WORDS
and
PICTURES
(INFORMATION BOOKLET)

Chalksoft

**EARLY
LEARNING**

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INTRODUCTION

WORDS & PICTURES is a suite of five programs using full-colour graphics, sound and animation to delightfully enhance the learning of 3-7 year old beginning readers and slower, older children. It can be used by individual children, or with small groups at home or at school with only the minimum of instruction.

WORDS & PICTURES contains words used most frequently in the early books of most reading schemes. These are the first words taught in most Reception classes today, where the trend is increasingly towards the individualised teaching of reading. Most teachers now use a variety of reading schemes rather than taking a child through all the books of one particular scheme. The programs have therefore NOT been tailor-made for one particular scheme, but are compatible with them all.

One of the many original features of the program is the use of the popular tune 'Five Little Speckled Frogs'. Phrases from the tune are used as rewards during exercises. At the end of each successful exercise the whole song is played by the computer with words on screen, together with a colourful animated sequence of frogs diving into a stream. Children love it, and even adults find themselves singing along.

The volume of all computer noises may be pre-set (not Spectrum version), and the computer may be instructed to store a child performance table.

Before using the program parents are advised first to read the section 'Mainly for Parents', which gives guidance on assessing a child's readiness for reading.

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All of the programs contained in this package have been fully tested in schools. The following activities are a sample of those which teachers have found most useful in making sure that children get the most out of this software. Naturally you will find other activities that work best for you. Please send your ideas to us and we will be pleased to include the best ones in the next edition of this publication.

1   Despite the best of creative efforts some children may not easily recognise some of the pictures. Each program begins, therefore, with a display of each picture in that program, held on-screen for a few seconds. This enables teacher or parent to lead a guessing game... "What is it? What else could it be? Let's call it a - ". This activity should be a child's first introduction to the programs.

2   During a child's first experience of the program it is essential to draw attention to the text at the bottom of the screen. Should this not be recognised, ask what sound begins the word. Is there a picture that starts with the same sound? Should the wrong picture be chosen, say, "No. Look at the picture you chose. What did we say it is? Now look at the word. Does that word start with - ? Good. So that cannot be the correct picture." Do this before the child presses the key that signifies his / her decision. Early experience with any computer software should be successful. Show what happens when YOU get one wrong.

3   The popular game 'I SPY' may help those children who find it hard to get to grips with the initial sound of a word. Say, "I can see a picture beginning with - ". Should two pictures begin with the same sound, move on to the second sound.

4   The song 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' is an ideal vehicle for the teaching of numbers to five. While some children are singing, others could be jumping off imaginary logs at the same time as the ones on screen. Since the words of the song appear on the screen too, many children will quickly learn to read these.

5   You may have access to a 'sentence maker' from a popular reading scheme. Children enjoy copying sentences from the screen onto their stand (useful for slow learners) or making sentences from their word bank. These are then copied into their book. (You may have to point out that the way the computer writes certain letters is not the way you like. Children seem to accept quite happily that there are some things that people can do better than computers!)

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MAINLY FOR PARENTS

Before using the programs check with the simple test
below whether your child is actually ready for the formal
teaching of reading.

If you can answer YES to the majority of these questions
then your child probably is ready.

If most answers are NO then your child needs help towards
reading readiness.

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1   Can the child see and hear properly ?
2   Is the child free from a serious speech defect ?
3   Is the child's general health satisfactory ?
4   Does the child listen with interest to a story ?
5   Can the child re-tell a story fairly well ?
6   Does your child understand, and carry-out, simple
     instructions ?
7   Does the child co-operate with other children ?
8   Does your child recognise common colours, shapes,
     and animals ?
9   Can the child match picture-shapes ?
10   Can your child draw recognisable pictures (like
     daddy, house...)
11   Does the child know what a word is ?
12   Does the child show signs of wanting to read ?

        Reading aloud regularly and conversing
        patiently will encourage good speech and
        vocabulary which are essential for reading
        progress. If your child is already at school
        you should consult his or her teacher. If
        your child has not yet started school you
        would be wise to discuss the school's
        approach to the teaching of reading.

REMEMBER that tackling this difficult area in the wrong
way may hamper a child's learning for life.

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METHODS OF TEACHING READING

The words used in the programs are those which form the basis of reading proficiency, at the same time being a good selection for initial letter sounds. Indeed many of the words can be taught partly and / or wholly phonetically.

However, it is now generally accepted that phonics (the teaching of the sounds of letters and letter strings) should only be introduced when children have a fairly good 'sight' vocabulary. Children have this when they recognise the early words by just looking and saying, and not sounding them out.

The English language is full of strange sound combinations — hence the major disadvantage of teaching purely using a phonic approach. Try teaching the word 'one' phonetically! Phonics should be taught incidentally, using activities such as those outlined in the GETTING STARTED section of this booklet.

The phonic approach is therefore only one of the skills with which children can be equipped for the attack on new words. Others are:

1   Use of pictorial clues. Children who are enjoying reading a new book often refer to the picture. They may then make a guess based on the picture and text together.

2   The discovery of smaller words in larger ones, for example ' sand = s + and'.

3   Recognising the word from it's shape or pattern and length. Words such as elephant and aeroplane are often learned in this way.

4   Word prediction. A child with a fair vocabulary can often predict a word such as 'are' in a simple sentence like 'The children are going to school.'

5   Word association. All of the words used in these programs are those used naturally by most children in everyday conversation. A child who knows what a word means is more likely to be able to read it.

6   Contextual clues. An unfamiliar word may be 'guessed' from the context of each of the words around it. If the child knows 'I like' and 'the train' in the sentence 'I like to go on the train', he may be able to guess one or all of the words in between.

Most children probably use a combination of all these skills — and more — in an attack on a new word.

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HERE IS A LIST OF ALL THE WORDS USED IN THESE PROGRAMS.
The words are listed alphabetically.
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a, an, and, apple, around

bag, bed, black, blue, boat, book, box,
boy, bricks

can, car, castle, cat, chair, closed, cot, cover

daddy, dog, door, down, duck

elephant

fat, fence, fingers, fir, fish, five, four

garden, glasses, go

handle, has, hat, help, here, horse, house

in, is

key

legs, like, live, love

made, me, mummy, my

nose

of, on

park, picture, pink, pond, post, postman

rabbit, red, roof

sand, school, sea, see, ship, shop, sitting, sky,
square, star, swing

teddy, the, there, these, this, three, through, too, toy,
train, tree, two

van

water, we, white, window, with

yellow, yes, you

Should you decide to teach children to break down words,
please be aware of the danger of mis-pronouncing the
parts of even simple words. In the word 'ship', for
example, the 'sh' sound should be pronounced as a short,
sharp 'sh' as in 'be quiet'. The temptation is to
pronounce it as 'shuh' or 'sher', making the word 'ship'
become 'shuh-ip' or 'sher-ip', and the child becomes very
'cuh-o-nuh-fuh-eeoo-zuh-duh' !

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The following publications from WARD LOCK EDUCATIONAL LTD. are strongly recommended to both teachers and parents:

'Listening to Children Talking'
by Joan Tough
Practical advice on the appraisal and fostering of childrens' skill in using language.
ISBN 0 7062 3506 1

'The Teaching of Reading'
by Donald Moyle
The fourth edition of this book has been updated in the light of the Bullock report.
ISBN 0 7062 3119 8

'Sound & Sentence Books'
by Terry Hall
Likeable characters are used to emphasise the shapes and sounds of initial consonants.
ISBN 07062 0981 7

'Pre-Reading Workshop'
by Christopher Walker
Posters, matching games, letter cards, sounding cards, etc.
Stage 1 ISBN 0 7062 3428 6
Stage 2 ISBN 0 7062 3717 x

'Steps to Reading'
by Derek & Lucy Thackray
Carefully graded exercises and bright illustrations develop visual and auditory discrimination and widen vocabulary.
ISBN 0 7062 4374 9

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