Tectonic
PAPER CASTLE
Guide for Families (Version 1.0)
https://gotectonic.org/p

Contents

Develop your child's reading through daily ten-minute practice

Overview

Reading is the foundation of success at school. As a teacher, I have found the systems available for teaching reading in the classroom consistently fall short. They are often expensive, complicated to implement, and not very effective. I've spent the last decade building a phonics system that fixes that.

As part of the development process, I've tested these phonics systems at home with my children. That has helped their reading to be far ahead of expectations. I've talked to so many parents who are worried about their children's reading progress, and I know I can help.
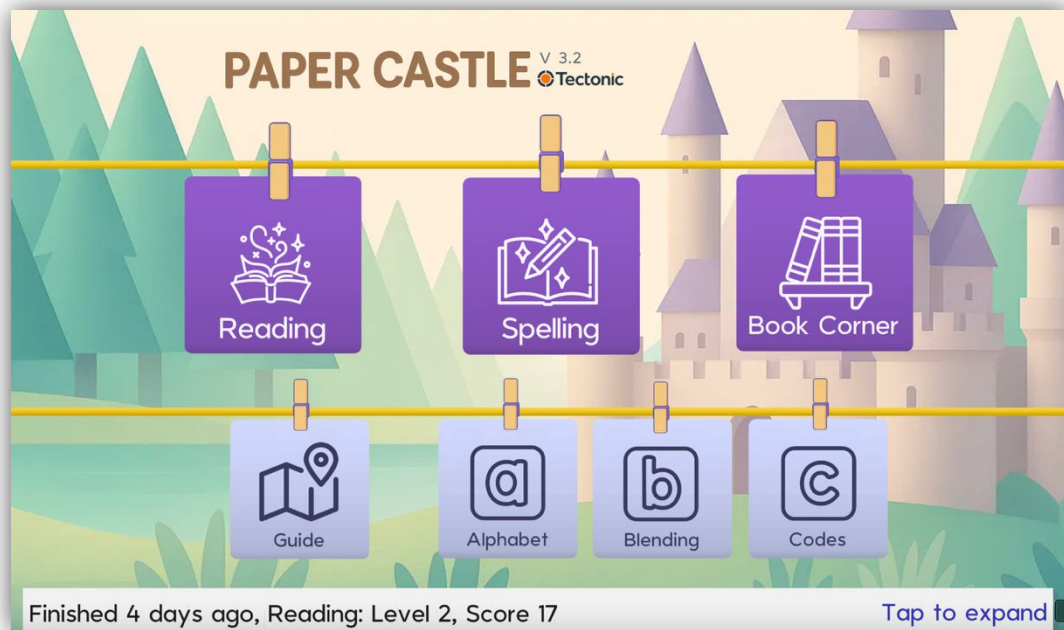

The app I've developed is called Paper Castle. It allows your child to practice reading independently for ten minutes each day. Additional features include spelling practice, levelled books, and tools so you can help your child to develop their reading skills. It is designed from the ground up to be simple to use.

Getting Started

Reading Feature

Once you launch the app, click 'Reading' to begin the reading practice. The three options that come up are:

1. '**Start**' begins practice from level 1, which is for children still learning their letter sounds
2. '**Boost Start**' will test to see if they should skip some levels, which is for children who are confident with their letter sounds
3. '**Practice Mode**' does not have a timer and lets you jump to any level, which will let you help your child with a specific level
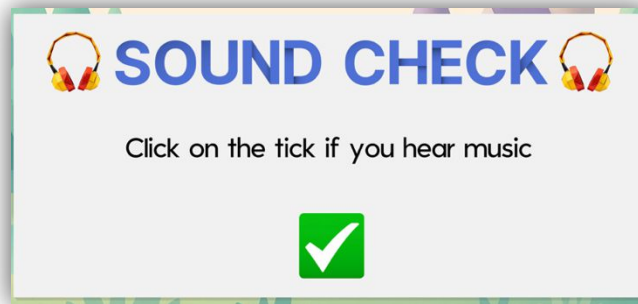
Before practice begins, the Sound Check plays music to make sure the audio is working. You can also bring the Sound Check back up during practice.
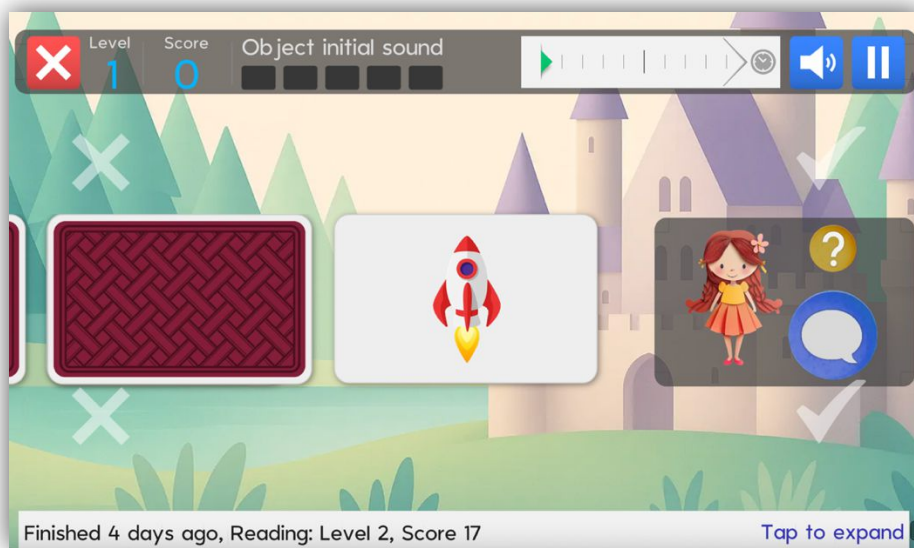
At the beginning of each level, you will hear the instructions for the level. You can have these repeated by tapping the girl. Your child should say the answer for the card. For example, for level 1 they need to say the initial sound, so if the picture is a rocket they need to say /r/. If they cannot say the answer, they should press the yellow question mark to initiate the training. If they can say the answer, they then press the blue button to hear what the girl says.

- If the girl's answer matches their own, they should drag the card to the right (towards the ✓).
- If the girl's answer is different, they should drag it to the left (towards the X).

It is important to encourage your child to say their answer when a new card appears, rather than just pressing the blue button straight away.

As your child answers questions correctly, they accumulate points and green cards. If they have five green cards, they will move to the next level. Making a mistake or pressing

the question mark button will remove all of their green cards. It will also show them training to teach them the answer and move the card to the next spot in the queue.

The levels progress from letter sounds, to sounding out short words, to learning codes (e.g. the 'ch' in 'chips') and then to more advanced skills like reading words with a final 'e'.

The timer runs for ten minutes and then a Finished screen appears.

Reading: Level 2, Score 16

Results will also be displayed in the log at the bottom of the screen.

Finished 0 minutes ago, Reading: Level 2, Score 17   Tap to expand

Accessing

To make it easy to share and to set up, Paper Castle is free and does not require a login. It is a web-app and can be run through any browser, meaning it can be used on an iPad, PC or phone. The app can be used with a touch screen or a mouse. You will need working sound. If the sound is not working on an iPad, make sure Silent Mode is disabled.

Paper Castle

Paper Castle can be installed as a web-app on an iPad:

1. Load it in Safari

2. Click the share button

3. Select 'Add to Home Screen'

Timing & Motivation

Practising at the same time each day makes progress much quicker, but it also makes it much more enjoyable for your child. That means you are less likely to get complaints. The trick is to pick a set time each day to practice.
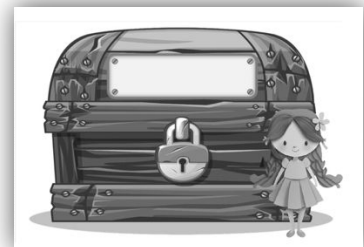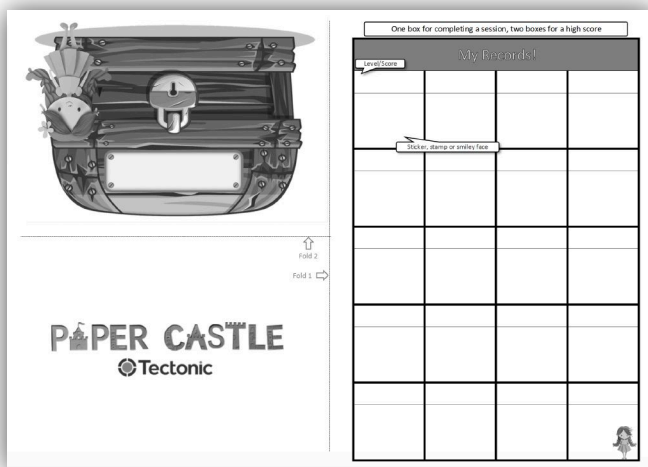
There's also an optional treasure chest you can print-out and fold. You record the score and level (e.g. level 4, score 54 would be 4/54) and put a stamp, sticker or just draw a smiley face below. If they get a high score, you can fill in two boxes. You can even have a small reward when they complete the treasure chest. You can download it through the Paper Castle app by going to the main menu and clicking 'Guide'. The treasure chest is fun, but it's not required.

Accelerating Progress

There are three ways to support your child with Paper Castle.

1) Watch them complete their practice. This can sometimes reveal obvious problems, such as long pauses.

2) Try the challenging level with them. Just launch Paper Castle, click 'Reading' and then 'Practice Mode'. From there you can jump to any level.

3) Support them with the three foundational reading stages. If you launch Paper Castle, you will see these three buttons representing the three stages:

Only move to the next stage once they have mastered the previous stage.

A - Alphabet
Learning the lower-case letter sounds

- Click on each letter to see the story for that letter
- Click 'Learn' to launch a tool for learning the letter sounds (see The 'Learn' Game below)

- Click 'Song' to hear the alphabet song (each letter will highlight as the song plays to help your child connect the letter names and symbols)

One of the first steps in learning to read is memorising the 26 letter sounds. However, this can be very challenging because it involves connecting an abstract symbol (e.g. the letter 'b') to an abstract sound (e.g. the sound /b/).
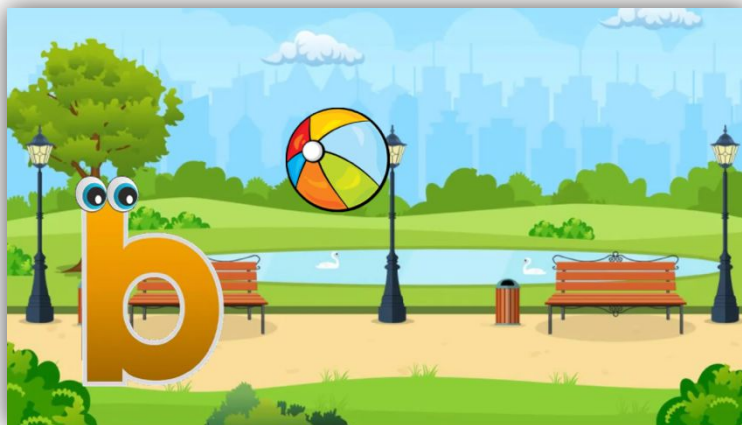
We pay more attention to – and are more likely to recall – tangible objects, characters (both real and fictional), and anything that evokes emotion. That's why in Paper Castle each letter has a short animated story where it's a character in an emotional situation. For example, the letter 'b' kicking someone's ball into the lake.

When your child is trying to recall the letter sound, ask them what happened to the letter. If they can recall the story, ask them what the object was. From there, they should be able to isolate the sound. This process can take some thinking time, but it quickly becomes faster as they practice.

B - Blending
Sounding out words
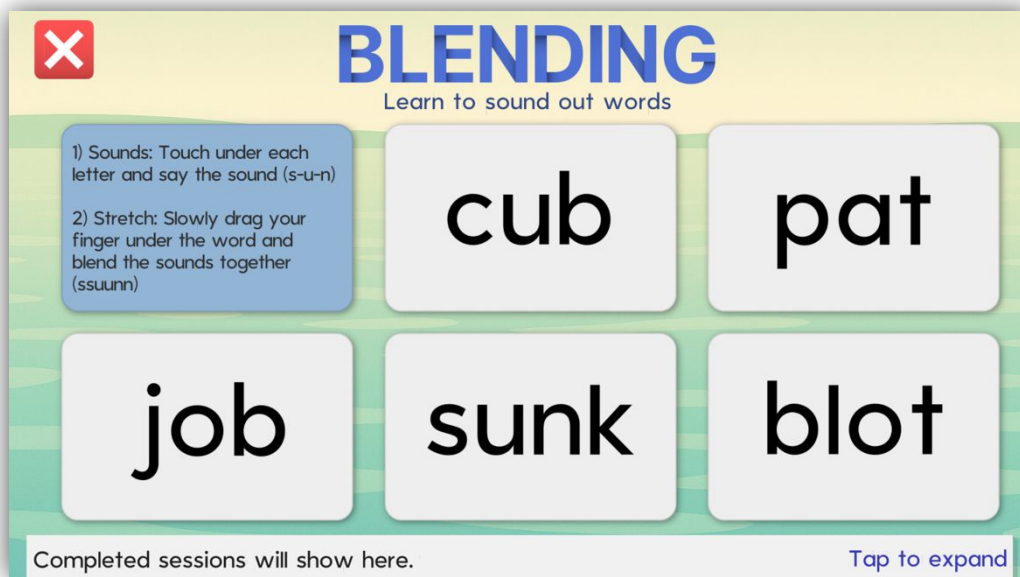
The blending page has words for practising blending. Each time you load the page, there will be a different set of words. The blue card has a guide on how to teach blending:

Sounds and Stretch
1) Sounds: Touch under each letter and say the sounds (s-u-n)

2) Stretch: Slowly drag your finger under the word and blend the sounds together (ssuunn)

Some things to keep in mind:
- Your child needs to be confident with their letter sounds before beginning blending
- Your child should keep their eyes on the word as they stretch it, so they are paying attention to the sounds they should be blending
- Some letter sounds can't be stretched (e.g. in the word 'bun', the 'b' sound has to be short and the 'un' can be stretched)

C - Codes

Memorising a set of multi-letter sounds (e.g. the /sh/ in ship)
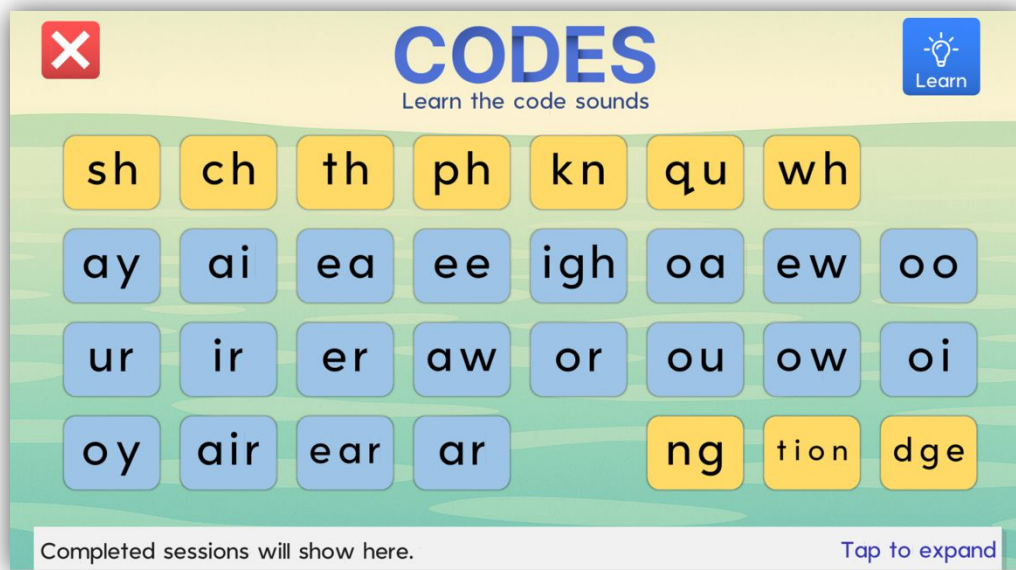
- Click on each code to hear the chant and see the image
- Click 'Learn' to launch a tool for learning the 30 codes (see <u>The 'Learn' Game</u> below)

k, n knitting knight /n, n, n/

Each code has a chant and an image. The images are deliberately unusual, but child-friendly, to help with memorisation. The chant begins with the letter names (e.g. 'k', 'n'). If your child has said the chant enough, just saying the letters should help them recall the rest of the chant. This helps with memorisation.

When learning codes, children will usually be more familiar with letter sounds than letter names. This can make saying the letter names at the start of the chant difficult at first. However, they should improve with practice.

The 'Learn' Game

Learning the letter and code sounds is a big memorisation challenge. The Learn Game is designed to help your child practice with your support. It's effective because it puts the focus on the letters or codes that they don't know.
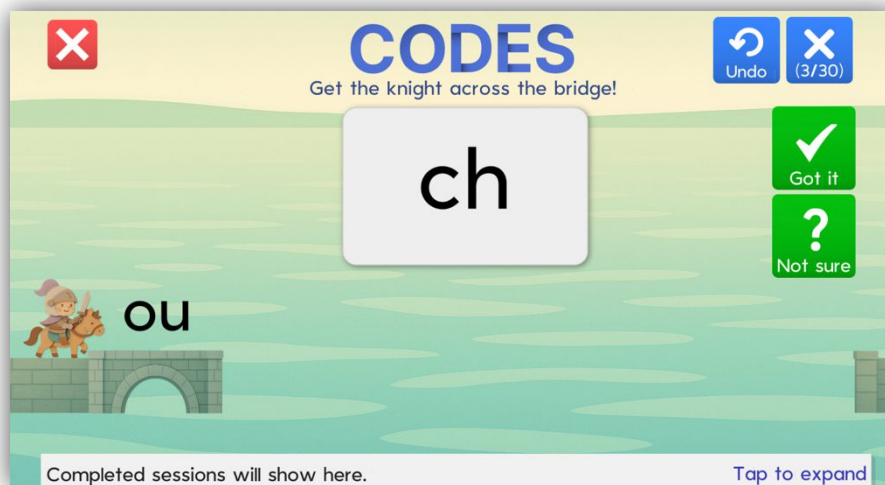
Here's how to use it.

- Ask your child to say the sound on the card.
- Tap 'Got it' if they can, and the next card will come up.
- Tap 'Not sure' if they can't, and a bridge section will be added (with that letter or code above it). Each time a bridge section is added, all of the 'Not sure' codes or letters are reviewed.
- Once six bridge sections have been added, and your child has successfully reviewed all of them, the knight crosses the bridge and the game ends.
- The game can also end if your child gets through all 26 letters or 30 codes.

Extra Features

Spelling

The Spelling practice is very similar to the Reading practice. There are three main differences:

1. The levels use letters, rather than numbers
2. If your child gets the first question of the level correct, they move straight to the next level
3. Your child only needs to get three answers correct in a row to move to the next level

Spelling should be commenced once your child has successfully completed the Reading section of the app. It begins with sounding out words and then teaches strategies for memorising the spelling of words in the final three levels.

Book Corner

The book corner has four levels of books (see buttons on the left) each with six books. The simplest level is suitable for children who have reached level 7 in Reading. Your child can tap each word in a book to hear it read aloud.

Guides

If you need to download this guide or find any related documents, such as the treasure chest, just click on Guide.

Appendix

To see each level: Launch Paper Castle ➜ Click 'Reading' or 'Spelling' ➜ Click 'Practice Mode' ➜ Click the right-facing arrow to go to the desired level

Reading Levels

Level	Title	Description
1	Object initial sound	Isolating the initial phoneme of a word
2	Letter Friends sounds	Saying the letter sounds for the letter characters
3	Letter sounds	Saying the letter sounds for lower-case letters
4	Word sounds	Saying a set of three sounds (e.g. d-o-g)
5	Three letter words (CVC)	Reading CVC words (e.g. dog)
6	Consonant blend words	Reading words with consonant blends (e.g. stop)
7	Letter names	Naming letters
8	Letter alternatives	Naming upper-case letters and alternative lower-case letters: a, g, y, k
9	Codes	Saying the sound for a given code (e.g. /ch/)
10	Find the code	Finding and saying the code in a word (e.g. <u>ch</u>ips)
11	Code words	Reading words with codes in them (e.g. chips)
12	Bossy e	Reading words with silent final e's (e.g. kite)
13	Special endings	Reading words with common endings (ing, y, es, ed)
14	Syllable counting	Finding and counting the syllables in words (1, 2 or 3)
15	Syllable reading	Reading multisyllable words
16	Sight words	Reading common sight words (e.g. their)

Spelling Levels

Level	Title	Description
A (1)	Three letter words (CVC)	CVC words (e.g. dog)
B (2)	Consonant blends	Words with consonant blends (e.g. stop)
C (3)	Code words	Words with codes (e.g. chips)
D (4)	Ending with e	Words with a silent final e (e.g. kite)
E (5)	High frequency words	Common non-phonetic words (e.g. could)
F (6)	Adding s	Words ending in 's' and 'es'
G (7)	Adding ed and ing	Words ending in 'ed' and 'ing'
H (8)	Contractions	Words containing apostrophes (e.g. we'll)
I (9)	Syllables	Multisyllable words
J (10)	Strategy: Words in words	Memorising word spelling using the words in words strategy
K (11)	Strategy: Build from the base	Memorising word spelling using the build from the base strategy
L (12)	Strategy: Say it like you spell it	Memorising word spelling using the say it like you spell it strategy

Letter-sound Mnemonics

To see each letter story: Launch Paper Castle ➜ Click 'Alphabet' ➜ Click the letter

Letter	Object	Story
a	apple	I tried to eat an apple one time, but it turned out to be the letter 'a', he's super sneaky.
b	ball	I was playing at the park when 'b' kicked my ball into the lake, he's so mean.
c	cake	I invited 'c' to my birthday party, but he ate the whole cake, he's greedy.
d	duck	My friend 'd' got attacked by a duck once, he was very sore.
e	egg	The other day 'e' hatched out of an egg, he's so cute.
f	fish	I last saw 'f' when he caught a giant fish and was pulled along, he was having so much fun.
g	goat	A goat charged 'g' at the farm, and I saw him jump straight over the goat, he's brave.
h	hat	'h' wants to be a magician, but his magic hat never works right, he gets so angry.
i	igloo	'i' lives in the Artic in an igloo, he is cold, cold, cold.
j	jet	My friend 'j' can come over so quickly in his jet, he's lighting fast.
k	kite	I saw 'k' start to fly away on his kite, he's okay now, but I was super worried.
l	lemon	'l' tried to eat a whole lemon, it was so gross.
m	moon	'm' went to the moon and made a new friend, it was amazing.
n	nest	'n' is about to fly out of his nest, I'm so excited.
o	octopus	'o' likes to play with everyone, even an octopus friend, he's really friendly.
p	pig	'p' lives on a farm and rolls in the mud with the pigs, he's super stinky.
q	queen	Did you know that my friend 'q' met a queen? He's so fancy.
r	rocket	'r' built a rocket, he's the smartest letter I know.
s	sun	's' loves to play in the sun, but he never puts on sunscreen, he's sunburned and sore.
t	tiger	I think 't' is still in Africa looking for tigers, but he never sees them, he's unlucky.
u	umbrella	'u' wanted to play, but it was too rainy, he felt really sad.
v	volcano	'v' escaped a volcano just in time, he was so relieved.
w	web	Once in the jungle 'w' got stuck in a web, but he just jumped out of it, he's super strong.
x	fox	'x' is always playing with foxes, and they love him, he's so kind. **The /x/ sound is at the end of fox.**
y	yoyo	'y' was exploring the mountains when he found a magic yoyo, he's so lucky.
z	zebra	'z' is always dancing with all the animals, he's pretty cool.

Codes

There are 30 codes (i.e. long graphemes). To see each code image and hear the chant:
Launch Paper Castle ➔ Click 'Codes' ➔ Click the code

Code	Mnemonic
sh	Sheep shop
ch	Chilli chewer
th	Thirsty thief
ph	Dolphin phone
kn	Knitting knight
qu	Quick queen
wh	Wheeled whale
ay	Play day
ai	Snail jail
ea	Jean ice cream
ee	Bee tree
igh	Bright light
oa	Goat boat
ew	Chewy stew
oo	Moon broom
ur	Surfing turtle
ir	Bird shirt
er	Bigger germ
aw	Hawk claw
or	Corn storm
ou	Mouse house
ow	Cow crown
oi	Soil coin
oy	Royal toy
air	Hairy chair
ear	Ear gear
ar	Shark park
ng	Singing king
tion	Emotion potion
dge	Fudge fridge