

PHONICS 

Jolly Phonics Read and See books

Simple, attractive first reading books for children who are learning with synthetic phonics



AT A GLANCE

- Part of the popular, DfE-validated Jolly Phonics scheme
- Separate books for specific graphemes or spelling patterns
- One word per page with the corresponding illustration on the following page
- Displays sound buttons to mark each grapheme

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



If learning to read is hard, then writing books for those who are just beginning their literary journey must be almost as tricky. It's certainly littered with possible pitfalls, so it is not nearly as easy as it might seem.

For a start, you have to find words that are meaningful to the reader, which for younger children, automatically rules out a surprisingly large number of possible contenders. Maybe it was my sheltered upbringing, but I remember being baffled as a youngster by the picture of a nail accompanied by the word 'tack', for example. You also have to make sure that each word contains only graphemes that the children will recognise and no others. And then, of course, you need to include illustrations that are appealing yet precise, meaning they have to illustrate that word and nothing else.

See, I really have thought about this!

To that end, these Read and See books from Jolly Learning walk that narrow tightrope as sure-footedly as any. Furthermore, as part of the DfE-validated Jolly Phonics suite of resources, they come with an impressive and trusted pedigree.

There are two packs of books in the series, each offering one word per page with a separate page for the accompanying image. Pack 1 (14 books) introduces graphemes relating to the seven sound groups in order. Each book in Pack 2 (14 books) focuses on a particular digraph as well as having a separate one for double letters.

For those who are just beginning to make links between spoken sounds and the funny squiggles we have chosen to represent them,

these books are a solid starting point. That said, I did struggle somewhat with one significant design decision here. While I completely understand the rationale of challenging the child to read a word, then providing the corresponding picture over the page for them to confirm its meaning, the result is that each new word appears on a double-page spread alongside an image that bears no relation to it. Of course, any teacher or parent worth their salt will be able to work around this, but even so, I did find it a little bit of a stumbling block.

Nevertheless, I did like the concept of having a series of books that exemplifies grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) in a precisely targeted way, and in the order in which they are taught. Furthermore, I appreciated how each example offers a varied range of words rather than just one or two. This avoids the risk of children associating spelling patterns with only one or two words – cat on the mat, goat on a boat, and so on.

It is also very useful to have sound buttons for each grapheme under each word – not an unexpected feature but an important one, nonetheless. The way each word is then rewritten under the image on the following page, broken into separate graphemes, is another bonus, and a great opportunity to practise revisiting information – something children will need to learn to do throughout their school journey. By the end of each book, the reader should have a pretty clear idea of how to match each target grapheme to the spoken word. Sound practice indeed.

teach PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Offers targeted decoding practice
- ✓ Suitable for small hands
- ✓ Bright, colourful and appealing, with precise illustrations for words
- ✓ Presents grapheme-phoneme correspondences in the order in which they are taught
- ✓ Develops sound-blending skills
- ✓ Suitable for use in school or at home
- ✓ Includes useful tips for teachers and parents
- ✓ Uses carefully chosen words

UPGRADE IF...

You want to spark children's interest in reading by helping them apply their developing phonics knowledge to a precisely paced, fully decodable series of books.

Pack 1: £30.00. Pack 2: £30.00. For more info, visit jollylearning.co.uk or email info@jollylearning.co.uk