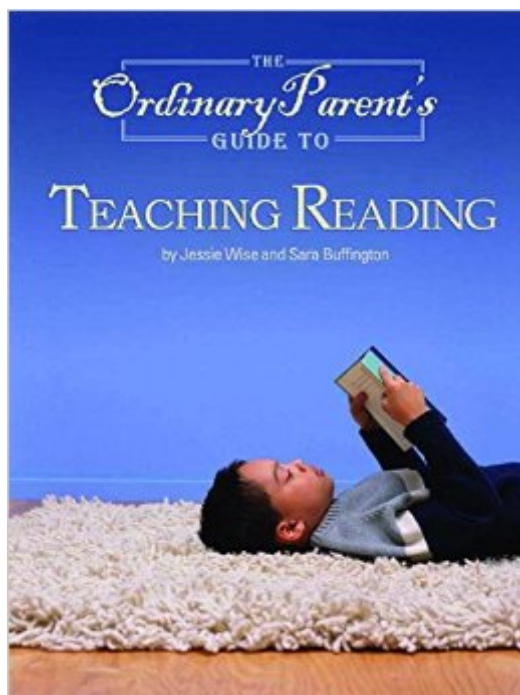


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# The Ordinary Parent's Guide To Teaching Reading



## Synopsis

A plain-English guide to teaching phonics. Every parent can teach reading—no experts need apply! Too many parents watch their children struggle with early reading skills—and don't know how to help. Phonics programs are too often complicated, overpriced, gimmicky, and filled with obscure educationese. The Ordinary Parent's Guide to Teaching Reading cuts through the confusion, giving parents a simple, direct, scripted guide to teaching reading—from short vowels through supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. This one book supplies parents with all the tools they need. Over the years of her teaching career, Jessie Wise has seen good reading instruction fall prey to trendy philosophies and political infighting. Now she has teamed with dynamic coauthor Sara Buffington to supply parents with a clear, direct phonics program—a program that gives them the know-how and confidence to take matters into their own hands.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm using this with my 4-year-old son. Before I started homeschooling him, I had him in a private preschool, where he learned all his short-vowel and consonant sounds, as well as some basic math (beyond simple counting that is). In spite of that, I didn't skip the first two sections that teach short-vowel and consonant sounds, but I did cover two letters a day instead of just one. Otherwise I've followed the program the way it's laid out. I gave the book 4 stars because it's simple, orderly, and lives up to its name. However, I have a few issues so far that kept the book from getting 5 stars. 1) The poems in the first two sections. Yes, kids are great at memorizing things, but these are

horrible. The very first letter caused problems for my son, who kept trying to say "first vowel" for both lines because the lines were so similar. Patterns are a wonderful way to memorize things, but these patterns weren't consistent. It made me wonder whether Jessie Wise had field-tested these on a variety of children before publishing them. I'm sure some kids will get them, but the combination of boring and inconsistent is a little too much for the short-vowel poem. The consonant poem is better - the pattern is consistent, and it's a little more fun (my son loved saying "/b/,/b/, bat" even though I didn't ask him to learn the poem), but after the short-vowel poem I opted to skip it. In my son's case it wasn't needed.<sup>2</sup>) Other reviewers have noted a lack of phonemic awareness training, which I also noted.

After completing 89 lessons in this book, my daughter and I are calling it quits. We've worked on it on and off for over a year (she's 5 now), and for the sake of preserving a love of reading, have decided to shelve it. This book has been helpful in a number of ways; it is great for giving a parent the sense that they can indeed teach their own children, that reading is easy, and laying out a path for doing so. I have found it useful as a reference book, i.e. to show me what to introduce, remind me what the actual "rules" are, and give me direction for our lessons. However, there have been some significant problems.<sup>1</sup>) The layout of the pages is daunting for a child. There are lots of words, no pictures, nothing to visually set apart the words that the child reads except that they're a bit larger. It seems overwhelming and very un-child-friendly.<sup>2</sup>) The practice stories often make no sense, and fail to capture my daughter's interest at all. An example from today: "The black snake did wish that he had a snack of mice. The snake did scan the grass to prey on mice. The grey mice sat on the rock and ate nuts. The snake came to the rock. Hey! The mice fled. They hid in holes. The snake will have no snack this day." Awkward wording, nothing particularly interesting about that, no pictures. The optional follow-up activity is to illustrate this story and label the items.<sup>3</sup>) The practice sentences are way too long, and overwhelm new readers. For example, the child has just been introduced to the "fl" blend (lesson 50), and reads the sentence, "Ducks in flocks flit and flap on the flat pond." This sentence is too long, has onomatopoeic words with which they may not be familiar (flit), and makes them use the new rule 4 times!!

I waited to write this review until I had used this book for a while with more than one of my children. I have been using this book for three years, with three different children (now 2nd, 1st, and kindergarten). With all of my children I DID NOT use this resource to teach the letter sounds. I found Leap Frog's Letter Factory to be an effective tool before I discovered this book and chose to stick

with it for all of my children. So, we picked up AFTER letter sounds in all instances. I am going to outline what I used this book for and how I found it helpful. I will point out that all of my kids are reading ABOVE grade level (1-2 years ahead of what is recommended). This book is a great scope and sequence for what phonics rules to teach and in what order. We basically went through each lesson in order. With my oldest I completed the book around the latter part of first grade. My younger children are not quite as far along as he was at the end of kindergarten, so it may take longer. I found the repetitiveness to be an asset. I found the book easy to navigate and it was easy to flip back to previous lessons and do quick reviews. I actually LOVE that the book has no flashy colors or pictures. This is INTENTIONAL. In schools children are taught to use picture clues to figure out words. I taught in public school for three years and have a MaEd. and I can tell you THIS IS NOT READING. It is a common practice and I NEVER saw it help a child, other than to encourage guessing. In The Ordinary Parent's Guide the child can only "read" by focusing on the words...right from the start. Yes, the words are small, but I found my kids had no problem quickly learning which words were for them and which were for me.

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