

# *Phonics* FOR DUMMIES®

by Susan M. Greve



Wiley Publishing, Inc.



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# *About the Author*

**Susan M. Greve** has been a reading specialist for 23 years. She taught first and second grade for four years and has been a publisher, editor, and a reading and curriculum consultant for schools and home-schooling parents.

Susan's methods of teaching phonics are based on those of Sister Monica Foltzer, OSU (Order of Saint Ursula), who was a nationally known pioneer in the field of phonics. Prior to her death in 2001, Sister Monica was a teacher, guidance counselor, principal, and a reading and curriculum consultant. Susan was a student of Sister Monica's at the Institute in Intensive Phonics at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 1997, Susan acquired Sister Monica's Professor Phonics Systems and has published and edited the Professor Phonics series ever since. Her day job includes her book business and tutoring. Susan developed a reading assessment test that has been very successful in analyzing reading problems and helping numerous children and adults. Susan hosts a website, [www.professorphonics.com](http://www.professorphonics.com), and has done phonics workshops across the country. She was the project manager of the *Professor Phonics with Me and My Mouse* CD-ROM.

Susan attended Mercy School of Nursing, which at the time was affiliated with Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She considers her nursing experience a great aid in helping her assess children with learning weaknesses.

Susan lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, with her husband. She teaches her grandchildren to read and enjoys spending time traveling, sewing, reading, and gardening.





# *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to Sister Monica Foltzer, OSU.



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# Introduction

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**W**hen the subject of phonics comes up at a PTA luncheon or a family gathering, I see many parents scratching their heads. My reputation as a phonics tutor ultimately brings them to approach me with comments like these:

- ✓ “I can read okay, but my spelling is atrocious. Is this because of the way I learned in grade school?”
- ✓ “I never learned from the phonics approach. Maybe that’s why I hate to read so much.”
- ✓ “I was always labeled as one of the slow kids because I had so much trouble reading. Do you think it was because we didn’t have phonics training?”

Every one of these parents shares the same fear and desire. They want to protect their children from the kind of problems they had to endure. And I give every one of them the same answer: All the children I’ve helped could master any subject after they caught on to reading.

Most phonics books are written for teachers. This book is for anyone. If you want to know what phonics is, how to use it, and how important it is in learning to speak, read, write, and spell, you’ll benefit from this book.

After you understand the value of phonics, you realize how far your — or your child’s — reading skills can advance. I destroy the myth that phonics works only for some people and assert that phonics helps 100 percent of the time. And reading well is the first step to unlocking all the opportunities available to everyone. Many people think phonics is much more complicated than it actually is. To put it simply, phonics is merely about sliding sounds of letters together to make words. It’s a science of application and is under the umbrella of linguistics. Its popularity has grown due to the fact that educators now acknowledge that learning phonics is of the utmost necessity in teaching children to read, write, spell, and speak.

The word *phonics* has become a household word (mostly due to a little voice on the radio that says “Hooked on Phonics works for me!”). The phonics revolution that began in the last ten years has made many products available, such as LeapFrog educational games, Reader Rabbit, and Hooked on Phonics, to name a few. Besides the games, companies develop plenty of TV programs, CDs, videos, and DVDs for phonics. Even though technology has definitely

narrowed the gap between home and school, the requirements for a good reader haven't changed. A good reader is able to recognize words instantly, has superb word attack skills, comprehends what she's reading, and applies her skills on a daily basis. The use of a good phonics program helps to develop each of these skills to the highest degree.

*Phonics For Dummies* has attitude: I want to give to you my positive and confident attitude that you're up to the task of teaching your child to read through phonics. I show you that phonics is an essential tool that you can use to help your child speak, read, write, and spell. And the best part is that you don't need a master's degree to learn phonics or to teach it to someone else.

## About This Book

*Phonics For Dummies* helps you discover that you're competent to learn or teach phonics. And better yet, you're able to teach or learn reading, spelling, writing, and language to the best of your ability. On first examination, this book may seem complicated, but never fear: It's a precise and thorough strategy for becoming an expert in applying phonics to the language arts.

I focus on certain techniques that are the building blocks to a better understanding of the English language. These techniques help you or your child conquer the difficulties in reading or writing. Say goodbye to

- ✔ Being a slave to a wild guessing game
- ✔ Reading with a lack of expression
- ✔ Poor word attack skills
- ✔ Slow-paced reading
- ✔ Weak comprehension
- ✔ Skipping words you can't read
- ✔ Relying on the context to "read" unknown words
- ✔ Guessing at words by using pictures

With the help of this book, you can

- ✔ Improve reading and spelling skills by going back to square one
- ✔ Learn about pronunciation and accent
- ✔ Increase your fluency in decoding multisyllable words
- ✔ Discover related subject matter and valuable resources
- ✔ Polish your skills with practice and application exercises