

## Just Right Reader's Theory of Action

### What We Do

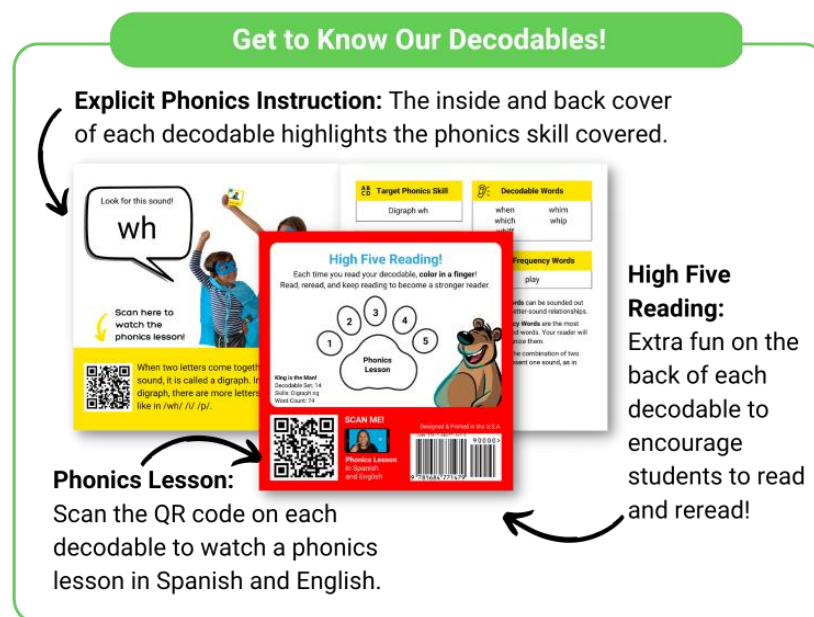
Just Right Reader's Science of Reading decodables accelerate reading achievement with over 380+ research-based decodable titles filled with vibrant illustrations, engaging authentic stories, and diverse characters that represent students in America's schools. We offer two engaging ways to support literacy growth in every context, from instruction in the classroom to at-home learning.



Founded by educators, we designed our decodables to follow a rigorous phonics progression supported by the latest science of reading research. Phonics instruction is reinforced with a QR code on each decodable linking to a digital phonics lesson in Spanish and English—a great tool for classrooms and families.

### Why It's Important

Research proves when students want to read and feel successful, their achievement rises! From the covers to the content, our decodables are intentionally designed to inspire students, support teachers, and empower families to participate in their children's reading activities to continue strengthening phonics instruction and high-frequency words.



Our key research focuses include:

## ★ Rigorous Phonics Progression

Our decodables follow a rigorous color-coded scope and sequence beginning with the six most common letters so students can establish a strong foundation and read simple vowel consonant words from day one. High-frequency words are strategically placed to support reading fluency and allow for a more robust set of words within each phonics skill.

The collage displays several project management templates:

- Top Left:** A Gantt chart with a header 'Executive Summary' and a table showing tasks (Task 1, Task 2, Task 3) with their durations (10, 15, 20) and start/end dates (10/1/2010, 10/15/2010, 10/30/2010).
- Top Right:** A PERT chart showing a network of activities (Activity 1, Activity 2, Activity 3) with their durations (10, 15, 20) and start/end dates (10/1/2010, 10/15/2010, 10/30/2010).
- Middle Left:** A Gantt chart with a header 'Task 1' and a table showing tasks (Task 1, Task 2, Task 3) with their durations (10, 15, 20) and start/end dates (10/1/2010, 10/15/2010, 10/30/2010).
- Middle Right:** A PERT chart showing a network of activities (Activity 1, Activity 2, Activity 3) with their durations (10, 15, 20) and start/end dates (10/1/2010, 10/15/2010, 10/30/2010).
- Bottom Left:** A Gantt chart with a header 'Task 1' and a table showing tasks (Task 1, Task 2, Task 3) with their durations (10, 15, 20) and start/end dates (10/1/2010, 10/15/2010, 10/30/2010).
- Bottom Right:** A PERT chart showing a network of activities (Activity 1, Activity 2, Activity 3) with their durations (10, 15, 20) and start/end dates (10/1/2010, 10/15/2010, 10/30/2010).

## ★ Characters and Stories That Represent All of America's Schools



Based on the research behind “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors,” our decodables have engaging, full-color illustrations depicting characters representative of students in America’s schools. The decodables incorporate meaningful and modern storylines that excite students and provide opportunities to recognize their phonics, phonemic awareness, and blending skills.

### ★ Deep Family Engagement: QR Code Phonics Lessons and Take-Home Decodable Boxes



Family engagement in a child's literacy journey benefits their development and academic outcomes, yet many times caregivers just do not know how to help. We bridge the gap between classroom and in-home learning by offering Take-Home Decodable Boxes and QR codes linking to phonics lessons in Spanish and English. These were created for caregivers to have an accessible, easy way to participate in their child's reading journey.

### ★ Quick and Easy Implementation

As educators, we designed decodables that are easy to implement for everyone! We help teachers and districts add our decodables into their students' literacy journey by:

- Differentiating Take-Home Decodable Boxes for each student
- Stating the phonics lesson, focus skills, and high-frequency words used in each decodable
- Color-coding the decodable text progression for easy identification
- Including video phonics lessons to support small group instruction



## The Research Behind Just Right Reader Decodables

### Why Decodables?



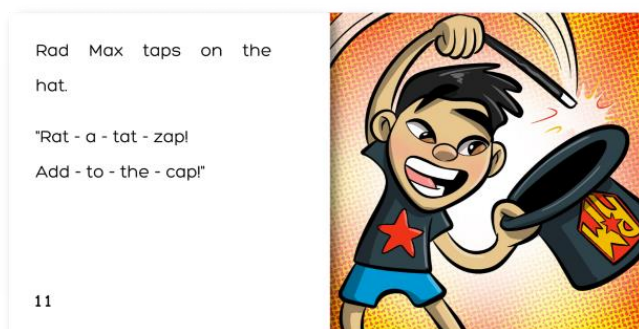
Decodable texts are books for beginning readers that only contain phonetic code students have already learned. This means students can read every word presented to them. Dr. Wiley Blevins, Ed.M., adds the key to successful phonics instruction is providing multiple opportunities to read decodable words (n.d.). If students read texts containing a high percentage of decodable words, they are more likely to “surpass the reading abilities of their peers who've

been taught with implicit phonics instruction” which relies on using clues for sound-spelling relationships (Blevins, n.d., par.8). Just Right Reader’s decodables contain at least 85% decodable words.



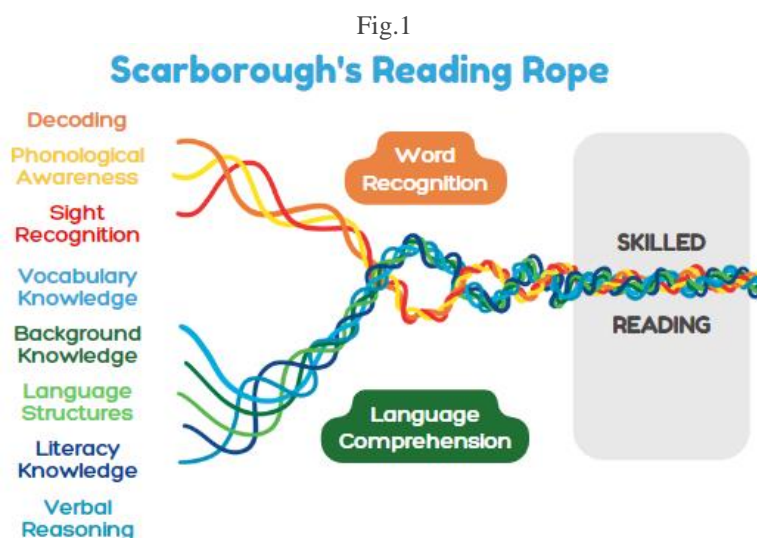
Dr. Heidi Anne Mesmer, Ph.D. introduces the research behind Just Right Reader Decodables

Dr. Heidi Anne Mesmer, Ph.D., explains when “beginners read decodable books, they apply their knowledge of...grapheme [and] phoneme correspondences and demonstrate robust year-end decoding” (2022, par.2). Reading decodables helps children become more accurate readers, rely less on the teacher, and apply phonics more frequently (Lindsey, 2022).



In education, there is a massive recognition that several children do not demonstrate sufficient oral reading fluency. Contrary to the belief more comprehension strategy was needed, the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress [report](#) revealed a critical gap between decoding and foundational literacy. To address this, Just Right Reader decodables were designed by

teachers and researchers to imbed Scarborough's Reading Rope (Fig.1) strategies of word recognition and language comprehension together, benefitting all learners.



Scarborough, H.S. (2001). Handbook for research in early literacy (pp.97-110). New York, NY: Gulliford Press.

Just Right Reader works closely with literacy experts including D. Ray Reutzel, Ph.D., Dr. Julia Lindsey, and Dr. Heidi Anne Mesmer, Ph.D., to incorporate the latest research into our decodables. This includes the following:

### Rigorous Phonics Progression

Before students begin reading, it is important they are set up for success by using decodables which match what they have been taught and learned (Mesmer, 2022). Just Right Reader's decodables follow a rigorous color-coded scope and sequence, listing the specific phonics skills and high-frequency words used (Fig. 2). Additionally, Just Right Reader's Take-Home Decodable Boxes use individual student reading data provided by districts to ensure students receive differentiated decodables.

"Children's knowledge of letter names and sounds is the best predictor of their later reading and spelling abilities" (Piasta & Wagner, 2010, p.8). Just Right Reader's phonics progression begins with the six most common letters so students can establish a strong foundation and read simple vowel consonant words from day one. Sound introduction, digraphs, and trigraphs follow. Each part of the continuum builds on previous skills and teaches phonics explicitly, supporting students as they apply phonics rules to increasingly complex decodables.

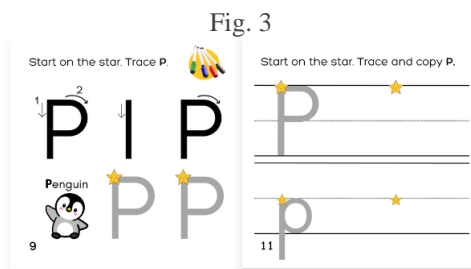
Fig. 2

AB CD Target Phonics Skill	Decodable Words
Short /û/ CVC Words	bus    Bud    put fun    hut    tub gum    lug    yum
<b>Blending Fun</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start with the first letter. Make its sound.</li> <li>Add the next sound.</li> <li>Exaggerate and stretch out the vowel sound.</li> <li>Make the final letter sound.</li> <li>Ask your reader to blend the sounds and listen for a word.</li> </ul>	<b>High-Frequency Words</b> <div>and      we look</div>

**Decodable Words** can be sounded out based on the letter-sound relationships.  
**High-Frequency Words** are the most commonly used words. Your reader will begin to recognize them.  
**CVC Words** are consonant-vowel-consonant words, like cap or big. The vowel sound is always short.



This involves introducing high-frequency words essential to sentence construction (Mesmer, 2022). Just Right Reader’s decodables strategically place high-frequency words to allow for a more robust set of words within each phonics skill and support fluency development (Lindsey, 2022).



Focusing on younger readers, Just Right Reader partnered with D. Ray Reutzel, Ph.D., on the Pre-K decodables. These include dry erase pages to help readers practice their letter formations to reinforce their decoding skills (Fig. 3). This component is supported by research from Piasta and Wagner (2010) revealing “multi-componential alphabet instruction yielded the best outcomes on letter name, sound knowledge, and writing ability” (Reutzel, 2022, par.1). It also fulfills the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) expectations for proficiency in letter discrimination, letter naming, and letter–sound correspondences during the kindergarten year (1998).

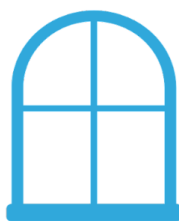
### Characters and Stories That Represent All of America’s Schools

Just Right Reader decodables have engaging, full-color illustrations depicting characters representative of students in America’s schools. This is purposeful and based on the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop’s “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.”



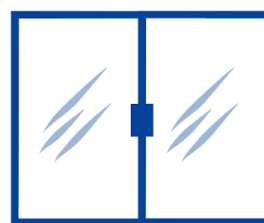
#### Mirrors

Help children see themselves and their own experiences



#### Windows

Help children learn about other people, places, and experiences.



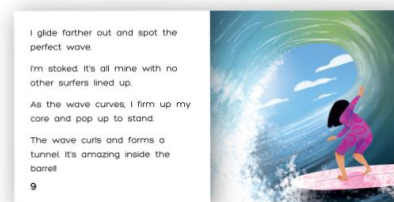
#### Sliding Glass Doors

Allow children to enter the “book world” through their imagination.



Bishop’s work is a metaphor for the importance of sharing multicultural literature with children and highlights the need to examine literature for “issues related to authenticity and...cultural details” which makes children’s literature distinct (Harris, 2007; McNair & Edwards, 2021, p.210). When students are exposed to diverse literature from a young age, they develop empathy, form personal connections, and have diminished prejudicial thoughts about race (Coon, 2012).

While Bishop's work emphasizes race, Just Right Reader's decodables include various storylines and identity markers as there are "multiple aspects to our identities, [and] consequently...a number of ways in which we can see ourselves reflected" (McNair, 2016, p.379). Dr. Julia Lindsey adds decodables need to be engaging for kids to understand that they can read. Incorporating meaningful and modern storylines (some involving ninjas, surfing, and lizards!) gives readers opportunities to recognize their phonics, phonemic awareness, and blending skills by reading something which actually makes sense to them (2022).



To support and engage older emerging readers from second to fifth grade, Just Right Reader's Decodable Plus Library offers decodable chapter books targeting phonograms, prefixes, suffixes, and word endings. They include educational and captivating content on subjects including planets and endangered animals.

## Building Deep Family Engagement: QR Code Phonics Lessons and Take-Home Decodables Boxes

Family involvement in children's learning at home can "impact lifelong health, developmental and academic outcomes" (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2020, par.2). Yet, many caregivers do not understand child development or appropriate practices to feel confident in helping (Kirkwood, 2016). Just Right Reader designed Take-Home Decodable Boxes and QR code phonics lessons to address this issue, encouraging family involvement in student literacy growth.

### Take-Home Decodable Boxes

The Take-Home Decodable Boxes break down some of the barriers to family engagement by cutting down on time commitments needed, giving caregivers a low stakes way of entering their students' educational pursuits. Using district-provided data, Take-Home Decodable Boxes include ten decodables specific to each student's individual phonics skill level, along with a Book of Fun or Writing Sketchbook. These decodables are specially wrapped to mimic the fun of opening a gift students get to keep and use at home!



### QR Code Phonics Lessons

Each take-home decodable has a QR code linking to a phonics lesson in Spanish and English (with more languages to come). Caregivers can watch the video alongside their children to be involved in their

progress and understand the curriculum being taught. By having phonics lessons in Spanish, Just Right Reader makes family involvement more accessible.

## Quick and Easy Implementation

Founded by educators, Just Right Reader recognizes the importance of easy school implementation. With collectively decades of experience in schools working with students, the Just Right Reader team created decodables in a way to minimize teacher time and maximize student learning by:

- Differentiating Take-Home Decodable Boxes for each student
- Stating the phonics lesson, focus skills, and high-frequency words used in each decodable
- Color-coding the decodable text progression for easy identification
- Including video phonics lessons to support small group instruction

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