

Advanced SoftRead teacher's guide

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November 2020

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Content Chart

The [SoftRead Collection](#) has been developed and designed to address students with learning difficulties or students with special education needs. It is a collection of books, with a unique approach to the reading teaching process, paying special attention to the students' developmental stage and helping them to acquire reading skills. Each book meets the needs of a different target audience, and offers a variety of activities. For this reason, we have summarized the various features of each book into a comparative chart, which will help the teacher choose the most suitable book for the student.

		Young-Soft-Read ^{*1}	SoftRead ^{*2}	AdvancedSoftRead ^{*3}
Language	English	✓	✓	✓
	Hebrew	✓	✓	✓
	Arabic	✓	✓	✓
Level	Beginners	✓	✓	
	Intermediate			✓
Age	7- 4	✓		
	8+ -7		✓	
	10+			✓
Suitability factors	Age, learning difficulties, and learning maturity.	1 st (for very young learners or students with specific learning difficulties)	1 st (for students aged 7-8+)	2 nd (for students with basic understanding and proficiency in reading)
Goal		To introduce all letters of the English alphabet and their sounds, then to immediately combine the letters into sound units. To teach reading skills.	To introduce all letters of the English alphabet and their sounds, then to immediately combine the letters into sound units. To teach reading skills.	To introduce most of the reading/spelling patterns of the English language, including silent letters and changes in pronunciation caused by other letters. To enrich and complete the school curriculum and ensure successful high level reading.

		Young-Soft-Read ^{*1}	SoftRead ^{*2}	AdvancedSoftRead ^{*3}
Content	All letters and their sounds	✓	✓	
	Two-letter combinations	✓	✓	✓
	Correct grapheme writing	✓	✓	
	Sound unit recognition (syllables)	✓	✓	
	Gross motor skills	✓		
	Fine motor skills	✓	✓	✓
	Reading/spelling patterns			✓
	Silent sounds			✓
	Changes in pronunciation			✓

		Young-Soft-Read ^{*1}	SoftRead ^{*2}	AdvancedSoftRead ^{*3}
Activities	Circling	✓	✓	✓
	Highlighting	✓	✓	✓
	Coloring	✓	✓	
	Symbol-letter matching	✓		
	Word-word matching		✓	
	Cutting	✓		
	Pasting	✓		
	String deciphering	✓		
	Stickers		✓	
	Reading	✓	✓	✓
	Filling in the blanks	✓	✓	
	Comparing		✓	
	Phonetic dictation	✓	✓	✓
	Patterns recognition & spelling			✓
	Short stories, using the introduced patterns			✓
	Pattern completion			✓
	Sorting			✓

*1: This book is recommended for students with fine or gross motor skill development difficulties, whether the student finds it difficult to hold a pencil, to trace the letters, or any other motor skill difficulty. It uses highlighting and coloring for visual recognition and identifying letters to encourage positive familiarization with graphemes. Suitable for students in small classes, inclusive learning purposes, special education needs including students on the autistic spectrum, and slow readers due to learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

*2: This book is recommended for those students who are more mature in learning. Although it is suggested for students aged 7-8+, if a younger student shows a more mature approach to the learning process, then it is advisable for him/her to use this book. SoftRead teaches the reading technique by first identifying the sounds, converting them into graphemes, and immediately afterwards connecting sounds into sound units. It is suitable for students with attention deficit disorder and dyslexia.

*3: This book requires basic reading proficiency, which means that the student should be able to perform one-to-one conversion of letter to sound, as well as connecting these sounds into blends and words.

Teacher's Guide to Advanced SoftRead

Introduction

Skillful reading

Learning a foreign language and language development in general, depend on and correlate with reading skills. Reading and reading comprehension depend on the ability to decode, and the time it consumes. Reading is a goal in itself, but even more importantly, it is a tool which helps to achieve language fluency.

The developer of the SoftRead method believes that reading as a tool should be regarded as a technique, and should be practiced as such to achieve **automation**. That is why nonsense words are often used to get away from meaning and to avoid global reading.

Decoding is a key skill, and to speed it up the student is trained to quickly identify the letters and later the letter combinations visually, to highlight them and to effortlessly recognize them by circling them. This will be explained later in more detail.

The success of the method lies in providing an effective reading practice as a technique for learners who find it difficult to read, whether or not it is due to a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia. Furthermore, this method successfully prevents dyslexic failures from a very early stage.

The SoftRead method relies on and teaches the logic of reading, i.e. it is more logical and less photographic. It introduces the combinations of the letters and their sounds, and practices their visual identification and sound conversion rather than dealing with repetitions, and practices global reading, which is based on familiarity and meaning. This enhances skillful reading since the reader does not need to look for or rely on textual clues in order to decode. On the contrary, to achieve fast and accurate decoding, meaning and understanding are disregarded at this stage.

AdvancedSoftRead Target Student *

1. Older beginners
2. Slow readers
3. Students with language disorder
4. Challenged students with various learning difficulties

*whether or not they are native speakers of English

This book requires basic reading proficiency, which means that the student should be able to perform one-to-one conversion of letter to sound, as well as connecting these sounds into blends and words. If not s/he should be referred to SoftRead

Advantages

The SoftRead method ensures no learner is left behind due to unsatisfactory or poor decoding. It has been especially designed to meet the difficulties faced by people with dyslexia, but it is also very efficient in teaching any learner, with or without reading difficulties or language disorders.

- There is no prior requirement for any level of spoken English, nor for previous visual familiarity with words. Native speakers will obviously look for words they know and try to memorize their position on the page. They will also try to complete the word based on previous knowledge and textual clues if available. Global reading and guessing are not possible here because the words are deliberately meaningless, and stand-alone.
- The purpose of this book is not to teach vocabulary but to teach the reading patterns and to practice them. The book shows how they appear in standalone meaningful words but does not depend nor rely on their meaning.
- Everyone, including native English speakers who can read a little, will improve their spelling proficiency thanks to the phoneme-grapheme conversion practice.
- The book offers various simple tasks, such as circling, highlighting, copying, sorting and completion. These are technical tasks, which do not require any high level of thinking. Still, they are highly important since they prepare the brain for reading. Even challenged students will not feel the burden of learning, will complete these tasks willingly and, as a result, will improve their phoneme and phonetic awareness.
- **NOTE:** AdvancedSoftRead is available in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and English, so if the student can already read in Hebrew or Arabic, s/he will be able to read all the explanations and the instructions by himself. However, reading may not be enough. The teacher may need to mediate and facilitate the explanations and instructions to students with reading comprehension difficulties.

About the guide

Small groups and individual learning

Teaching can be done individually and in small groups. The guide refers to individual learning but gives highlights and recommendations when taught in small groups, too.

The importance of the guide

SoftRead offers a different and unconventional approach for teaching to read. To guarantee success this guide should be thoroughly studied and accurately followed. The instructions in the book are clear and most of them are self-explanatory. The rationale of the method and extra guidance are provided in this guide. It is essential to follow all the instructions and recommendations, and in the suggested order.

Special features of the AdvancedSoftRead

- **Conversion** - trains the eye to identify letter combinations (patterns) and trains the ear to recognize the sounds and to convert them into the grapheme combinations. The student practices the two-way conversion: to correlate what you hear with what you see, to be able to easily convert audio and visual performances and vice versa.
- **Letter Sounds** - AdvancedSoftRead relates to the sounds of the letter combinations and introduces them through illustrations of well-known words in which those combinations appear.
- **Language** - SoftRead does not use textual clues and does not rely on an understanding of the English language. To achieve fast decoding, meaning is disregarded.
- **New vocabulary** - SoftRead focuses on teaching reading. Some new vocabulary is introduced through the completion exercises. The method does not introduce new vocabulary and is deliberately detached from meaning. Meaningful context is used, first in short sentences and then in stories, but only after acquiring the patterns that appear in them. Patterns will not appear in sentences or stories without first learning them.
- **The goal** – the goal of this book is to teach reading as a technique. The developer of the SoftEnglish method believes that reading is a tool for language acquisition and as such the student needs first to decode and then to attach meaning and to retain it. Retaining and retrieving will be more efficient once decoding is not an obstacle and an inhibitive. (Vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension are taught in our SoftTalk collection.) But the book does offer sentences and stories to implement and practice the learned patterns in a “real environment” of lines and text. Those who speak the language will decode and understand and those who don’t speak the language will just decode. Psychologically speaking, this is a great opportunity to overcome previous fears of sentence and story reading.
- **Activities** - the book uses a wide variety of activities, such as circling, highlighting, sorting and completion. Translation is an option. It is important to emphasize that some activities, like circling and highlighting, should be done **before** the reading assignment, as indicated in the book. . In general, the process of highlighting forces the student to **do the fine and accurate identification** of each letter by itself rather than recognizing the whole word globally. It trains the brain and the eye to distinguish carefully each grapheme independently without seeing the whole word.

- **Structure** - the book is divided into 12 lessons. It has 131 colored pages, including reviews of the basic reading (SoftRead), and pattern reviews at the end.
- **Reading exercises** – long exercises have been split into two. The teacher can read both parts with the students or leave one part as home practice.
- **Home assignments** – it is recommended to assign eye-brain practice of circling in preparation for the next reading assignments.
- **Duration** - depends on the student's age, capabilities, motivation and other factors. Sometimes one lesson will have to be taught in two sessions. The average number of sessions to complete the course is 10 to 14 lessons.
- **Unit structure**

Each unit consists of:

- Pattern introduction with pictures of well-known words
- A pre-reading assignment –circling, marking and highlighting letters and patterns.
- Reading activity – practice reading words

Some units also include:

1. A sorting exercise
 2. Phonetic dictation
 3. Completion assignment
 4. Sentence reading
 5. Story reading
 6. Optional - translation assignment
- **Student's Materials** - the student should have a pencil, preferably a 0.7-point mechanical pencil, an eraser, and highlighters in pink, green, yellow, orange, blue and purple. It is also advisable to buy the SoftRead memory game to play at home for extra practice. Downloadable letters can also be found on the SoftRead website www.anglitanglit.com

Glossary

To help understand the method and the guide, here are some terms that appear in the book, some of which are perhaps unique to SoftRead.

Opening sound refers to the **first sound** we say or hear in every word: **first, fire, famous** and **flamingo** all start with the sound [f] regardless of the next letter or sound.

Unvoweled reading system refers to a system that articulates the **vowels** although they need **not** be **indicated** in writing. In principle, letters, dots, or any other symbol can represent vowels. Hebrew and Arabic are good examples of this phenomenon and that is probably why so many Hebrew/Arabic-speaking students encounter difficulties in understanding the concept of the vowels. In Hebrew the words כבד, אבל, דוד have several pronunciations and meanings. The Hebrew reader cannot be sure about their meaning unless they are embedded within a text. This phenomenon is not common in English (tear and read are examples of the exceptions) and is prevented thanks to the letters that represent the different sounds, the vowels. In Hebrew the vowels (diacritics) may be omitted, but then the reader must rely on textual clues.

Pause/Stop letters - the terms “**stop**” or “**pause**” are used to demonstrate the function of the vowels. The vowels actually make us move and stop whenever we articulate a word. By doing so they form the syllables. There are six letters/sounds, which can make us move and stop: [a], [e], [i], [o], [u] and [y] and they are referred to as **stop letters**.

Pink letters - all the stop letters are highlighted **in pink** and may be referred to as the pink letters.

Yellow letters - refers to the letters **e, i, y** which affect the **c** and the **g**.

The wizard - refers to the **character which** appears on several occasions throughout the book to point out important notes.

Boom words - refers to words with one stop, like **sit, up, Ben** etc.

Teaching Highlights & General Recommendations

Pattern (letter combination) introduction and practice

Each lesson introduces a pattern or a rule. The order of the lessons should be carefully followed and can be seen in the table of contents.

Sound introduction

The sound of each pattern is introduced through images sharing the same audial performance. Rarely, there are 2 sound variations for the same letter or letter combination (such as c, g, th, ea). Then there are more images to cover all sound variations.

IMPORTANT! Although the Hebrew equivalent is sometimes mentioned, it is recommended not to draw the student's attention to it but rather to rely on the images, since it is well known that images are better retained than graphemes or words. It is essential to always refer the student to the image representing the sound rather than saying it for him/her without showing it since the capturing of the image together with the sound will help retain the sound and later retrieve it.

Directionality: even though the student who uses AdvancedSoftRead is expected to have a basic level of reading s/he might still confuse the directionality. It is therefore advisable to add an arrow to mark the correct direction.

Writing

IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATION:

If the student does not achieve the expected writing performance or if his/her handwriting is not as clear as it is expected to be, it is recommended to try and improve it, but to be careful not to make any discouraging remarks. It is a pity to discourage any student because of insufficient motor performance. REMEMBER! Students are often frustrated and sensitive. Also, the main goal of reading and writing is to create a tool to reinforce and foster reading.

TIP: The teacher may suggest writing on other surfaces, such as the classroom whiteboard, a small individual whiteboard or a blank piece of paper, and draw larger lines to allow larger letters. Other recommendations can be found in the SoftRead teacher's guide.

Pre Reading assignment:

After the letter combination has been introduced, pre-reading activities are assigned prior to reading. These activities are a must. Visual distinction and identification by circling and highlighting the combination train the eye to improve and speed up visual identification - first circling then highlighting, and not the other way around. Circling the combinations is essential and must not be skipped. The circling trains the eye/brain to see more than one letter as a whole and only then converts it to the relevant linked sound. Besides the instructions there are always examples to follow.

LESSON 3 - Pages 30-36

This lesson introduces the letters/sounds [c] and [g] with their two sound variations.

Pages 30-31 - Introducing the [c] and [g] and their Common Secret

The two letters [c] and [g] share a “common secret”, a common phenomenon: each of them has two different sounds affected by the same letters. That is their shared secret.

The first sound of g is as in the words gorilla and guitar and the second sound of g is as the name of the letter g (such as in the word giraffe).

C is the second letter, which produces two different sounds.

It can sound like a [k] as in cat, cactus, coffee and Canada, and it can sound like [s] as in Cinderella, pencil, circus or Greece.

Differentiate the Two Sounds of [c]

Again, the same rule is applied as with the g - the yellow letters i, e and y determining the sound of the c. Only if there is a yellow letter after the c is the name of the letter sounded as in Cinderella. If it is followed by any other letter, whether a stop letter or a regular letter, c sounds like a [k], as in clock or cat.

The difference is demonstrated very well in class with the word pencil, or in words like circus and concert.

Pages 32-33 - How to Differentiate the c and g Sounds ?

The rule is very simple: we will hear the name of the letter when it is followed by [i], [e] or [y]. Without those three letters, the g remains as in gorilla and the c remains as in coffee or cat. However, there are several exceptions with regard to the g, such as: gift, together, girl and more.

Page 34 - A Schematic Summary

As mentioned before, schematic summaries are usually the best tool to organize and memorize information. This schematic figure summarizes the various sounds of the c and g : g with the images of the gorilla and the giraffe and c with the images of the cat and Cinderella. While reading, the student should look at this summary and implement the various sounds rather than trying to memorize them, getting frustrated and maybe failing.

Page 35 - Time to Practice c and g

Pre-Reading Assignments

In order to differentiate between the two sounds of c and g, this highlighting assignment is

Page 39 - Introducing the Sounds [sh] and [ch]

The sound of [sh] is demonstrated through the illustrations of **shower**, **shampoo** and **sheriff**. **Shower** may be used only if the student knows the word. [ch] is introduced through **cheetah** and **chips**.

NOTE: When introducing these sounds, it is recommended not to pronounce the names of the letters but only the sound they produce.

The sound sh is very common in Hebrew and the student may think of and suggest many words with the sound sh.

IMPORTANT: sh is represented by one letter in Hebrew. It is important to point out to the student that sometimes there are two letters which make one sound as in sh and ch, but sometimes one letter makes two sounds, as in x .

In Hebrew, in order to produce ch, we need the apostrophe 'כּ' whereas in order to produce x in English we need a different two-letter combination - [ts]. This is all explained at the bottom of **page 39**.

Page 40 - Introducing the [th]

We start by saying that we do not have this sound in Hebrew.

This is again a little complicated:

1. [th] has two sound variations
2. In Hebrew neither sound exists but in Arabic they do. More about the resemblance to Arabic in the AdvancedSoftRead Arabic version.

The easiest way to explain to non-native speakers of English how to pronounce th is by telling them to stick the tip of the tongue out slightly. One [th] sounds more like s (but with the tip of the tongue out) as in **three**, **thin** and **think**, and the other sounds more like z (but with the tip of the tongue out) as in **father**, **mother** and **brother**.

At the bottom of **page 40** there is a schematic figure that demonstrates this visually.

Pages 41-43 – sh, ch and th practice

1. Circle **sh**, **ch** and **th**
2. Highlight according to instructions in the student's book.
3. If still needed, circle the stop letters with their preceding letters