

# SoftRead teacher's guide

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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.

		YoungSoft-Read * <sup>1</sup>	SoftRead* <sup>2</sup>	Advanced SoftRead* <sup>3</sup>
Language	English	✓	✓	✓
	Hebrew	✓	✓	✓
	Arabic		✓	✓
Level	Beginners	✓	✓	
	Intermediate			✓
Age	4 – 7	✓		
	7– 8+		✓	
	10 +			✓
Suitability factors	Age, learning difficulties, and learning maturity.	1 <sup>st</sup> (for very young learners or students with specific learning difficulties)	1 <sup>st</sup> (for students aged 7-8+)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (for students with basic understanding and proficiency in reading)

		YoungSoft-Read <sup>*1</sup>	SoftRead <sup>*2</sup>	Advanced SoftRead <sup>*3</sup>
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.
Content	All letters & 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			✓

		YoungSoft-Read <sup>*1</sup>	SoftRead <sup>*2</sup>	Advanced SoftRead <sup>*3</sup>
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 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 visually, to highlight them and to effortlessly recognize the **sound units** 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 sounds of the letters, immediately connects them to “sound units” 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.

After the acquisition of basic reading (decoding), the reading-spelling patterns are introduced and practiced, once again, with no textual clues, in the next book, AdvancedSoftRead.

## Target student \*

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

\*whether or not they are native speakers of English



## 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 the book is not to teach vocabulary, although it does show some real words, and introduces vocabulary through illustrations based on the acquired letters. The Hebrew translation also appears, but upside down, so that the eye catches the image rather than the Hebrew word.
- 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 highlighting, circling, copying and sorting. These are technical tasks, which do not require any high level of thinking. Still, they are highly important since they prepare the eye for reading, and even reluctant students will do them. Sticker pages are also included as reviews. The students are asked to choose which image best helps them remember a specific sound. The fact that they can choose and can take an active role makes the learning process more effective. Again, 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.



## 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 game activities are mostly for groups but it is always indicated.

### 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 as well as extra activities. It is essential to follow all the instructions and recommendations, and in the suggested order.

Additional printable materials can be found on our website: [www.softenglish.io](http://www.softenglish.io)



## Special features of the method

- **Conversion** - trains the eye to identify individual graphemes and, later - letter combinations (patterns). It also trains the ear to recognize the sounds and to convert them into graphemes or, later - grapheme combinations. The student practices the two-way conversion between the sounds and the letters: to correlate what you hear with what you see, to be able to easily convert audio and visual performances and vice versa.
- **Order** - SoftRead introduces all the letters of the English alphabet and their sounds but in a different order. (See the chart at the end of the guide).
- **Letter Sounds** - SoftRead relates to the sounds of the letters and introduces them through symbols, mostly cognates, whose opening sounds are equivalent to and represent the sounds of the letters. Sometimes other words, like dog, dollar, New York, green and more were needed. These should, of course, be introduced prior to their usage.
- **Sound units** - SoftRead trains the learner to immediately connect each sound to another into what is here called “sound units” (syllables).
- **Upper case letters** - SoftRead does not pay a lot of attention to upper case letters. Learning to read is sometimes difficult enough so why increase the difficulty with a double alphabetic system? The ultimate goal is to master the reading technique. Once the student has achieved this goal, the upper case letters can be introduced and will easily be integrated. Nevertheless, the upper case letters are introduced in each corresponding lesson.
- **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. Only a little new vocabulary is introduced through images based on the learned letters. The goal of this book is to teach reading as a technique. (Vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension are taught in our SoftTalk collection.)
- **Activities** - the book uses a wide variety of activities, such as circling, highlighting, sorting, copying, comparing, and filling in the blanks. It is important to emphasize that some activities, like circling and highlighting, should be done before the reading assignment, as indicated in the book.

- **Games** - throughout the guide various games are offered to enhance phonological awareness and to support the learning process. Most of these games are best suited for small groups of students and not for large groups. In addition, there is the SoftRead memory game, which introduces and practices the opening sounds of two images per corresponding letter and then practices correlating the letter to the sound. The images and the letters can also be used as flash cards to make up words.
- **Structure** - the book is divided into 10 lessons. It has 150 colored pages with 5 pages of colorful stickers at the end for review purposes. There are more stickers than needed, so the student can choose which illustration best suits his/her representation of the sound and will best be retained.
- **Duration** - depends on the student's age, capabilities, motivation and other factors. Sometimes two lessons can be taught together in one session. The average number of sessions to complete the course is 8 to 12 lessons.

- **Unit structure**

Each unit consists of:

1. Letter-sound, introduced through symbols
2. Grapheme writing - demonstration and practice
3. Pre-reading assignments – highlighting and circling letters
4. Reading activity – reading practice of “words” (mostly nonsense words).

Some units also include:

1. A copying activity
2. A sorting exercise
3. A matching activity
4. A sticker assignment
5. Phonetic dictation
6. Practicing illustrated vocabulary



- **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](http://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.

**Final sound** refers to the **final sound** we say or hear in every word: **got, bit, bite expect, brilliant** all end with the sound [t] regardless of the preceding 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 כבוד, 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 that 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.

**“Bridge” letters** - refers to the letters **n, m, h** and **r**. This definition comes from the way they are written.

- n: a line with one “bridge”
- m: a line with two “bridges”
- h: a tall line with one “bridge”
- r: a line with half a/small “bridge”

**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.

**Sound units** - refers to the circled units of a stop letter and its preceding letter or letters (known as a syllable).

# Teaching Highlights & General Recommendations

## Letter (phoneme and grapheme) introduction and practice

Each lesson introduces several letters in a specific order, which should be carefully followed. The order can be seen in the table of contents and in the chart at the end of the book.

- **Sound introduction**

The sounds are introduced through three images sharing the same opening sound as the grapheme. Rarely, there are 2 sound variations for the same letter or letter combination (c, g, th). Then there are more images to cover all sound variations.

The equivalent letter in Hebrew is mentioned only if it is a consonant and if it produces exactly the same sound, except for the letter **u**, which is introduced through the Hebrew words **ענף** and **עלה**, **אבטיח**.

**IMPORTANT!** Although the Hebrew equivalent consonant is 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 letters.

- **Grapheme introduction and practice**

Once the sound has been introduced, the graphic representation is shown. As mentioned before, capital letters are not practiced, they are briefly introduced and then again at the end of each lesson as part of a summary.

- **Grapheme writing**

The book facilitates writing and directionality by indicating arrows and dots to trace. In addition, there are points in **red**, **pink** and **light blue** to indicate the start and end points, and even intermediate points where necessary.

The central lines are colored **blue**. All letters are written between the central blue lines. Some are "tall" and some "fall" to the lower lines. Letters start from the top or like the letter c.

**TIP:** In order to demonstrate the writing direction, from top to bottom, the student may be asked to raise his/her hands to indicate the top and then drop them to indicate the bottom. Or to form with his fingers an almost closed circle to form the C.

**IMPORTANT:** Always draw the student's attention to the correct writing/reading direction. Hebrew and Arabic readers may face more difficulties here due to the opposite directionality.



**TIP:** When the student gets confused about the reading/writing direction, it is 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 be careful not to make any discouraging remarks. It is a pity to discourage any student because of insufficient motor performance. REMEMBER! Our students are often frustrated and sensitive. Also, our main goal in reading and writing practice is a tool to reinforce the 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. Forming the letter “in the air” on in sand, or making letters of clay are also good ideas. Another recommended way is to form the letter using the index finger before using a pencil, or tracing a written letter with the index finger. The teacher can even lightly hold the student’s index finger and lead it. Highlighters may also be used instead of pencils.

### **Pre Reading assignment:**

After the phoneme and the grapheme have been introduced and practiced, pre-reading activities are assigned: first visual identification and then sound unit recognition. Hence, before each reading assignment, the student is asked to highlight one or more specific letters, and then find the stop letter and circle it together with its preceding letter in order to train the eye to identify the sound units. Stop letters are always highlighted in pink, and that is why they are also called “pink letters”. Each pink/stop letter is circled together with the letter preceding it because each stop letter “belongs” to the letter before it. If there is no letter before the stop letter because it is the opening letter, it is not circled but only highlighted. This stop letter stands on its own.

As the student becomes better trained he/she may be exempt from circling, because it is now done automatically in the student’s mind.

### **The importance of decoding**

It is essential for the student to decode and read on his/her own rather than repeat after the teacher. Repeating after the teacher does not involve decoding, and leads to learning by heart and dependency. The student must become an independent decoder; must learn to visually

identify and then convert and connect the sounds. The best way to help the students is by directing him/her to the images so he/she can remember the sounds, and to help him/her to identify and “sound out” the sound units. Once the student succeeds where he/she first faced difficulty or failed, he/she will be encouraged to continue the process and encounter the next challenge.

- **Reading practice**

Only after completing the pre-reading assignments is the student ready for reading. This is the first time the student will be doing this kind of assignment, so it is essential for the teacher to supervise him/her closely. In a group of 3 to 5, each student can read 3 to 4 words and then it is advisable to change turns, so as not to make it too long for the reader or too boring for the listeners. At first, the student is given only a few words to read.

- **Written assignments:**

Whenever the book gives a written assignment, it is advisable to encourage and engage the student to also provide examples of his/her own. Even nonsense words are accepted as long as the student can read what he/she has written and as long as the words follow the rules. Personal involvement enhances the learning process and assures future autonomous writing production.

- **Copy assignments:**

These exercises occasionally appear after the reading assignment and help the student review the introduced letters and sounds. Such exercises, as many others, are simple and easy and thus have a positive and reassuring effect on the process, and encourage the student to continue with the learning process.

- **Phonetic dictation:**

Phonetic dictation is an extremely useful tool. It assists in understanding and implementing the linkage and correlation between the phoneme and the grapheme. The first dictation is on page 41, but the teacher may give dictation as early as the first lesson, instead of or following the copy assignments. The more dictation is used, the easier and faster the learning-to-read process becomes.

It is also recommended to create multi-syllable and clustered words, both of which always intimidate students who are learning to read and write.

**IMPORTANT!** The more difficult the process of converting and connecting the sounds, the more dictation is recommended. Dictation is a terrific tool to feel the rhythm of the words, to learn how many stop letters are needed and where to place them. They help to implement the conversion from sound to writing: what sounds and how many stops, as



well as where to place each stop. Writing names like Elizabeth shouldn't be difficult at all. All the student has to do is - listen and convert.



- **Sticker assignment:**

At the end of each lesson, there is a sticker assignment, which reviews all the letters of that lesson and their correlating images. This reviews the sounds the letters make. Following the lessons summary, there are more sticker assignments, to review all the letters and sounds as an overall review. As mentioned before, the student may choose the images out of the collection offered.

**More detailed explanations, recommendations and tips are provided subsequently.**

**REMEMBER!** What is obvious to the average teacher or parent may not be obvious to your students. What is clear and natural to a student who does not have any reading challenges, may be an enormous challenge for a reader who has dyslexia.

## **Page 8 - Opening sounds, final sounds and stop letters**

As part of the pre-reading training, the goal of this part is to raise the student's phonetic awareness. The student should learn to identify and separate the opening and the final sounds of each word, and also to "feel" and identify the rhythm of each word and the number of stops in it.

This can be done first by using the students' names:

**Teacher:** What is your name?

Student: David

**Teacher:** What is the first sound of your name?

Answers like "da" or the names of the letters d, a, or in the student's native language are **not** the desirable answers. Here are questions to clarify:

**Teacher:** What is the very first sound the mouth makes/utters? Even before the [da] sound? We want to hear the student say just [d]. **Frida** is an easy example since the [f] sound is part of a cluster but in Fatima the [f] should also be separated from the following [a]. Ask other students and analyze their names with their classmates. [r] for Rebecca, [t] for Tim, [g] for Gabriel, [m] for Maram. Special attention should be dedicated to names, which begin with vowels such as [e] for Elinor, [o] for Oliver or [a] for Anwar.



## Final Sounds

In the same way, the final sounds should be practiced using students' names and items inside and outside the classroom.

In Daniel, the final sound is [l]....

In Aaron, the final sound is [n]....

In Intisar, the final sound is [r]...

**IMPORTANT:** It is essential for the teacher to pronounce and articulate the sounds very clearly! The goal of this exercise is to train the student to identify and separate sounds out of a sound cluster i.e. to be able to articulate the sound of a letter without a vowel next to it like [f] in flag, [p] in place, [s] in sting, [g] in glad.



## Stop letters and sound units

As mentioned before, understanding the concept of the stop letters is crucial to reading acquisition. If difficulties have been detected, understanding the concept of the stop letters will be a game changer. Sometimes it is worth explaining to the students about the “unvoweled” Hebrew system versus the “voweled” European languages. (This has been explained in the introduction). This is a good place to mention that text messages in Hebrew are always shorter than in English.

## The stop concept introduction

In English, the words “pause” or “stop” may be used interchangeably. In this case the word “stop” is preferred. It is universally used and is even known as a universal traffic sign. The stop sign can be used to show the student when to stop when he/she reads. It is an expressive and pragmatic method, since we want to train the student to stop whenever a stop letter appears. Wherever there is a stop letter, we must stop. And vice versa – whenever we hear a stop, we must put a stop letter!

## Detailed explanation

The pause is what marks the rhythm, the music or rhythmus of each word. By means of pausing, we can divide the words into sound units (traditionally referred to as syllables).

The explanation on pages 8 and 9 demonstrates how many times one can stop in each name: two, three or more.

## Page 10 – Written assignment

### Sort the names according to the number of stops.

After explaining and practicing in class by moving, jumping or clapping, the students are now ready for their written assignment.

At the top of the page, there is a list of names in the student's native language. The student reads the names and marks a **yellow** dot to show the division according to the stops. The next step is to copy the names into their corresponding columns according to the number of stops.

**NOTE:** The teacher may read the words to those who have difficulty in reading them, even though they are in their native language.

On page 11, short names like **Gil, Ben** and **Paz, Jad** as well as short words like **run** or **sit** can be used. These words cannot be divided by stops but still have one stop. They are called BOOM words according to the SoftRead method.

It is crucial for the students to understand that in every word there is at least one stop!

At the bottom of page 11, the six pause indicators are mentioned – six letters or their combinations that indicate a pause. These letters are **a, e, i, o, u,** and **y** which sometimes also functions as a stop letter.

To achieve a full understanding of the “stop” concept and to “feel” the movements of a word, the teacher may hold the student's hands and “move” with him/her according to the number of stops to demonstrate the movements.

**Game Activity:** Feel and identify the stops (individual student or small groups). This activity will be integrated into the lessons throughout the book.

**Activity No. 1:** The teacher says a word or a name. The students clap or jump to the “music” of the word, as many times as the number of stops they can identify in the word.

**Activity No. 2:** The teacher says a word or a name. The students move around the classroom taking big steps, and stop according to the number of stops in the word.

**Activity No. 3:** As suggested above, but instead of the teacher - a volunteer chooses what to say.

**Activity No. 4:** The students are asked to bring in pictures of family members, friends or famous people, dead or alive, and then practice the opening and final sounds of their names and the stop concept.

**Activity No. 5:** The teacher writes several names in the students' native language on pieces of paper and scatters them on the floor or on the desks. The teacher then makes a chart on the board with four different columns to indicate the amount of stops (1, 2, 3 or more than 3). The students stand at the rear of the room, far from where the pieces of paper are. When the game begins, the teacher calls out a name from one of the pieces, and one student at a time looks for the word. Once the student finds the name, he or she writes it on the board in the correct column according to the number of stops in the name. The words are written in the students' native language. This game is not appropriate for young students who cannot read yet.

**Activity No. 6:** Corner-Stop

This is a more dynamic way of making students understand the concept of stops. All students stand in the middle of the classroom. The teacher assigns a number of stops to each corner of the classroom (like sorting to columns, but instead of columns - using the room corners). The teacher says a name and the students run to the corner with the same number of stops as in the name. Now other words can also be used, such as colors, animals, nouns etc. based on the students' level.

**Page 12 - Written assignment:**

**Sort the names according to the number of stops.**

This assignment is done in the student's native language.

The assignment has two parts: first to sort names given by the teacher, but this time longer ones, into the columns according to the number of stops, and then to use names chosen by the students, such as family members, friends, neighbors and relatives. The second part enables the student to be personally involved in the process and to bring in names from his own world.

**Page 13 - Practice**

**The Flags**

Flags fascinate children. This is why, on this page, you will find some flags of countries, which are later used to demonstrate letter sounds. They can also be used to practice opening and final sounds.



## Lesson 1

### Page 14 - Introducing the first sound - [b].

As mentioned before, we refer to the sounds of the letters rather than to their names.

The first sound [b] is demonstrated through the illustrations of **banana**, **blue** and **black**. It is important to practice the sound of the letter with no vowel next to it since it often appears as part of a sound cluster. The students may suggest more names and objects starting and ending with [b], even in their native language.

**IMPORTANT:** Make sure that all the students know all the symbols prior to introducing the letter.

At the bottom of page 14, the **wizard** introduces the capital **B**.



### Page 15 - Grapheme introduction and practice

As mentioned in the introduction, the book facilitates letter forming. It indicates the directions by using arrows, it shows the form with the help of traceable dots and indicates the starting point, the final point and the intermediate points by means of colors.

The starting point is identified by a **red** dot.

The intermediate point is marked by a **blue** dot.

The final point is represented by a **pink** dot.

All the “bellies” of the letters **d**, **b**, **g**, **o** and **q** are written between the central **blue lines**.

The first lines are a little broader. They slowly reduce to standard sizes. This is, of course, to help the student with his/her motor skills.

**IMPORTANT!** Although the Hebrew equivalent consonant is 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 letters.

**NOTE:** Remember to draw the student’s attention to the writing direction. It should be emphasized that English, unlike Hebrew and Arabic, is written from left to right.

**Remember, what is obvious to you may not be obvious to your students.**

**NOTE:** If students get confused, an arrow may be drawn to mark the writing direction.

**IMPORTANT:** If the student does not achieve the expected performance, do not make

any remarks but carry on. It is unwise to discourage any student because of insufficient motor performance.

**RECOMMENDATION:** If a student experiences motor difficulties, YoungSoftRead may be recommended since it offers more diversified activities, such as coloring, matching, cutting and pasting and more. These activities are most suitable for young learners and for students with special needs.



### Page 17 - Introducing the sound [o] – the first stop letter

The second sound presented is the [o]. If the stop concept has not yet been introduced, it should be done now. If it has, it should be reviewed.

The [o] sound is introduced through the words **organ**, **orange**, **on** and **Australia**. It is crucial to introduce the letter through its images and not by its name.

**REMEMBER** - in Hebrew, the color orange and the fruit are different words.

**Activity:** There are illustrations of two boys: **Omer** and **Ophir**, but together with the students more names may be mentioned, such as: Oliver, Oren, Ofer, Olivia etc. It is a good idea to think of famous people whose names begin with the sound [o] and bring their pictures to the classroom. (Obama is a great example.)

A practical way to demonstrate to Hebrew speakers that [o] is a stop letter: The teacher says: Let us say we have a dog named Bobo. How many times can we stop when we call him? Bo-bo. The answer is twice. Now, if we want to say בוא בובו , we say bo bo-bo and we can hear three stops. This means that [o] is a stop letter.

### Game activities to practice the stop letter [o]:

**Activity No. 1:** The teacher or a student say a word or a name. The students clap or jump to the rhythm of the word according to the number of stops they can identify in the word.

**Activity No. 2:** The teacher says a word and the students move around the classroom taking big steps, and stop according to the number of stops in the word.

**In both activities nonsense words may be used and they should have mostly the sound [o] as stops.**

## Page 18 - Grapheme introduction and practice

The starting point of **o** is mid-way between the two central **blue lines**. There is the **red dot** and an arrow to demonstrate the correct writing direction. The starting point between the lines is essential for a nice round **o**.

## Page 19 - First Reading activity - connecting two letters

### Pre-reading activities

The student is asked to highlight all the **o** letters in **pink**. (Throughout the learning process all stop letters are highlighted in **pink**.) After highlighting, the student circles the **pink**-highlighted letter with its preceding letter to identify and form the “sound units”. **There is always an example to follow**. Here one line is done as an example. And there is even an arrow to indicate the reading direction.

**Reading** - only after completing the pre-reading assignments will the student be ready for reading. This is the first time the student will be doing this kind of assignment, so it is essential for the teacher to supervise him/her closely. In a group of three to five, each student can read three or four words and then it is advisable to change turns, so as not to make it too long for the reader or too boring for the listeners. At first, the student is given only a few words to read.

**NOTE:** SoftRead is available in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and English, so if the student can already read in Hebrew or Arabic, he/she 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.

**IMPORTANT:** It is essential for the student to read by him/herself, and not repeat after the teacher. The student is expected to decode, convert and connect the sounds on his/her own. Do not read the “words” out loud to the student because that would just be repetition! If a student has difficulty, simply draw the student’s attention to the circles and the sound units, and even point to them using his/her own finger. It is also recommended to conceal the other letters when pointing to the circled units.

**REMEMBER:** Repetitions do not lead to independent reading, but rather, to parrot learning and global capturing and global reading.

Whenever a student forgets a sound, he/she should look back at the images. If the student has not acquired the habit of doing so, direct him/her to find the images. The teacher need

not remind the student of the sound or the image, but should rather motivate him/her to act. Doing the job on his/her own will help to retain the information.

**REMINDER:** Always refer to the images



### **Additional activity:**

An optional, encouraging, reading-related activity for struggling or reluctant students is to train their audial-visual recognition. The teacher reads words from the page and the students find and point to them. Since this process is easier, it encourages the students and assures them they can do it! It is also an opportunity for the student to hear and learn the correct pronunciation.

### **Copy assignment**

At the bottom of page 19 is the first copy assignment. Again, since it is an easy assignment, it has a great positive effect on the student and encourages him/her to continue with the learning process.

**REMEMBER:** Assignments do not always have to be complicated, difficult or challenging! A good book should always provide easygoing assignments, as well, to avoid intimidation and frustration.

### **Phonetic dictation**

Although there is no indication on this page to do a phonetic dictation, remember that this is an extremely useful tool for understanding the reading technique. It is highly recommended to give as much phonetic dictation as possible. As always, the student should refer back to the images when he/she is not sure. Finding out independently what letter should be used is particularly helpful for long-term memory.