

## *A Brief Look at the Formation of English Words*

(Parent Introduction to *The Writing and Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking*. Permission to reproduce.)

The English language is composed of 42 “pure” elementary speech sounds (phonemes), which your child can already pronounce and put into words. Like other alphabetic languages, the English language is a sound/symbol system. Since the English language has only 26 letters, some of these letters must be used to represent more than one phoneme (and/or can sometimes be combined with other letters to represent one of these 42 sounds. Your child will soon be naming these symbols-for-sounds *phonograms* (phono means sound and gram means write), and will be referring to them by their sounds rather than by their letter names. For example, the *s* represents two sounds, and your child will call that phonogram ‘s’ - ‘z’ as heard in the words *so* and *is*.

**Note:** Except for the vowels, letter *names* are not heard in English speech.

26 Letters  
42 Sounds  
71 Phonograms  
  
120-125  
Combinations

Included in this package is a chart of the 71 phonograms your child will be learning during the next few weeks of instruction. In order to prevent or correct reversal problems and prepare for upcoming composition work, we will be teaching letter formation, spacing, and margins as the first 26 phonograms are presented. Our method of presentation is simple: We will be following the dictates of research by teaching phonograms without key words or pictures, and we will present each phonogram in such a way that your child will **see** the phonogram, **hear** the sound(s) it represents, **say** the sound(s) and **write** on paper the letters which represent it. This is called “explicit” phonics – coupled with multi-sensory instruction to address *all learning styles*. It will aid your child in making the direct connection between sound and symbol.\*

After the first 55 phonograms are introduced and practiced, the spelling process will begin. In brief, your child will hear a word, analyze it to determine its separate phonemes (sounds), say the sound(s), then write the correct letters to represent each of the sounds. The word is read back, sound by sound and the spelling rules and marking system are applied. The writing and reading of correctly spelled sentences will follow, always with your child building upon what has been previously learned. Children read, write, and spell phonograms, words, and their own sentences.

### *The Writing and Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking*

- Letter Formation
  - Phonograms
- Words with Spelling Rules
- Sentences (with correct spelling and punctuation)
  - Paragraphs
- Books at Your Child’s Vocabulary  
and Interest Levels

The report on the reverse will be prepared for your child at the end of weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10 until the phonograms have been mastered. The name of this program is *The Writing and Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking*. Cognitive development in auditory, verbal, visual, and motor subskills is taught from the beginning in this sequentially appropriate method of instruction. You may learn more about the scope, sequence, and content of this method from your child’s teacher or at the non-profit publisher’s website at: <http://www.riggsinst.org>.

\* Explicit phonics was identified and recommended in a 1985 federal compilation on reading research entitled, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*.