

clever tricks to make reading easier

By Mary Ashby-Green*

Kids love to know 'clever tricks' to help them with their learning ... here are some quick and easy ways to add a bit of magic to their reading practice and make reading a little more fun.

In previous issues, we've looked at making sure your child understands short vowels and consonant blends. Another area that causes lots of confusion is long vowels, because they appear in two letter combinations, such as 'brain' and 'coach.' Which sound do you read first?

I have found it easiest to teach a rule (or 'trick'), then practice it in single words. This way, you can systematically clear up the obstacles in your child's reading pathway.



Trick 1

two vowels walking

There is a rule of thumb to teach them that gives your child a general approach.

"When two vowels go out walking, the first one does the talking and it says its own name."

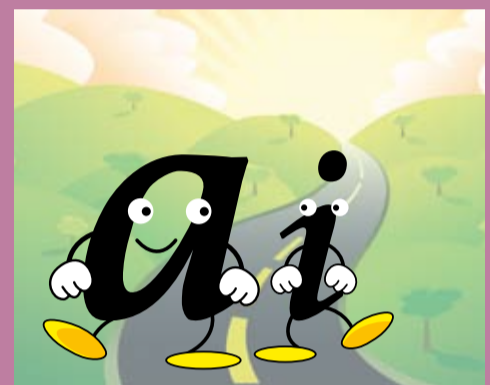
Help your child remember the rule by creating a story around the two vowels – perhaps that the first one is like the older brother taking the younger one for a walk and it speaks for them both, or that they are introducing themselves

to others they meet on their walk and the first vowel does all the talking.

Here are some examples of those words:

- main
- coat
- bean
- blue
- lied

Build up lists of words that have the same spelling so that your child can see how often the rule applies.



Trick 2

magic E words

This is another set of words that often cause confusion. Words like late, wine, note and huge are also long vowel words and they are following what's often called the Magic E rule: when a word ends in 'e', it changes the first vowel so it says its own name.

It's easier to see it when you look at examples:

- mat – mate
- rid – ride
- not – note
- cut – cute



If only that's all there was to it! In fact there are actually seven different long vowel sounds (ai, ee, ie, oa, ue, ou, oi) and often there are several letter combinations to make those sounds.

All of these exceptions could get overwhelming, so it's best to take one category pattern at a time, and gradually your child will come to see the underlying pattern.

The easiest way to make sure your child has a way to approach these words is to focus on the five long vowel sounds first. Remember that when 'y' is in the middle or at

the end of a word, it acts like an 'e' or 'i' sound. Once again, it's easier to understand when you see it in examples, such as cycle, gym, mummy.

* Mary Ashby-Green is a reading specialist and trainer of teachers in literacy, and also trained in NLP to work with children with anxiety about learning. She enjoys sharing effective teaching strategies that make learning easy, and she's trained over 2,500 teachers in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the Middle East. She has just returned from her third trip to Namibia where the teachers

are making huge progress with their students using these techniques.

Want to learn how you can help your child at home improve in Reading, Writing and Spelling?

Mary has designed a seminar especially for parents called 'Reading Breakthroughs' which will give you the right skills to help at home and work well with what they are learning at school. It comes with a free CD of activities and a risk-free guarantee. Parents using it say it's great to be able to stop worrying now they know what to do.

Go to www.seminarsolutions.co.nz to find out more.

Image sourced from the Jolly Phonics programme

Progress.



For all enrolment enquiries, please contact the Director of Admissions
ph: +64 9 415 9566 ext 2324
or email: admissions@kristin.school.nz


Kristin
KINDERGARTEN - SENIOR SCHOOL
BUILDING GREATNESS

 International Baccalaureate

Progress with vision, integrity and love | www.kristin.school.nz

360 Albany Highway, Albany, Auckland | Ph 09 415 9566 | Fax 09 415 8495