

Elementary Reading Programs

The Elementary DI reading program consists of six programs. Reading Mastery I and II reach children to read. Reading Mastery III and IV teach children to learn history, geography and science from text. Reading Mastery V and VI teach children to analyze Literature.

Some students are in **Fast Cycle** or **Horizons** reading programs. These are the same as the Reading Mastery programs, except that they move twice as fast. Students in Fast Cycle I complete all the material in Reading Mastery I in about half a year. Similarly, Fast Cycle II and Horizons III and IV cover all of the material in Reading Mastery II, III and IV, in about half the number of lessons. To understand what your child is learning in these programs, you will need to look at the description for the corresponding Reading Mastery program and double the lesson number for your child's group. For example, if your child is in Fast Cycle II, Lesson 30, you should look at Reading Mastery II, Lesson 60, to get an idea of what is being taught.

“What did you learn in school today?” Information for Parents

Reading Mastery I
Using Sounds to Build Words

This program teaches children to read by sounding out words. All materials use a special typeface which helps prevent students from confusing similar letters like d and b. The words in an ordinary book may look funny to them, especially if they don't read at home very often. This means that some children may not read as well at home as they do in school. But don't let that stop you from having your child read at home, if she wants to — children will still benefit from regular reading outside of school, when they enjoy it. By the end of RM II, they will be used to books written in regular type.

We teach sounds before we teach letters of the alphabet. If your kindergartner can read *fan* but forgets that the first letter is called *f*, that's OK. He'll learn the letter names later on.

Almost every day, your child completes a “take home,” a worksheet that reinforces the day's lesson. (The work is done in class, not at home. It's called a take home because students take them home to show you their work.) Every take home includes a “story,” which may be anything from two words to a few sentences. Teachers ask questions about the story to make sure students understand what they read. When your child brings you a take home, you can ask him to read the story out loud.

Lessons 1 - 55

Students learn to recognize letter sounds like *s*, *d* and *a* (as in *rat*). At the same time, they are learning to “say it fast,” putting together words and sounds. Soon, children can use these skills to sound out words like *at*, *see* and *sad*. The stories in their take-homes are very short. Here's one from Lesson 53: *the fat rat*.

Lessons 56 - 108

Students learn harder sounds and read longer sentences. They learn to sound out words silently and then read them out loud. At lesson 91, they begin reading from a storybook, which is **very** exciting for them. Be sure to ask your child about it! By now, they know to stop when they see a period or question mark.

Lessons 109 - 160

As their skills develop, children read longer stories — more than 150 words long, by the end of RM I. They can identify the title of a story. They know some irregular words (words they can't sound out), like *said*. They can read and answer written questions about the stories, and they play a game in which they read and follow instructions like, *If the teacher says “go,” stand up*.

Everything that children read is written in lowercase letters. Capital letters are not used in RM I, because we don't want to confuse children with more than one symbol for each sound. *A* and *a* may look like different letters to a beginning reader.