapes on these pages are more subtle than on previous pages. Your child will need to look carefully to match pairs or to recognise the odd shape out. Both these activities reinforce the left-to-right reading movement.

Pages 8 and 9 – Match the shapes and Odd one out

On these two pages, again encourage your child to match and find differences between the shapes and patterns. This time, the shapes and patterns are even more complex. These activities reinforce left-to-right reading.

Pages 10 and 11 – Matching directions

Your child will need to be able to differentiate between the different directions that letters face, as some are mirror images of others. For example, the letters *b* and *d* are mirror images of each other, and *u* and *n* are the inverse of each other. The activities on these pages introduce familiar objects pointing in different directions. Ask your child to identify and draw a ring around the object that is pointing the same way as the first object on the left.

Pages 12 and 13 – Matching directions

These activities progress from the previous pages by using more complex and abstract shapes. As before, encourage your child to find the shape pointing the same way as the first one shown on the left. If your child finds this task difficult, demonstrate and practise the activity with two toys, such as cars or dolls. Keep one car in one position and keep rotating a second car into different positions. Encourage your child to say “stop” when the two cars are in the same position.

Pages 14, 15, 16 and 17 – Match the letters

These activities introduce letters, helping your child start to recognise their different shapes. Encourage your child to draw lines matching the letters on the balloons to those on the children, and do the same with the hats and teddy bears, bees and flowers, and leaves and trees. He or she can enjoy colouring the pictures, too.

The sounds that the letters represent are not introduced in this book. If your child recognises the shapes as letters, then do name them, as your child will later need to learn both the name and the sound of each letter of the alphabet.

Pages 18 and 19 – Find the letters

Ask your child to identify and draw a ring around the three letters that make up the simple illustrated words: *bin*, *cup*, *dog* and *hat*. This activity introduces the idea that letter shapes can be joined with others to make words. Talk about this concept with your child if you think he or she is ready.

Pages 20 and 21 – Find the words

The task on these pages is to distinguish between words and pictures. The child identifies each word and draws a ring around it. Ask your child what he or she thinks the words say. This activity reinforces letter-to-word-to-speech associations and encourages your child to “read” the words with their picture definitions.

Pages 22 and 23 – Match the words

Here your child looks closely at words and matches up identical words by either drawing a line to link the pairs or by circling the matching words. These activities also encourage a left-to-right reading movement.

Pages 24 and 25 – Sentences

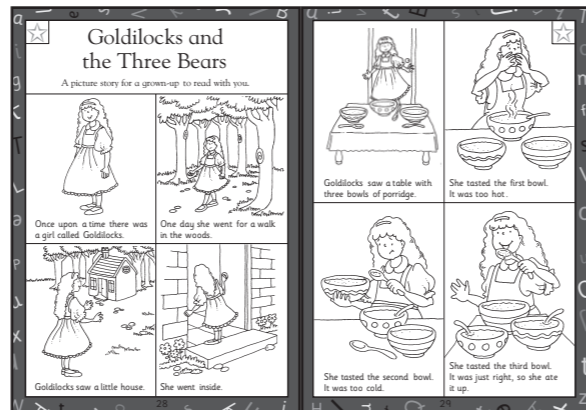
These pages introduce simple sentences – several words put together that make sense. Talk about the pictures, and then read the sentence below each picture together. For this activity, your child counts the words in each sentence and one of you writes the number of words in the box.

Pages 26 and 27 – Reading stories

On page 26, ask your child to look at and talk about each picture on the left and then to draw a line linking it with the picture on the right that shows what happens next. On page 27, the task is to find the missing picture that ends each of the three-picture stories about a tree. Let your child tell each story as he or she creates it. You could introduce traditional story conventions, such as “Once upon a time”. Ask prompting questions, such as, “Why did the man chop down the tree?” to encourage your child to elaborate on each story. This activity will help him or her make an accurate guess at difficult or new words when reading in the future.

Pages 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32 – Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and Finish the story
 First, let your child have fun colouring the pictures in this story, which is presented like a comic strip with text captions underneath. Your child is not expected to read all the words, but encourage him or her to talk about each picture and to predict what will happen next in the story sequence. Next, read the story together, pointing to the words on the page as you do so. Pause before the end of a sentence to encourage your child to complete the words. For instance, you could say, “One day she went for a walk in the ...”. If your child says a different word, such as *forest* or *countryside* rather than *woods*, don’t say that the word is wrong. Talk about the picture again, and agree that all these words make sense, but this story uses the word *woods*.

This story doesn’t have an ending, so encourage your child to use his or her imagination to make up the ending of the story. He or she could draw a picture of the imagined ending. Together, you could write your own ending to the story. You could try this with other stories, too. It’s fun, creative and educational!



Page 34 – Find the rhyme

This activity is based on the vowel *a* and features words in the *at* word family. For each exercise, say together the names of all the pictures in that row. Then ask your child to name the first picture on the left of the page again and to draw a ring around the picture that rhymes with it. The two rhyming words at the bottom of the page have been selected for your child to copy. When writing rounded letters, make sure that your child always starts at the top and draws in an anticlockwise direction.

Page 35 – Match the rhymes

This activity is based on the vowel *a* and features words in the *an* word family. First say together the names of all the pictures. Next, your child has to find all the pictures that rhyme with the one in the centre of the page. If a picture rhymes, draw a line to link it up. Once again, your child can copy the rhyming words at the bottom of the page. If your child is ready, point out that the letter endings are the same. Talk about the sound that this pair of letters makes, and explain that new words are made when a different letter sound is added at the start of a word.

Page 36 – Odd one out

This activity is based on the vowel *a* and features examples of several word families. The task on this page is to identify the picture that does not rhyme with the first picture on the left of the page. Say together the names of all the pictures. Encourage your child to listen and hear the different sounds. Handwriting practice using rhymes from the *all* word family is provided at the bottom of the page.

Page 37 – Join the rhymes

This activity is based on the vowel *a* and also contains examples of several word families. Say together the names of all the pictures. Ask your child to match the pictures on the left with those that rhyme on the right. Encourage your child to draw each linking line from the left to the right-hand side of the page. This will help to reinforce the correct writing movement.

Pages 38 and 39 – Find the rhyme and Match the rhymes

These activities are based on the vowel *e* and feature words in the *en* and *ee* word families. Say together the names of the pictures. On page 38, ask your child to draw a ring around the picture in each row that rhymes with the first one on the left. On the next page, ask your child to find all the pictures that rhyme with the one in the centre of the page and to draw linking lines. Handwriting practice is provided at the bottom of both pages.

Pages 40 and 41 – Odd ones out and Join the rhymes

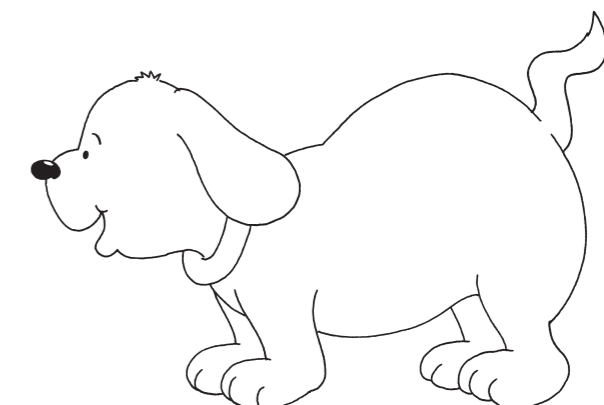
These activities are based on the vowel *e* and feature examples of several word families. On page 40, say together the name of each picture aloud and encourage your child to listen to and hear the different sounds. Then ask him or her to circle the pictures that do not rhyme with the first picture on the left. Handwriting practice using rhymes from the *ell* word family is provided at the bottom of the page. On page 41, ask your child to match the pictures on the left with those that rhyme on the right. Encourage him or her to draw linking lines from left to right.

Pages 42 and 43 – Find the rhyme and Match the rhymes

These activities are based on the vowel *i* and feature examples of several word families. Your child has to draw a ring around the picture in each row that rhymes with the first one on the left. On the next page, your child has to find all the pictures that rhyme with the one in the centre of the page and draw linking lines. Handwriting practice is provided at the bottom of both pages.

Pages 44 and 45 – Odd one out and Join the rhymes

These activities are based on the vowel *i* and feature examples of several word families. Your child has to circle the picture that does not rhyme with the first picture on the left of the page. Handwriting practice is provided for two words that rhyme but do not have the same spelling (*pie* and *cry*). Talk about this, emphasising that some words still sound the same even though they don’t look the same. On page 45, your child has to match the pictures on the left with those that rhyme on the right by drawing linking lines.



Pages 46 and 47 – Odd ones out and Match the rhymes

These activities are based on the vowel *o* and feature examples of several word families. The task is to identify the pictures in each row that do not rhyme with the first picture on the left of the page. There is handwriting practice using rhymes from the *oon* word family. On page 47, ask your child to find the pictures that rhyme with the one in the centre of the page and to draw linking lines. There is handwriting practice for two words that rhyme but do not have the same spelling (*fox* and *socks*).

Pages 48 and 49 – Odd one out and Join the rhymes

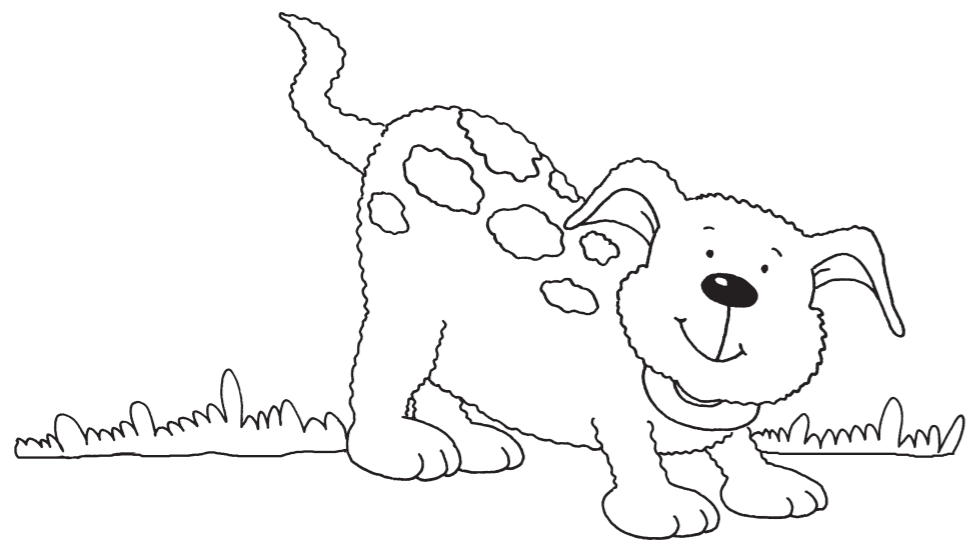
These activities are also based mainly on the vowel *o*. Ask your child to circle the picture that does not rhyme with the first picture on the left of the page. There is handwriting practice for two words that rhyme but do not have the same spelling (*rose* and *toes*). On page 49, your child needs to match the pictures on the left with those that rhyme on the right by drawing linking lines.

Pages 50 and 51 – Find the rhyme and Match the rhymes

These activities are based on the vowel *u* and feature examples of several word families. On page 50, ask your child to circle the picture in each row that rhymes with the first picture on the left. On page 51, ask your child to find all the pictures that rhyme with the picture in the centre and to draw linking lines. Handwriting practice is provided at the bottom of both pages.

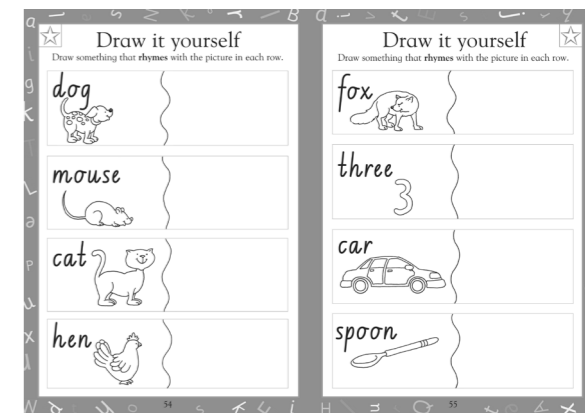
Pages 52 and 53 – Odd one out and Join the rhymes

These activities are based mainly on the vowel *u* and feature examples of several word families. On page 52, ask your child to circle the picture in each row that does not rhyme with the first picture on the left. On page 53, help your child match the pictures on the left with those that rhyme on the right by drawing linking lines.



Pages 54 and 55 – Draw it yourself

These activities introduce written words with the picture illustrations. Ask your child to draw his or her own picture of something that rhymes with each word. If your child finds it difficult to think of rhyming words, have fun making up words, however silly, until your child discovers a rhyme that can be illustrated. Alternatively, look back at earlier pages to refresh your child's memory.



Pages 56 and 57 – Find the pictures

These activities have hidden pictures. Say together all the words aloud. Your child has to find all the words in a particular word family and colour them either red, blue, yellow or green to reveal the mystery picture. Choose other colours to finish the rest of the pictures.

Pages 58, 59, 60 and 61 – Missing letters

For the activities on these four pages, ask your child to say the first word ending aloud and then add the missing letter to the word ending in the box on the left. Next, your child can either find and copy the rhyming picture from around the border of the page, or think up another rhyming word to use instead. The alphabet is printed at the bottom of the page to remind your child of the different letter shapes.

Pages 62 and 63 – A nursery rhyme and More nursery rhymes

These nursery rhymes have missing words for your child to fill in. Say together the rhymes and the words in the boxes. Your child should listen to the sounds of the words and look at the word endings to find the word that completes each rhyme. As an extra clue, lines are used to indicate the number of letters in each missing word.

Page 64 – Word puzzle

Help your child find the pairs of rhyming words at the bottom of the page. Your child should draw a line linking the rhyming words and then find each word, one by one, among the letters in the word square. Encourage your child to draw a ring around each word as it is found. If this activity is too difficult for your child at a first attempt, put it to one side and return to it later. In the meantime, have fun exploring rhymes.

