

## *Where Do I Begin?*

Success in English begins with the foundational spelling skills found in *The PHONICS Road to Spelling and Reading*. From the beginning these skills are introduced incrementally and practiced sequentially in a logical process until mastered by the student.

Students ages 5 and 6 automatically begin in Level One and follow the daily schedule set by Mrs. Beers. For those students ages 7 and above who have already learned to write their letters, we offer this simple 5-step assessment to help you know where to begin.

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### **STEP ONE: Individual Sounds of Letters and Letter Teams**

Point to each letter and letter team below and ask your student to say the sound or sounds represented by it (refer to the answers on the next page). Some of our letters and letter teams represent only one sound and some letters and letter teams represent two or more sounds. If your student knows all the sounds represented by a letter or letter team, circle it.

**k w r a g z b n s**

**x c u sh p d o m**

**f h y ch e th i qu**

**l ay v j t**

Did your student identify at least 25 of these letters/letter teams correctly by their sounds?

**Yes:** Move on to Step Two.

**No:** Begin with Level One where your student will learn all the sounds represented by the 72 letters and letter teams. This is a foundational skill for great spelling.

Answer key to the sounds of letters and letter teams in Step One:

**k**=/k/ as in *kite*; **W**=/w/ as in *win*; **r**=/r/ as in *ran*;

**a**=3 sounds: /a/ as in *act*, /ay/ as in *ate*, /ah/ as in *all*;

**g**=2 sounds: /g/ as in *girl*; /j/ as in *gem*; **Z**=/z/ as in *zoo*;

**b**=/b/ as in *boy*; **n**=/n/ as in *net*;

**S**=2 sounds: /s/ as in *sit*; /z/ as in *as*; **X**=/ks/ as in *ax*;

**C**=2 sounds: /k/ as in *cat*; /s/ as in *cent*;

**U**=3 sounds: /u/ as in *cut*, /u/ as in *use*, /oo/ as in *put*;

**sh**=/sh/ as in *ship*; **p**=/p/ as in *pet*; **d**=/d/ as in *dog*;

**O**=3 sounds: /ah/ as in *odd*, /o/ as in *so*, /oo/ as in *do*;

**m**=/m/ as in *man*; **f**=/f/ as in *fin*; **h**=/h/ as in *hat*;

**y**=3 sounds: /y/ as in *yes*, /i/ as in *myth*, /l/ as in *my*;

**ch**=3 sounds: /ch/ as in *chin*, /k/ as in *character*, /sh/ as in *chef*;

**e**=2 sounds: /e/ as in *set*; /ee/ as in *me*;

**th**=2 sounds: /th/ as in *thin*; /th/ as in *that*;

**i**=2 sounds: /ih/ as in *in*; /l/ as in *ice*; **qu**=/kw/ as in *quit*;

**l**=/l/ as in *list*; **ay**=/ay/ as in *say*; **v**=/v/ as in *vest*;

**j**=/j/ as in *jet*; **t**=/t/ as in *top*.

## STEP TWO: Writing Sounds of Letters/Letter Teams from Dictation.

Dictate the following sounds and have the student write them down. Refer to the answer key from Step One for pronunciation.

You say /b/.	The student writes <b>b</b> .
You say /p/.	The student writes <b>p</b> .
You say /d/.	The student writes <b>d</b> .
You say /n/.	The student writes <b>n</b> .
You say /f/.	The student writes <b>f</b> .
You say /s/,/z/.	The student writes <b>s</b> .
You say /y/,i/,/I/.	The student writes <b>y</b> .
You say /th/,/th/.	The student writes <b>th</b> .
You say /ah/,/oh/,/oo/.	The student writes <b>o</b> .
You say /g/,/j/.	The student writes <b>g</b> .
You say /ch/,/k/,/sh/.	The student writes <b>ch</b> .
You say /k/,/s/.	The student writes <b>c</b> .

Did your student identify at least 10 of the letters and letter teams by their sounds and write them correctly?

**Yes.** Move on to Step Three.

**No:** Begin with Level One where the student will learn to write all the sounds of the letters and letter teams from dictation.

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## STEP THREE: Spelling Words From Dictation.

Dictate the following one-syllable words that use short vowel sounds, then the sentence that illustrates each one, then repeat the word again. Have the student write each one neatly.

"**Stand** - Stand beside me. - **stand**"

"**Fish** - The lake contains many fish. - **fish**"

"**Soft** - The cat's fur is soft. - **soft**"

"**His** - His bike is new. - **his**"

"**Spent** - He spent one dollar. - **spent**"

"**Fix** - I will fix lunch today - **fix**"

"**Best** - We had the best time at the park. - **best**"

"**Lift** - Lift your feet when you walk - **lift**"

"**Help** - Will you help me? - **help**"

"**Skip** - You may skip your chores today - **skip**"

"**Cost** - How much did that book cost? - **cost**"

"**Crust** - She cut the crust from the bread. - **crust**"

Did your student spell at least 10 of these words correctly?

**Yes:** Move on to Step Four.

**No:** Begin in Level One. If your student is 8 years or older, you may choose the 4-month **Velocity Track** to accelerate through Level One.

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### **STEP FOUR: Knowledge of the Basic Spelling Rules**

Ask your student these questions to find out what they know about the common spelling rules and simple sentences:

**1. Which 4 vowels usually say their names at the end of a syllable?**

*Answer: A, E, O & U*

**2. Why is there a silent E at the end of the word *live*?**

*Answer: You can't end an English word in U or V.*

**3. Every syllable in English must have a \_\_\_\_\_. *Answer: Vowel***

**4. Every sentence begins with a \_\_\_\_\_. *Answer: Capital letter***

**5. How many syllables are in the word *understand*? *Answer: 3***

**6. Why can O say its name in the word *cold*?**

*Answer: It is followed by 2 consonants.*

**7. What letters are often doubled at the end of a base word? *Answer: L, S, F***

**8. C always says /s/ before what 3 letters? *Answer: E, I or Y***

**9. If a base words cannot end in A, saying its name, what do we use? *Answer: AY***

**10. G can only say /j/ before what 3 letters? *Answer: E, I or Y***

**11. Since English words do not end in I, what letter is used instead? *Answer: Y***

**12. What does *singular* mean? *Answer: One***

**13. What does *plural* mean? *Answer: Two or more (or more than one)***

**14. What is the plural of *fish*? *Answer: fishes***

**15. What is the plural of *bed*? *Answer: beds***

**16. Name at least 2 of the 3 common punctuation marks always found at the end of a sentence. *Answer: period, question mark, exclamation point***

**17. The name of a person always begins with a \_\_\_\_\_? *Answer: Capital letter***

Could your student answer at least 13 of these questions?

**Yes:** Move on to Step Five.

**No:** Begin in Level One. If your student is 8 years or older, you may choose the 4-month **Velocity Track** to accelerate through Level One.

**STEP FIVE: Writing sentences from dictation.**

Dictate the following sentences for the student to write:

**Jim runs up the hill.**

**Can you help me pick a song?**

**Pack a lunch for the trip.**

**Jan is kind to all of us.**

**Tim can tell time.**

Did you student write these dictated sentences correctly?

**Yes:** Use the 3-month or 4-month Velocity Track for **both** *The PHONICS Road* Level One and Level Two. This will secure the foundations and prepare him/her for the intermediate/advanced work in Levels Three and Four.

**No:** Begin in Level One using either the 3-month or 4-month Velocity Track for this level.