



‘Unlocking the Code’

“If a child memorises ten words, the child can read only ten words, but if a child learns the sounds of ten letters, the child will be able to read...over 25,000 words.”

~Dr. Martin Kozloff



Why the change?

A lot has changed in 30 years!

- Since the last curriculum reforms, there has been a huge amount of research into how children learn to read.
- The way children interact with language has and continues to change.
- The increased availability and use of technology plays a significant factor in the way children learn.
- Our brains are not built for learning to read sounds but to hear them. The ability to read and write sounds comes from our ability to hear them.
- The overwhelming majority of research shows that the use of a synthetic approach to the teaching of phonics is the best approach.

Scarborough's Reading Rope

What does it take to be a skilled reader?

Scarborough's Reading Rope model can help us better understand.

Dr. Hollis Scarborough invented the concept of the Reading Rope in the early 1990s. She used it to help parents understand the various skills their children needed to master to become proficient readers.

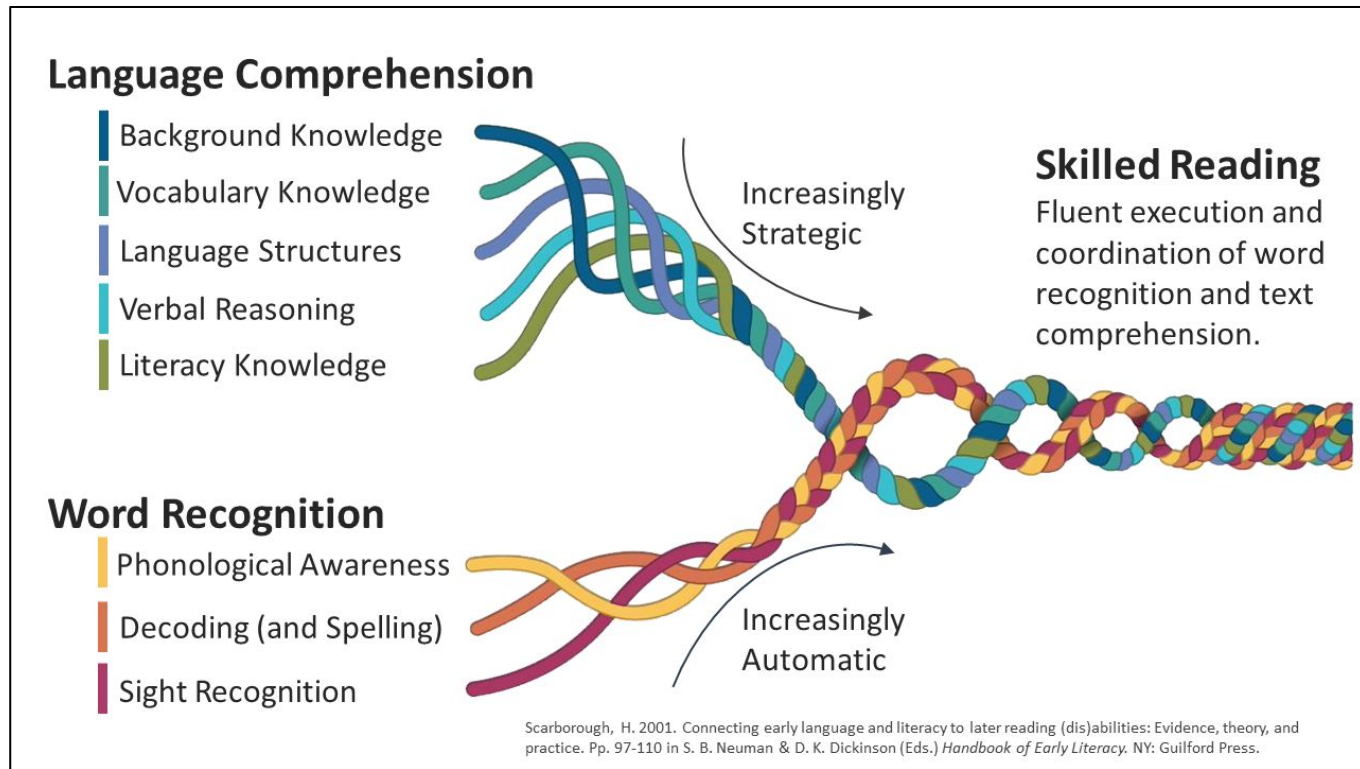
Scarborough's Reading Rope contains two main sections: Word Recognition and Language Comprehension. Woven together, these strands become the rope that represents complete skilled reading. All the components are interconnected and interdependent. If just one strand is weak, it affects the rope (and the reader) as a whole.

Lower section - focuses on **word recognition skills**. These are the skills we tend to think of most when we talk about teaching kids how to read.

Upper strands - are key in creating strong readers.

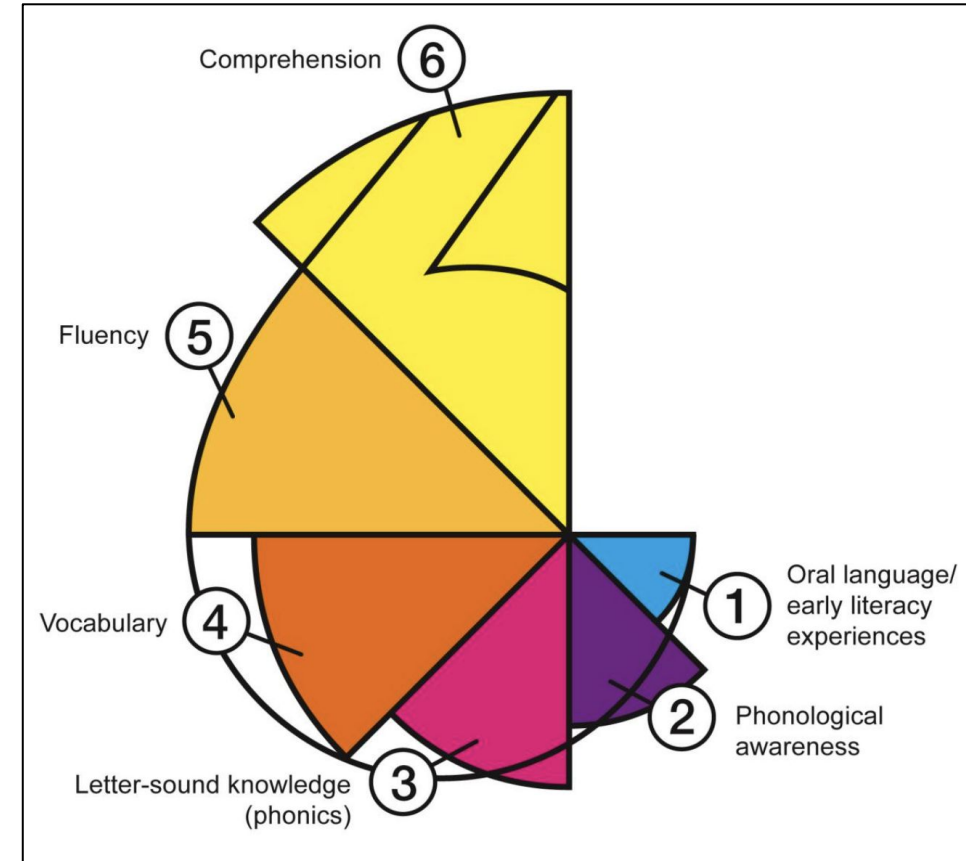
Scarborough's Reading Rope is useful because:

- helps teachers identify the **weaker strands** for a struggling reader
- helps teachers make **adjustments** to help that student succeed.
- it demonstrates that while students are learning to decode (lower section), we can't then ask them to answer questions about what they have just read. This requires just too much cognitive load.



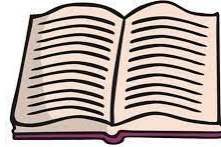
The Big Six Pyramid - a framework for understanding the reading process.

- 1. Oral language development** – This provides the foundation for learning to read. About 98% of teaching and learning is mediated by language. Children who are surrounded by rich and increasingly complex conversations, have an overwhelming advantage in vocabulary development, in understanding the structures of language, and in tuning into the sounds of the English language.
- 2. Phonological awareness** - This is the ability to focus on the sounds of speech as opposed to its meaning. If children cannot hear the separate sounds in words, they cannot relate those sounds to letters – an enormous stumbling block in learning to read and spell
- 3. Letter-sound knowledge (phonics) and word knowledge** - Once children understand that words can be broken up into a series of sounds, they need to learn the relationship between those sounds and letters – the “alphabetic code”. At the heart of reading is an understanding of the predictable relationship between sounds and the letters that represent them (graphemes).
- 4. Vocabulary** - A key component of reading for meaning. If children know the meaning of a word, they are far more likely to be able to read it and make sense of it within a sentence.
- 5. Fluency** - The ability to read connected text rapidly, effortlessly and automatically, with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading. Fluency reflects a pivotal point in reading development – that point where all the component skills of learning to read are in place and occurring without overt attention, so that cognitive energy can be focussed on determining the **meaning**.
- 6. Comprehension** - The ultimate goal of reading is, of course, comprehension, and it rightly takes its place at the pinnacle of the Big Six pyramid. Comprehension requires engagement with the text at a deep level.



Reading is without question a highly complex cognitive process. Children need to be explicitly taught each element of the Big Six.

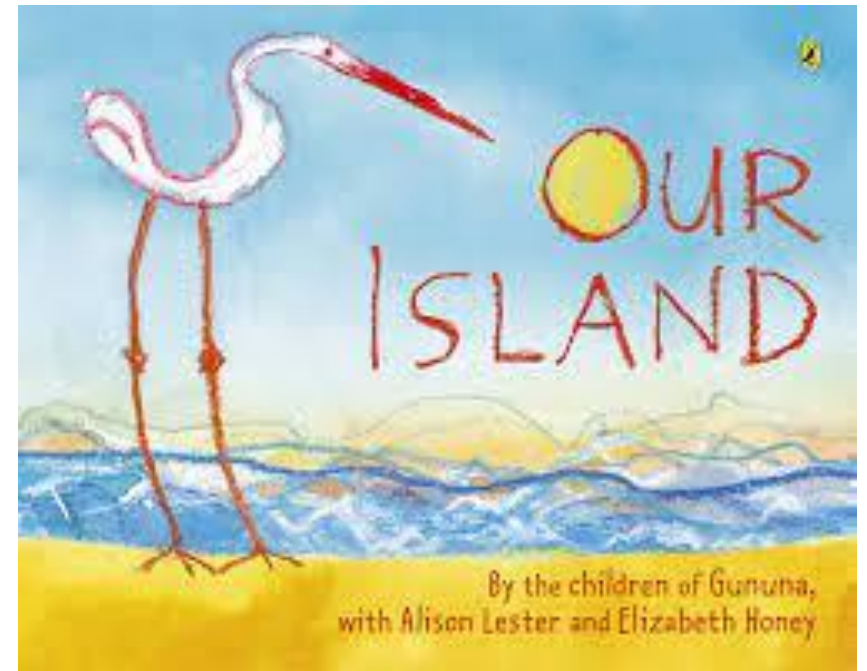
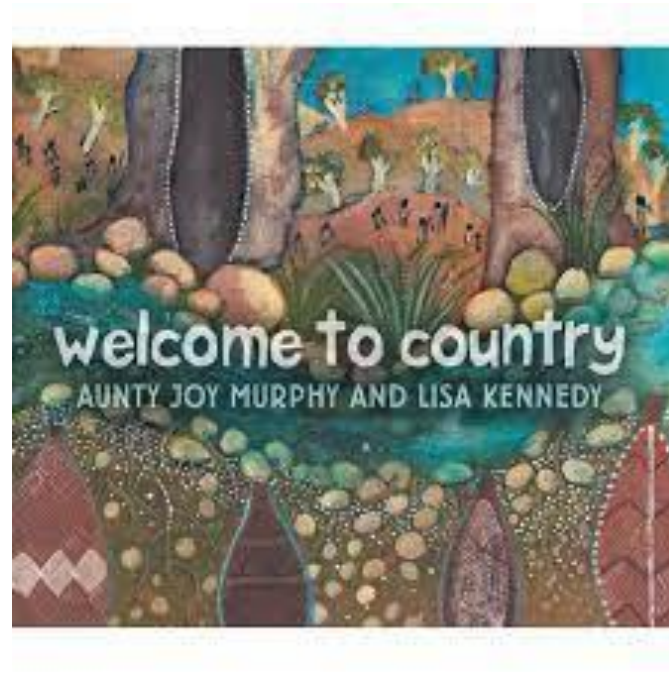
So what texts are we using in our classrooms and for what purpose?



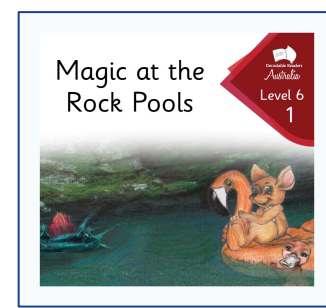
- **Decodable readers** - Gives students the opportunity to focus on practising taught letter-sound relationships and blending through words (teaching the code)
- **Mentor texts / Quality texts** - Support cross curriculum priorities, model the language features/text structures/themes that are the focus of the cycle of learning and allow the teacher to model effective reading strategies and think alouds, facilitate rich discussion
- **Multimodal texts** - Gives students the opportunity to engage with a variety of print, digital, written and spoken texts

Mentor Texts

Comprehension, vocabulary, responding to author's purpose etc are all important parts of literacy. These are taught through the use of mentor texts. Mentor texts are quality literature which invite students to think deeply about texts and connect their ideas about their world with ideas in the text.



Decodable texts



What is their purpose?

Decodables are used for a very specific learning purpose for a short period of time. We use them to focus on the strategy of **blending through words** and **practising taught letter- sound relationships** (teaching the code).

Why are they so effective?

A large percentage of the text will be able to be decoded independently by the student. They also contain high frequency words and give students the chance to practise reading those words that they are also learning.

Decodable texts

Decodables Australia

What are the sequence of sounds introduced in your readers?

Our sequence of sounds are as follows:

Level 1 – s, a, t, p, i, n, nn

Level 2 – m, d, g (goat), o, c (cat), k, ck, e, u, r, ss

Level 3 – b, h, f, l, j, v, w, x, y, z, ll, ff, zz

Level 4 – sh, ch, th (them), th (thin), qu, ng, wh, ph, g (gem), c (city), gg, bb, tt, rr, pp, dd, mm

Level 5 – ay, ai, ee, ea, igh, ie, ow, oa, ew, ue

Level 6 – oi, oy, oo, oo, ou, ow, er, ir, ur, ar, or

Level 7 – a_e, e_e, l_e, o_e, u_e, a (baby), e (we), y (funny), i (find), y (sky), o (go)

Level 8 – air, are, ear, eer, ore, aw, ou, ew, dge, tch

Decodable texts



Level 1 Book 1: Nat

Words: 12 Sounds: s, a, t, p, i, n

All children need to be screened for, and demonstrate competency in, their phonemic awareness ability prior to using decodable readers. A simple, yet effective oral screener has been provided with the Level 1 Decodable Reader series. Use this to determine each child's readiness for Level 1 Decodable Readers.

This book introduces the names of the characters in the Level 1 Decodable Reader series. Capital letters, used for names, may not be familiar to beginner readers. Use this pre-reading activity to show how the letters s, a, t, p, i, n are represented as capitals.

Point and say the sound: s a t p i n

Point and say the sound: S A T P I N

Find the capital letter to match the lower case letter:

s a t p i n

N T I S P A

Decodable texts

Did you understand what you read?

1. What type of animal is Nat?
2. Find the picture of Stan. How is Stan able to stay up in the tree?
3. Find the picture of Nip. How do you think he is feeling?

Let's learn a new word:

If you are cheerful, you are happy.

Find a character in the story who looks cheerful.

cheerful

Which sentence is correct?

The cheerful lady had lost her dog.

The cheerful boy licked the strawberry ice-cream.

Show your partner a cheerful face.

Ann



Did you see that my name has two of the letter n? When there are two of the letter n together they make the same sound as just one n.



Level 1 Book 1: Nat

Words: 12

Sounds:

s, a, t, p, i, n



INTERACTIVE APPS LEVELS 1 - 8



All Level 1 books contain two pre-reading and two post-reading activities. Each book contains a phonemic awareness activity to provide ongoing "training" for children in learning to hear and work with sounds. Whether it be for guided reading groups or parental discussion, the post-reading activities provided at the back of each Level 1 story allow for further learning.

Published by Decodable Readers Australia

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ISBN 978-0-6480292-1-2



Decodable texts

Level 1 – s, a, t, p, i, n, nn

Level 2 – m, d, g (goat), o, c (cat), k, ck, e, u, r, ss

Eric's Socks



Decodable Readers
Australia
Level 2
2

Level 2 Book 2: Eric's Socks

Words: 57 Sounds: s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r

Sight words: the, his

Book Discovery

Use this activity to help children recognise and name the different parts that make up a book.

Teacher: Find and touch the front cover.

We know this is the front because a book must open this way. There is usually a picture on the front cover.

Teacher: Find and touch the title.

The title is like the name for the book. It is always found on the front cover.

Teacher: Find and touch the spine.

Books have spines. Your spine helps you sit up straight. The book's spine also helps it stand up straight and tall.

Teacher: Find and touch some of the illustrations.

The illustrations are the pictures on the front cover and inside the book.

They help to tell the story. Not all books have pictures.

Teacher: Find and touch some of the words.

The words are what the reader uses to tell the story.

Sight words:

the

his



Decodable texts

Level 1 – s, a, t, p, i, n, nn

Level 2 – m, d, g (goat), o, c (cat), k, ck, e, u, r, ss



Eric runs on the track in his socks.



Eric stamps in the mud
in his socks.



Eric digs in the sand
in his socks.

Decodable texts

Level 1 – s, a, t, p, i, n, nn

Level 2 – m, d, g (goat), o, c (cat), k, ck, e, u, r, ss



Eric gets gum on his sock.



Eric's socks stink.



Eric dips his socks in the suds.
Lots and lots of suds!

Decodable texts

Did you understand what you read?

1. What item of clothing was Eric wearing in this story?
2. What do the marks that are drawn coming out of Eric's socks mean?
3. What do you think was in the tub that cleaned his socks?
4. Were Eric's socks the same in the beginning of the story as they were in the end of the story? Why?

Let's learn a new word:

odour

An odour is a smell that is often not a nice one.

Can you find something in the story that was giving off an odour?

Which sentence is correct?

A strange odour came up out of the bin.

We bent down to odour the roses.



Level 2 Book 2: Eric's Socks

Words: 57

Sounds:

s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d,
g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r

Sight words:

the his

INTERACTIVE APPS LEVELS 1 - 8



All Level 2 Readers contain pre-reading activities to set the purpose for reading and post-reading activities to assist in comprehension and vocabulary development. Six new Australian characters are introduced in this level, who have lots of fun and exciting adventures that children will love to read about.

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ISBN 978-0-6480703-2-0



Decodable texts

Level 1 – s, a, t, p, i, n, nn

Level 2 – m, d, g (goat), o, c (cat), k, ck, e, u, r, ss

Level 3 – b, h, f, l, j, v, w, x, y, z, ll, ff, zz

Level 4 – sh, ch, th (them), th (thin), qu, ng, wh, ph, g (gem), c (city), gg, bb, tt, rr, pp, dd, mm



At the **sh**ops, Nip got a big, fresh fish.
Not **sh** in a packet but fresh fish.

Decodable texts

Level 1 – s, a, t, p, i, n, nn

Level 2 – m, d, g (goat), o, c (cat), k, ck, e, u, r, ss

Level 3 – b, h, f, l, j, v, w, x, y, z, ll, ff, zz

Level 4 – sh, ch, th (them), th (thin), qu, ng, wh, ph, g (gem), c (city), gg, bb, tt, rr, pp, dd, mm

Level 5 – ay, ai, ee, ea, igh, ie, ow, oa, ew, ue

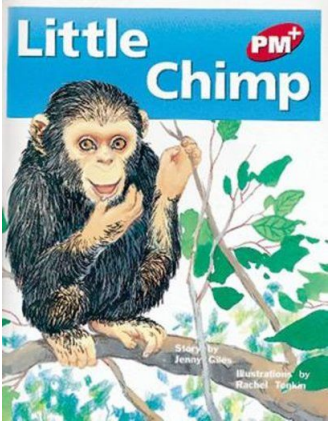
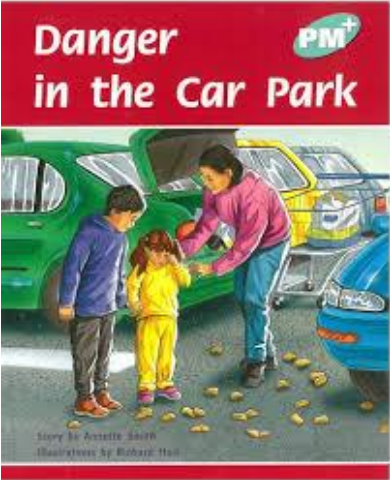
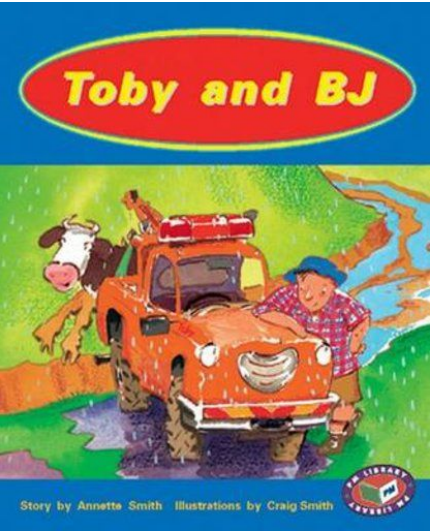
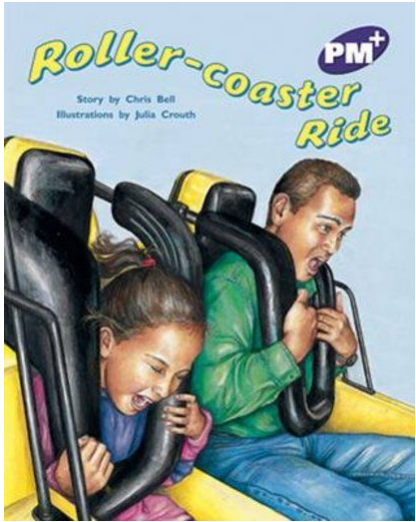
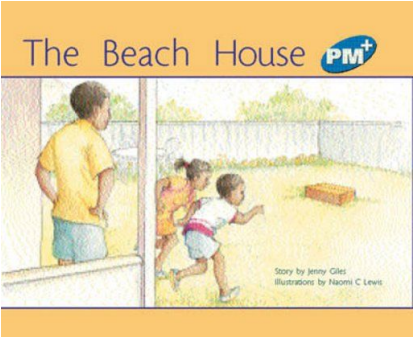
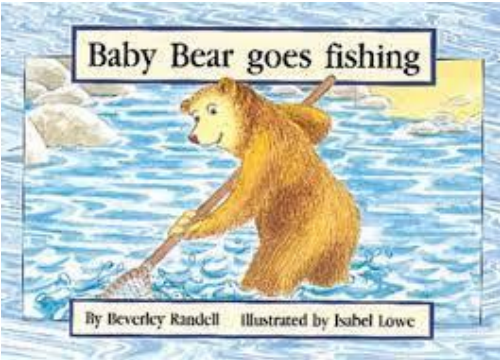
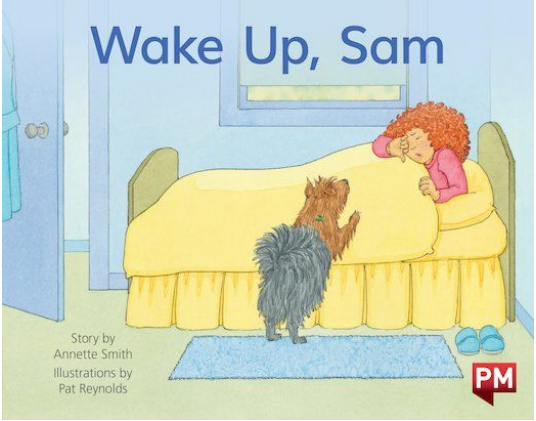
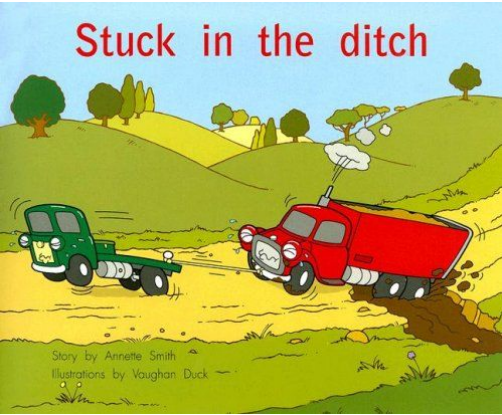
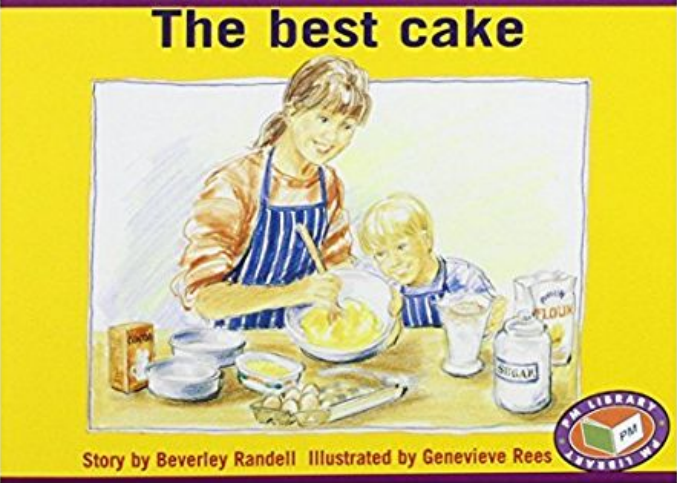
Level 6 – oi, oy, oo, oo, ou, ow, er, ir, ur, ar, or

Magic at the Rock Pools



It was a long way to the rock pools from the highway. Pam's yellow car went bump, bump, bump on the dirt road. Nat and Pam kept the windows up to stop the dust getting in. There was not a cloud in the sky and there was no wind. It was a perfect day to go to the rock pools for a swim and enjoy a picnic in the park. Nat and Pam had been planning this day trip for weeks.

Not decodable texts



Level 1 PM Reader - Non Decodable

I am playing



I am in the box.



I am in the car.



I am in the sandpit.

Level 1 PM Reader - Non Decodable



A truck is big.



A bulldozer is big.



A fire engine is big.

Level 1 Decodable Text



Pat it.



Tap it.



It sits.

Level 1 Decodable Text



Nat sits on the tin.

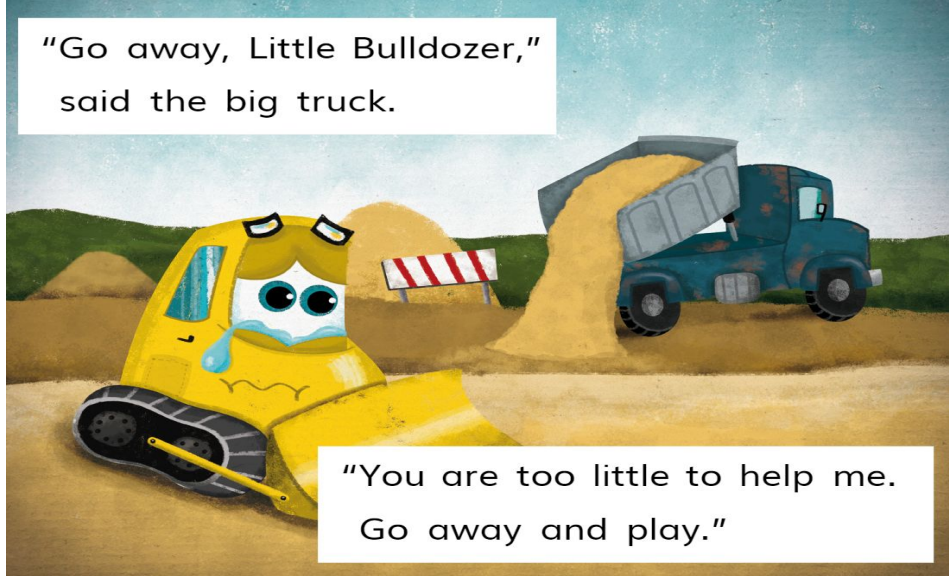
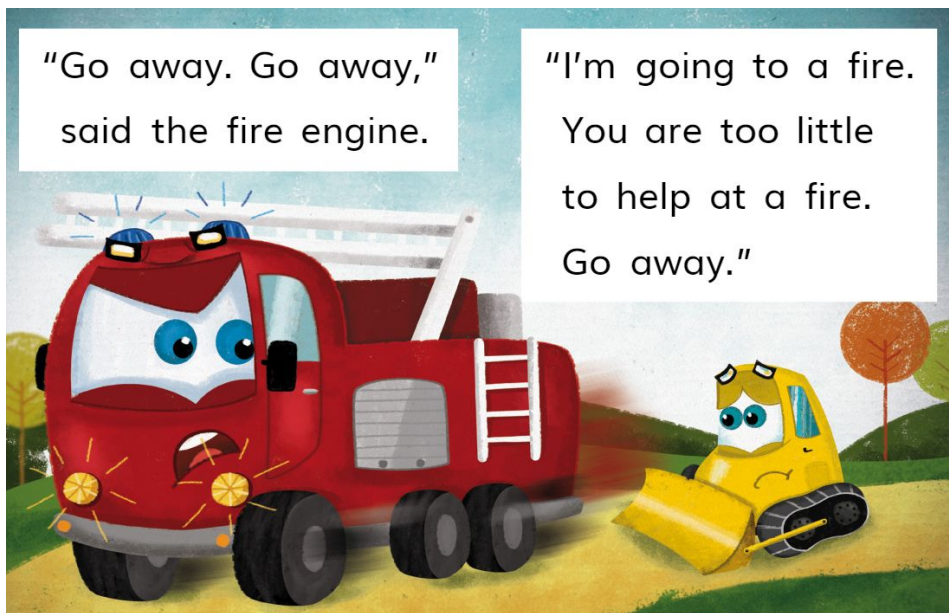
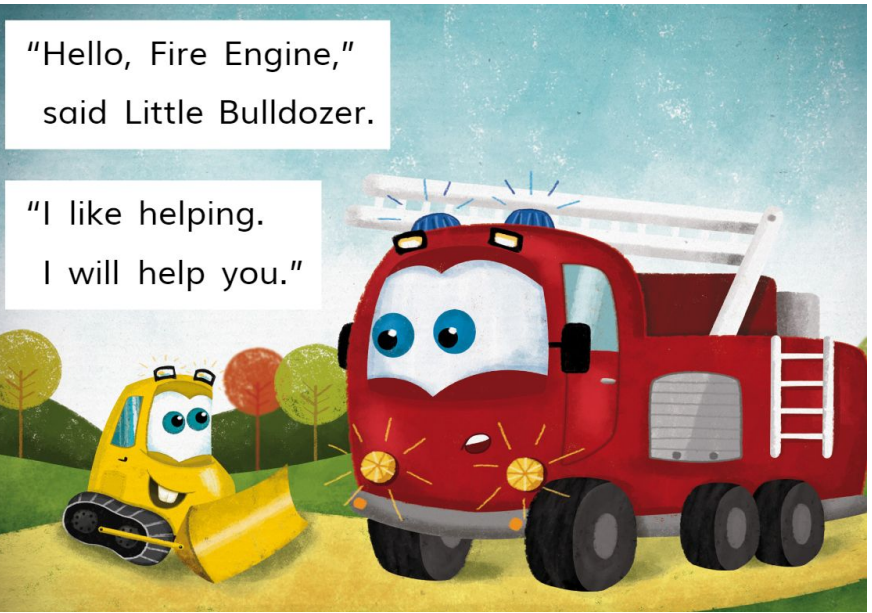


Nat pats the tin.



Nat taps the tin.

Level 8 PM Reader - Non Decodable



Level 8 Decodable Text



Nat came down the stairs and sat at the kitchen bench without saying good morning. She began to eat her toast and drink her milk, still without uttering a sound. “Are you feeling ok?” said Nan. Still Nat did not utter a sound. “You seem very grumpy this morning. Are you sick?” said Nan. Nat stared up at Nan and replied, “No, Nan. I am ok.”

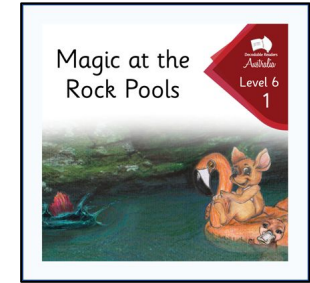
The day before, Nat had told Nan that she had a sore tummy. Now she had not eaten much of her toast and was in a very grumpy mood. “If you are not sick, then why are you not eating and why are you acting so grumpy?” said Nan. “Remember that chatting to me about how you feel can be a good way to fix a problem.”



Reading behaviours with decodable texts



- Concepts about print
- Draw meaning from the text
- Fluency
- Background knowledge
- Verbal reasoning
- Language structures



What do I need to know?

~~What level is my
child on?~~

**Which skills does
my child need to
learn?**

What to do if my child gets stuck?

What to do if I get stuck...



Look closely at the word



Put your finger under the word



Slide your finger



Blend the sounds out loud



Ask yourself 'Did that make sense?'



Re-read the sentence

Student Learning Library

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/initiatives/nsw-student-learning-library.html#/>

NSW Student learning library

The library contains learning resources for class or home. K-2 English and Mathematics resources are available with K-10 to be released over the next 3-5 years aligned to the new NSW syllabus rollout.

[How to use the platform](#)



[How the platform can help learning](#)



[Resources for teachers \(DoE staff only\)](#)

