

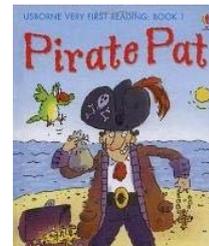


Usborne Very First Reading

A newly-launched series, Usborne Very First Reading, aims to help parents to support their child through the thrills and frustrations of learning to read.

Shared reading with your child

Helping your child to learn to read can be an exciting and frustrating experience, especially during the first two years when your child is getting to grips with the basic principles of letters and sounds.



Many UK schools now teach reading using a system based on synthetic phonics, according to government guidelines. It is vital that children can practice at home what they have learned at school but it can be hard for parents to know how to approach this.

Usborne's new Very First Reading series provides some of the answers and gives parents a very specific role in supporting their child's development as a reader. The series is based on the principles of synthetic phonics and follows what a child is learning at school.

Synthetic phonics involves learning to recognise the distinct sounds, or phonemes, that make up words. The Very First Reading series includes a parents' guide that explains how a child will progress through this system and at what stages to use the individual books. A set of 15 titles is available covering what a child will learn during their first 18 months of learning to read.

While most reading schemes recommend parental involvement, they can be quite vague about the parent's role. However, in the first seven books of Very First Reading, the adult and child take turns to read. This gives parents a very specific role in a child's reading development says Mairi Mackinnon, managing editor of the series. Usborne has already tested out this approach to shared reading in its popular Farmyard Tales books.

Getting parents involved also helps to make the stories more exciting – after all, as Mackinnon points out, there is only so much you can do with the first eight letters your child is learning. Each of the stories offers something entirely different. Book 1, Pirate Pat, has gran at loggerheads with mad, sad Pirate Pat who wants to dig for treasure in her house. In book five, Grizzly Bear Rock, bear Sal wants to join a rock band.

Mackinnon says, "Learning to read is hard work but shared reading like this can help take off some of the pressure from a child, and it gets them involved in an exciting story." Rhyming text and full colour illustrations on every spread help to make the books enticing, while additional downloads from the website can be used to reinforce your children's learning.

How your child progresses through the series of 15 titles will be up to them, she adds. "The Parents' Guide we have provided, and the website (www.usborne.com/veryfirstreading), give some guidance of the right time to start reading with your child and when to move onto a new title. But every child will progress at their own rate."

A full set of the 15 titles is available from retailers with discounts, including 'buy one get one free' offers. Each books cost £4.99. A free Parents' Guide is available with every purchase.