

# Learning to Read with Rhino Readers

## A Guide for Parents and Carers

Is your child learning to read with the Rhino Readers scheme? This guide will help you understand more about how the scheme works, how to get the most out of reading with your child and how to help your child develop their reading skills.

### Phonics and Decodable Books

'Phonics' is a way of teaching children to read. In phonics lessons, children are taught that **letters** correspond to **sounds**. Learning this 'code' enables children to identify each sound in a word before blending these together to read or write whole words. The more sounds that children know, the more words they will be able to 'decode'.

Most schools use a phonics scheme to ensure that children learn all the possible letter-sound combinations that they will need. Phonics schemes progress in a methodical, step-by-step way so that children can quickly begin to read and write words by themselves.

The Rhino Readers books pair perfectly with the Twinkl Phonics teaching scheme which your child may be using.

Many reading schemes, like Rhino Readers, start with books containing just a few letter sounds and gradually become more complex. To make maximum progress, children should be reading **fully decodable books**. This means that the books children are given should match up exactly to the phonics that they have learned. Books shouldn't contain any letter sounds not yet taught. With fully decodable books, children can use their phonics skills to tackle every word and there's no need to rely on guesswork or clues from the pictures. This helps them quickly gain confidence and feel successful when they read. **Rhino Readers is a fully decodable reading scheme.**

### Working through the Rhino Readers Scheme

Our decodable books match up with Levels 2–6 of Twinkl Phonics. The scheme follows the same levels as Twinkl Phonics with each level split into three 'sublevels' – a, b and c.

- Your child's teacher will teach a set (or sets) of letter sounds and tricky words in phonics lessons.
- A book (or recommended level) will be suggested or given to your child to read that includes the recently taught phonics.
- Your child will read several books at this level to practise and consolidate this recently taught phonics. They will also develop fluency and comprehension skills by reading several books at the same level.
- Meanwhile, your child's teacher will begin to teach the next set (or sets) of letter sounds and tricky words.
- When your child has secured their learning, they will progress onto the next sublevel (as recommended by the teacher).

Twinkl Phonics Level	Rhino Readers books	Year Group (schools in England)	Age of Children
Level 2	2a	Reception	4-5 years
	2b		
	2c		
Level 3	3a	Reception	4-5 years
	3b		
	3c		
Level 4	4a	Reception	4-5 years
	4b		
	4c		
Level 5	5a First Steps	Year 1	5-6 years
	5a		
	5b		
	5c		
Level 6	6a	Year 2	6-7 years
	6b		
	6c		

This is just an overview. Every child progresses at their own pace.

As some levels last a lot longer than others, your child may stay on some sublevels for a while. Different children will be ready to move up at different points, too. If you think your child is finding the books too easy or too challenging, speak to your child's teacher.

## How Can I Help My Child with Their Reading?

Rhino Readers books have some great features to help you make reading with your child as smooth and easy as possible. Here's how to get the most out of sharing a book with your child.

### Make a Prediction

- Use the front and back cover to talk about what the book might be about. The text on the back cover – called the 'blurb' – helps introduce the book to the reader.
- If your child isn't familiar with the subject or setting, this might also be a good point to explain a bit more about it to them.
- Don't give away too much, though – it's fun for children to learn about something for themselves!



### Warm Up with the Before Reading Page

The Before Reading Page prepares children for reading.

**Before Reading**

**Say the sounds.**

If your child needs help, point to the picture and read the word to them.

w wave	z zigzag	sh sheep	ai snail
ee cheese	igh knight	oa boat	ar star
or horn	ur purse	ear ear	air chair

**Read the focus**

The dots show one sound one sound made by more

wait	sheep
cars	turns
buses	airport

**Read the tricky word**

Parts of these words cannot be sounded out. Read the word to your child if they need help.

are they all

Practise blending the sounds together to read some of the words your child will come across in the book. The dots, dashes and smile lines will help them see the individual sounds making up each word.

Point to each sound card and ask your child what the sound is. If they're not sure, there's a clue in the picture and the word underneath.

Check that your child can recognise the tricky words. These are words that can't be fully decoded yet so if your child needs help, read the whole word to them.

## Talk about the Book as You Go

It's important that children get the chance to think and talk about what they read, as they read it. Try to pause for a quick discussion every couple of pages or so.

You could ask them to:

- answer a question;
- give an opinion;
- explain what they have found out;
- try rereading a section so it's smoother and more fluent;
- explain what a word means.

This kind of 'talking around the book' helps children make sense of what they've read so they don't fall into the trap of reading fluently but without good comprehension.

## Consolidate Learning with the After Reading Page

**After Reading**  
Read these pages to your child and complete the activities together.

**Look at the pictures and retell the story.**

**Recall questions** ask children to remember and restate something they read.

? What is blocking the zigzag road?

? How do you think Dad, Mum, Kit and Sam feel when they arrive at the airport?

? Have you ever had to wait and wait for something? What were you waiting for? How did you feel?

**Inference questions** ask children to think 'beyond the text'.

**Rhino Challenge!**

- Talk to a grown-up about a journey you have been on.
- Where do you think Dad, Mum, Kit and Sam go to on the plane? Create a picture or a model of their destination.

This activity must be done under adult supervision. The adult is responsible for ensuring that the activity is safe.

The After Reading Page supports with understanding and comprehension.

Sequencing questions help children to think about the order of the whole story.

Rhino Challenges help make the story memorable and link it to the child's own experiences.

## Build Fluency with Rereading

When your child first tackles a book with phonics that they have recently learned, their main focus will likely be on decoding the words and getting the blending right. However, if they reread the book they'll be much more familiar with the sounds and will be able to concentrate more on fluency and comprehension. That's why reading a book more than once can be really helpful.

You'll likely find that as they read more books from a sublevel their fluency will improve but once they move up to the next sublevel, the process of getting the phonics correct and becoming fluent needs to start again. This is a very normal part of becoming a fluent reader. If you're worried about your child's fluency or their understanding of what they read, speak to their class teacher.

## Is There Anything Else I Can Do to Help?

Yes! You could try:

- drawing their attention to print and text around them in the environment, like notices and signs, to show them that reading is a part of everyday life;
- letting them see you read to show them that it's a valuable and fun activity;
- reading books to them that they can't yet read themselves – many children will be able to follow and understand stories that are too hard for them to read yet;
- visiting a library;
- leaving books around and visible, rather than tidy and tucked away;
- playing first sound games (like I Spy, using the sound rather than the letter name) and other word games;
- listening to audiobooks – many of the Rhino Readers and Twinkl Originals can be accessed this way;
- reading on devices – this can be a nice change from reading printed books.

Remember – keep activities short and fun and keep modelling that you love reading, too!

